SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN CRISIS: LOCATING DISASTER COMMUNITIES IN
RHETORIC AND RHETORIC IN DISASTER COMMUNITIES

by

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B.A., University of North Texas, 2006

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech Communication
College of Arts And Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2008

Approved by:

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Abstract

Modern disasters have shown a disturbing tendency to disrupt normal community life by severing the connection between social services and the populace. Emergency managers realize that responding to disasters presents many unique communication challenges, both on the technical level and the symbolic level. Communities have begun to organize themselves to prepare for and respond to disasters in the event that emergency response agencies confront such challenges. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program was established to train and deploy citizens to supplement the efforts of first responders. The CERT program's website provides information about the program, how to form a CERT and other training and administrative information. A close textual reading of the CERT website enables the rhetorical critic to identify the use of fantasy themes that construct a vision that defines CERT as a rhetorical community. Upon identifying the rhetorical vision at work, a comparison can be made to the features that define a social movement. Applying social movement theory to citizen initiatives opens the possibility for improving community response and the study of communication issues in disaster response.

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Chapter One

"If…we choose to work with nature and each other, we can reduce the waves of unnatural

disasters that have been washing over the shores of humanity with increasing regularity and

ferocity." (Abramovitz, 2001, p. 50)

The recent record of disasters in the United States provides evidence of the high stakes

involved for those who serve the communities affected by such events. In the United States

alone, over 1700 disasters have been declared since 1953 (Federal Emergency Management

Agency, 2008). During a record setting decade, over two billion people were affected globally

between 1990 and 1999 (Abramovitz, 2001). Given the fact that an average of thirty-two federal

disasters are declared in America every year (FEMA, 2008), it seems prudent for those

disciplines involved in studying disasters to critically examine the fundamental issues involved

in disaster response.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) forced emergency managers to

reexamine response plans and procedures because of the enormous loss of life experienced on

that day (Haddow & Bullock, 2006).   In total, 2,819 people would lose their lives (as of

September 5, 2002). Three-hundred forty-three firefighters and paramedics perished, leaving

fires burning at the World Trade Center for ninety-nine days after the attacks (New York

Magazine, 2002). The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9-

11 Commission) describes the response that day as "largely improvised," with emergency

response personnel and the victims focused on doing whatever they could to cope with the

"unimaginable catastrophe" (9-11 Commission, 2004, p. 315). The 9-11 Commission (2004)

recognizes that "it is impossible to measure how many more civilians would have died but for

the determination" (p. 316) of the Fire Department, Police Department and Port Authority Police, even after the South Tower collapsed.

The American people were told that creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and housing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within that organization would address the deficiencies experienced on 9/11 (Fischer et al., 2006). New equipment was bought and new training was undertaken at the state and local level, and reforms were designed to testify to the improvement of disaster response. Unfortunately, the tragic losses experienced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina serve as yet another example of why Americans need to continue to rethink disaster management strategies.

In the aftermath of Katrina, the House of Representatives established the Bipartisan Select Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina (The Committee), whose report, "A Failure of Initiative" (2006), provides a critical evaluation of disaster management strategies post-9/11. Though heroic efforts were made to address the hurricane, the Committee found that these efforts were overshadowed by failures at all levels of government. Katrina simply overwhelmed the national emergency management system because the degree and scope of destruction was far beyond the system's capabilities. The Committee (2006) even goes as far as to state that improvements sought after 9/11 still had not been fully actualized (p. 1).

These two quintessential disasters stand out in recent American memory. The responses to 9/11 and Katrina serve to focus attention on recurring challenges involved in disaster response which transcend individual incidents to implicate the larger structure of emergency management. It is not my intention to attack or second-guess the actions of emergency workers and/or victims in the incidents examined. Instead, analysis of disaster response rhetoric will solidify the case

for critically examining both the successes and failures involved in disaster response while still applauding the efforts of first responders.

Disasters in Public Discourse

Given the frequency of disasters and the mixed results of existing response strategies, it should come as no surprise that disasters occupy an important place in public discussion and command a lot of attention in the aftermath of 9/11 and Katrina. Personal conversations are no doubt influenced by such events. Simply recalling the number of times one has heard references to 9/11 by politicians, news media, television shows and music serves as a reminder of the role that disasters play in the rhetoric we hear in our everyday lives. Twenty percent of Americans were reported to have known someone who was killed or injured during 9/11 (New York Magazine, 2002). Moreover, people understand and communicate about disasters with those they know (Cutter, 2006; Dynes, 1970; Kirschenbaum, 2004; Procopio & Procopio, 2007); hence, such events generate a lot of discourse amongst individuals by the simple fact that disasters can serve as markers in a person's life (Clarke, 2004; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002; Webb, Wachtendorf, & Eyre, 2000).

Modern public life is flooded with discourse about disasters. Representations in popular culture, literature, films, music and games help transmit knowledge about such events between individuals, groups and generations because such transmissions inform a large portion of social life (Webb, Wachtendorf, & Eyre, 2000). It is no wonder that 9/11 was mentioned twenty-six times at the Oscars the year following the attacks (New York Magazine, 2002). While confusion results in a relative shortage of information in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, news media coverage of such events expands rapidly as more information becomes available (Sood, Stockdale, & Rogers, 1987). Such information has the capacity to become "part of the rhetoric

of future public and policy debates" (Sood, Stockdale, & Rogers, 1987, p. 39) by selecting the elements covered and the frame used to analyze events. Dymon and Platt (1999) point out that the decision to declare a disaster and, consequently, distribute federal money is a form of "disaster gerrymandering." Politicians may use such events to gain visibility and to bring funds to their constituent communities. Thus it should come as no surprise that the amount of time and attention spent discussing disasters rises in the aftermath of a catastrophic event.

Communication is "one of the most common lessons learned in virtually every disaster" (Fischer et al., 2006, para. 21). It is undeniable that managing disasters effectively requires secure, powerful and reliable channels of communication (Dimitruk, 2007). Equipment malfunction, power outages and antennae failure are common consequences of the immediate impact of disasters (Fischer et al., 2006; McEntire, 2007). Overlapping responsibilities and unclear protocols also complicate communication, as many agencies, groups and individuals are focused on reducing suffering immediately no matter what is written in plans and policies. These challenges require that emergency managers make important choices about how to effectively communicate during disasters.

Various academic disciplines have dealt with the issue of disaster management, each using its own lens as the basis for forming a perspective on how to respond. From a public affairs perspective, improving the connection between disaster management and the promotion of sustainable development is a critical means of increasing public perception of the importance of mitigating disasters before they occur (Abramovitz, 2001; Schneider, 2003). For journalism, improving the working relationship of the news media and emergency management officials is essential to facilitating the flow of information used to warn the public and instruct them about what to do when disaster does strike (Haddow & Bullock, 2006; Sood, Stockdale & Rogers,

1987). From the view of public relations scholars, attention must be paid to the content of messages about risks present in a community, so that the public is compelled to act based upon a trust of the organizations responsible for disaster management (Clarke, 1999; Heath & Palenchar, 2000; Palenchar & Heath, 2002). And from the viewpoint of geographers, we are encouraged to examine both the spatial location of populations and the social conditions that render certain groups more vulnerable to disasters, so that the impact of such events can be reduced (Abramovitz, 2001; Cutter, 2006; McEntire, 2007). This thesis will synthesize these findings with a rhetorical perspective to form an integrated paradigm capable of deepening existing knowledge on community response to disasters and the study of communication.

This review of the historical and cultural context of disasters confirms that emergency management scholars do recognize the need to evaluate and improve communication amongst all levels of government and between the public and private sectors (McEntire, 2007). Communication scholars can contribute to this effort in a way that holds true to the discipline's unique pedagogical approach. Using rhetorical criticism to examine the messages that inform the public about the appropriate actions and procedures during a disaster is one way that our discipline can make such a contribution.

Specifically, this thesis will use fantasy theme analysis to examine web-based disaster response information for evidence supporting a social movement perspective. The research question addressed by this thesis is:

RQ: How does the rhetorical vision created by emergency management agencies embed disaster response within the social life of the community?

This question will be answered by looking at the fantasy themes used to transmit messages about community disaster response, looking specifically at the national model, the

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Particular attention will be placed upon piecing together the fantasy themes present in the text that chain out to form a rhetorical vision about how communities should respond to disasters. Once mapped out, the characteristics of the rhetorical community that shares that vision can be compared to relevant social movement theories advanced by communication scholars.

The CERT website does provide evidence sustaining a social movement perspective on disaster response. Appeals to past experiences of official response difficulties and efforts made by ordinary citizens combine with a sense of hope and order in the future, creating a rhetorical vision that shapes the perceptions and actions of CERT participants. The CERT program persuades citizens to work together to supplement official emergency response activities. After discovering the rhetorical basis for constituting CERT as a social movement, suggestions and criticisms can be leveled that enable emergency managers and communication scholars alike to recognize how disasters affect the way that communities form, act and communicate.

Contributions to the Communication Studies

This study fulfills two primary functions for the study of communication. First, this study will afford communication scholars and emergency managers an opportunity to gain a sharper picture of disaster response. Crisis communication has evolved into a type of research and literature that attempts to serve as "a manual for ways that organizations can handle crises" (Waymer & Heath, 2007, p. 88). The primary focus has been on how organizations should act to improve their transmission of information in order to appear responsible and worthy of the public's trust (Clarke, 1999). Such an approach pays "little or no attention to the voices of the affected publics" (Waymer & Heath, 2007, p. 88) because the goal in communicating is protecting the organization's capacity to exist securely rather than necessarily serving the public.

A renewed focus on crises should be undertaken from the viewpoint of the communities affected so that the organizations responsible for transmitting disaster information can fashion plans and policies that best serve the public.

Second, this study advances rhetorical theory by illuminating the symbolic dimensions of disaster communication, dimensions that are routinely forgotten in the emphasis on resolving technical difficulties. In FEMA's *Disciplines, Disasters and Emergency Management* textbook, provided free of charge to teach courses in a variety of disciplines (McEntire, 2006, preface), Richardson and Byers argue that our discipline's contribution to emergency management lies in the call to "consider communication's symbolic functions particularly within disasters contexts" (p. 19). Although most disaster research focuses on organizational capabilities, Clarke (1999) argues that the assumptions and vocabularies used by organizations in disaster response need to be rethought (p. 136). Because the meaning of disasters arises within social interaction and a particular rhetorical context, more must be done to critically examine the arguments used to frame the way communities prepare for and respond to disasters.

This chapter provided an exploratory glimpse into the theoretical discourse available for advancing a social movement perspective of disaster response. Chapter Two focuses upon developing working definitions of critical concepts such as disasters and community and explains the background of communication research about disasters. Chapter Two also addresses the need to fashion a rhetorical theory that recognizes the role of social movements in disaster response. This conceptual base will inform Chapter Three which details the method for examining emergency management texts that transmit information about community disaster response. Describing the method and the artifact, the CERT website, serves as a preview of the analysis to be undertaken. Chapter Four will critique the artifact for evidence of the two types of

fantasy themes Bormann (1972) identifies in his seminal work: fantasy themes which connect

audience members with a shared past experience and fantasy themes that connect the audience

with the dream of an ideal future (p. 243). Finally, in Chapter Five, these findings will be

compared to the relevant aspects of social movement theory to decide whether or not the CERT

model enables a social movements approach to disaster response. Chapter Five will conclude

with a discussion of the limitations of such an approach and a description of areas rich for future

exploration.

Chapter Two

Disasters have the capacity to disrupt the entire social structure that a community depends on to function daily. Immediate loss of life and property are compounded by a long period of hazardous conditions and painful recovery. Due to widespread damage to community infrastructure, new social needs and forms of behavior may develop, which official agencies lack the capacity to accommodate. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, communities often face a period where overarching governing structures are unable to deliver the resources and services that the community depends on. Supporting communities to get through these difficult times requires analyzing how emergency management officials and the community prepare for and respond to disasters.

This chapter introduces the conceptual basis for creating a social movement perspective of disasters as a potential solution to community response difficulties. The first section creates a working definition of the term 'disaster' and details the emergency management approach to handling these incidents. The second section details the communication discipline's interest in studying disaster management, identifying the ways disasters affect the social and symbolic characteristics of a community. Thirdly, the conceptual background explores the characteristics of a social movement and the importance of rhetoric to such an organization. Finally, this chapter concludes by synthesizing these findings in order to justify studying disaster response from a social movement perspective, explaining why programs like CERT are social movements and why studying the rhetorical dimensions of these movements enables well-rounded emergency management strategies.

Disaster Research and Emergency Management

Many people throw around the amorphous term 'disaster' everyday without considering the symbolic meaning implied in such messages. For some, a disaster may be losing one's wallet, losing prestige in one's social network or the tragic loss of a loved one. For others, disasters are events experienced on a purely structural level: for these individuals, massive wildfires in the Western portion of the United States, rolling arctic fronts across the Midwest and the landfall of hurricanes along the Gulf Coast represent the pinnacle for defining the term 'disaster.' For the purposes of this thesis, 'disasters' will be understood as:

> actual or threatened accidental or uncontrollable events that are concentrated in time and space, in which a society, or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society undergoes severe danger, and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions the society, or its subdivision, is prevented (Fritz, 1961 quoted in Fischer, 1994, p. 2-3).

Disasters can strike anytime, anyplace, with or without warning. Volcanoes, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfire, blizzards, floods, heat waves, terrorist attacks, nuclear reactor meltdowns, chemical releases, famine, wars and riots all have the characteristics of events which are considered disasters. These events share the characteristics outlined in the definition above. This thesis will concern itself with the way such events affect communities, groups of people that adopt solutions particularly suited for themselves and others in order to cope with the consequences created by a disaster.

The impacts of disasters on communities are diverse and multidimensional (Lindell & Prater, 2003). Initially, the consequences of such events depend on whether the incident is a natural disaster like a hurricane, earthquake or flood or an "unnatural" disaster such as terrorism,

nuclear meltdowns and war. The physical impacts of such incidents include the number of deaths and the extent of damage to structures, animals and crops. Such physical estimates typically require assessment by a trained observer in order to be accurate (p. 177). Social impacts are also difficult to assess because they typically develop over a longer period of time. These social impacts include mental health and emotional recovery; sheltering issues; and economic losses from damaged assets (p. 178). Political impacts such as conflicts over how to reconstruct and quality of life issues after a disaster can disrupt civil governance and make way for social activism (p. 180).

Emergency managers break disasters into four phases of planning: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery (Haddow & Bullock, 2006). *Mitigation* is defined as "a sustained action to reduce or eliminate risk to people and property from hazards and their effects" (p. 57). Such actions include identifying community risks that could create disasters, adapting building construction and land-use policies, creating incentives for people to reduce their vulnerability to disasters and acquiring insurance to offset the losses that may occur in a disaster. *Preparedness* is defined as "a state of readiness to respond to a disaster" (p. 157). Preparedness activities aim to plan, educate and train the public and responders about what to do when a disaster does occur. The *response* phase begins when the disaster strikes (p. 99): firefighters, police officers and medical staff arrive at the scene and begin to administer assistance; local emergency management officials activate the affected community's plans, policies and protocols and coordinate with higher levels of government to acquire resources they need. The *recovery* phase begins when immediate threats have subsided and social life begins to return to normal conditions. Recovery activities include reconstruction, finding employment for victims and restoring business and social services (p. 131). Each of these phases of emergency

management presents unique challenges for the emergency manager and, as we shall see next, these challenges contain important communicative dimensions as well.

Connections to communication studies can be found in the interdisciplinary discussion taking place about disasters. Disaster management agencies are expected to communicate during crisis by the communities they serve. "Public awareness is needed to gain approval for any type of emergency management measure" (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 202) since the public provides popular support for funding and legitimacy that keeps emergency management agencies afloat. Practically every disaster, mass emergency and routine response requires emergency managers to make decisions about the proper information to transmit to interested parties and the means to do it. At the outset of any disaster, without accurate information about the location, impact and victims' needs, the response is almost guaranteed to be inadequate (McEntire, 2007). The demands of a crisis situation require that these agencies make strategic decisions about how to best get their information across.

One communication challenge that emergency managers face is the sheer demand for emergency services. 911 networks find themselves overloaded with callers during crisis events (Shneiderman & Preece, 2007), as victims reach out to receive assistance from official fire, medical and law enforcement personnel. This does not even account for all of the phone calls placed by those people looking to find their friend or loved one and other information about the incident. The sheer volume of requests quickly becomes overwhelming, making decisions about how to commit resources even more difficult (Dimitruk, 2007).

Another challenge is the quality of information used to make decisions during a disaster (Haddow & Bullock, 2006). Emergency managers often face conflicting reports about casualties and damages as a result of responder confusion at the scene. Rumors and misinformation are not

uncommon during a disaster, so emergency managers and community officials must work hard to ensure information is accurate and effective in providing comfort for victims, the media and the public at large.

Yet another issue that emergency managers must face is how to coordinate the various agencies and parties involved (Haddow & Bullock, 2006). Many private, local, state and federal organizations respond to a disaster to fulfill various functions including law enforcement, public health, medicine, science and business. When conflicting authorities and structures interact on an ad hoc basis, communication can easily become the "Achilles heel in the emergency management field" (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 121). There are steep costs for these coordination problems, as a slow or inefficient response can aggravate the immediate impacts of a disaster in addition to damaging careers and reputations in the long run.

All phases of emergency management could benefit from a critical evaluation of the processes and mediums available for facilitating communication in the event of a disaster. Haddow and Bullock (2006) even go so far as to state that a communications element should be "included in all organizational activities, plans, and operations" (p. 198). Richardson and Byers (2006) describe how "mitigation efforts will be enhanced when disaster personnel and agencies develop communication networks, increase the flow of relevant information and share ideas" (p. 5). In order for mitigation procedures to receive public support and resources, "the public has to agree that a hazard exists, that it should be reduced, and that the proposed program is an appropriate measure" (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 202). It is unfortunate that so much emphasis in emergency management is placed upon improving prediction and administration of relief when promoting strategies of sustainable development that reduce a community's exposure to disasters have been proven more cost-effective. Abramovitz (2001) breaks the tradeoff down

to the simplest of terms: "On average, $1 invested in mitigation costs saves $7 in disaster recovery costs" (p. 7). This is because there is a disturbing tendency for communities and individuals to return to business as usual when times of crisis come and go (Schneider, 2003).

Richardson and Byers identify the work of Auf der Heide (1989) as evidence that preparedness activities such as community awareness, accurate risk assessment, special interest group involvement, benefits articulation and clear definition of responsibility require the public and the government to address communication issues in a meaningful way. Messages about these activities must "encourage and educate the public in anticipation of disaster events" (Bullock & Haddow 2006 p. 195), so that communities are ready and capable to respond when the events do occur. The public must be made aware of opportunities for mitigation and prevention and why such opportunities are beneficial to them.

Decisions about what information to release to the public and when are made during the response phase. Public notification, warning, evacuation information and situation reports during an ongoing disaster require emergency managers to make important choices about how to communicate (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 195). Emergency managers must work hard to make sure that the affected populations get the appropriate information they need in order to take steps to protect themselves, their family and their property. Informing the public about the disaster as it unfolds is critical to demonstrating that emergency managers are aware of the situation and monitoring developments to make sure response strategies are working.

And during the recovery phase, officials are confronted with the requirement to "restore individual and community lifelines" (Richardson & Byers, 2006, p. 7) by communicating messages that gets the public back on its feet and functioning the way it did before the disaster struck. Specifically, the public needs to know how to register for and receive assistance from

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relief agencies (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 196). The public must be made aware of any unique procedures that different agencies and organizations may use in order to receive the services needed to return to normal social life.

This thesis concerns itself with the response phase because it is "the most visible activity" that an emergency management agency does (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 124). The public, political figures and the media all judge the effectiveness of an emergency management agency based on its performance in the response phase. If the agency is seen as incapable of fulfilling its commitment to provide services for citizens when disaster does strike, this agency loses the trust of those groups that provide support, funding and legitimacy for the organization (Clarke, 1999). If, on the other hand, emergency managers are able to network with other community leaders, then they can demonstrate that their activities have a significant public value that makes response more salient, supported, stable and effective (Schneider, 2003). Because many previous responses have succeeded or failed on the basis of the ability for emergency managers to communicate effectively, scholars would be well served to evaluate emergency management from a perspective that recognizes the unique contribution of the communication studies field.

The Study of Disasters in Rhetorical Scholarship

Rhetoric is an essential characteristic of studying human behavior. As Griffin (1969) states, "man is a being who lives in language; who moves and is moved by words; who rises and is redeemed, or fails and falls, through words" (p. 457). We cannot possibly understand even tangible objects without somehow figuring out a way to put our thoughts of what the object is into words or symbols. Rhetoric is how we form and express ideas. The speaker uses "common ideas, conventional language, and specific information" (Hart & Daughton, 2005, p. 7) to

communicate meaning to the receiver. We use rhetoric to describe what we see, to translate that reality into what we should do in the world and then we do it.

In addition to this symbolic function, there is also something inherently social about rhetoric. Rhetoric is the exchange of symbols; it is also how we build communities (Hart & Daughton, 2005, p. 35). By communicating, rhetors and audiences "open themselves up to each other's influence" (p. 8). Studying communication entails an examination of this "opening," uncovering how the speaker attempts to share the intended meaning of a message with the receiver of that message. Rhetoric is "the art of using language to help people narrow their choices among specifiable ...policy options" (p. 2). Studying the language used to communicate about competing courses of action reveals a lot about what a community values and the way that community is organized. As Hart and Daughton (2005) put it, "to turn our backs on rhetoric would be to turn our backs on the sharing of ideas and hence any practical notion of human community" (p. 19).

Disasters and their responses afterwards arise within an "eminently social" context worthy of rhetorical analysis (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002, p. 12). Most people in a given society do not "experience disasters first hand," but instead rely upon others' accounts to learn about such events (Webb, Wachtendorf & Eyre, 2000, p. 7). The very act of naming a disaster is a rhetorical move, as labeling a "tornado-ravaged town ...as a Federal Disaster Area" has important implications for the types of responses used (Hart & Daughton, 2005, p. 17). Deciding how to distribute disaster assistance requires that interested parties unlock the meaning of the signifier "Federal Disaster Area" and get to the root of what we mean when we apply the label.

Rhetoric is an essential factor in considering how communities respond to crises because it creates the shared meaning between people that serves as the basis for action. People form

stories, interpretations of a disaster's meaning, to explain how these events have changed the people affected. Webb, Wachtendorf and Eyre (2000) state "virtually every type of society …produce[s] some kind of disaster, and every culture that lives through a major disaster produces some kind of cultural representation of it" (p. 5). These stories are passed on through time by rhetorical performances including folklore, memorials, and dramatized portrayals. The endless list of artifacts used to transmit information about disasters ensures these representations become "embedded in a group's collective conscience as permanent markers of social time" (Webb, Wachtendorf & Eyre, 2000, p. 5). Disaster films, jokes and games, songs and literature, photographs, newspapers and World Wide Web chat rooms that emerge during disasters all provide evidence of the extent to which disasters inform our rhetorical situation.

While transmitting knowledge about the incident itself, disasters also serve as a lens to examine society and social relations. "Disaster exposes the way people construct or "frame" their peril …the way they perceive their environment and their subsistence, and the ways they invent explanation, constitute their morality, and project their continuity and promise into the future" (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002, p. 6). These texts become contested grounds for discourse when those organizations responsible for planning community response measures frame stories in a particular way. Examining the rhetoric used to communicate about disaster response helps communication scholars understand an experience that shapes the lives of many people.

Lee Clarke (2004) provides a critical justification for studying disasters as a phenomenon capable of explaining social organization and behavior. Clarke argues that viewing disaster as an extreme deviation from normal social life is misguided because such events reveal how and why social systems operate in the way they do (p. 137). His work also seeks to assess the importance

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of media framing in determining governmental and social responses to disasters that will aid communication scholars attempting to analyze disasters from a rhetorical perspective. Clarke argues for the importance of examining social networks in communities and thematic elements in reports of disasters in order to understand social vulnerability and attribution of responsibility for causing, responding to and recovering from disasters (p. 138).

Heath and Palenchar (2000) provide evidence of the importance of emergency response information. This quantitative study found that increasing the public's awareness of risks, while providing information that the organizations responsible for controlling the risk were doing their job, encourages the affected communities to think and act in ways consistent with managing and reducing the risk. Telling people that they should protect themselves as a supplement to organizational efforts establishes "zones of meaning" (p. 146) about the nature of risks present in a community and the appropriate protective measures. These 'zones of meaning' reflect a shared knowledge and interpretation of events, which increase the public's trust of the organizations and encourage abidance with emergency response messages.

Palenchar and Heath (2002) also provide a conceptual framework for exploring symbolic issues in risk communication. In this study, the authors examine how communities that are adjacent to industries that produce harmful chemicals judge the content of the messages about risks communicated by the industry. The goal of this research is to understand how messages from industry structure community perceptions of the risk caused by the chemical producers being located in close proximity to those neighborhoods. The study provides critical information about applying fantasy theme analysis to the message content and communication processes between industry leaders and affected communities. While not directly applied to

communication issues in disaster response, this study is critically important to any attempt to rhetorically analyze artifacts concerned with the risks that communities collectively possess.

In the book *Mission Improbable: Using Fantasy Documents to Tame Disaster*, Clarke (1999) suggests that documents used for disaster planning contain functional as well as symbolic aspects. Plans are a language, a rhetoric directed at bringing the audience into a relationship with the rhetor where the symbolic meaning of reality is shared (p. 13). The designers of these fantasy documents aim to convince the public generally that agencies are capable of taming the wild and unforeseen events which threaten communities with devastating consequences. First responders use disaster planning documents as a map to guide their responsibilities on the ground when a disaster breaks out. Elected officials use disaster plans and the testimony of emergency management agencies as evidence of the government's forethought in catastrophic events since these officials often have very little practical experience in handling crises on the scale described by these plans (Rodriguez & Dynes, 2006). And ordinary citizens recognize the plan as a badge of rationality (Clarke, 1999, p. 16), proof that 'the powers that be' have our interests and safety in mind. By ratifying the plan through a willingness to accept the procedures as described rhetorically, the audience comes into symbolic agreement with the rhetor about the nature of risks and the responses used by a community.

Obviously disaster plans have some functional application; they direct responsibilities to specific actors and provide guidelines for resource acquisition, resource use and scenario planning. But, because of the ever-present threat of danger, disaster plans have become mere "fantasy documents" put forth to signal the rhetor's ability to control danger (Clarke, 1999, p. 16). Using plans designed to clean-up open seas oil spills, evacuate in the event of a nuclear reactor meltdown and create a civil defense network against nuclear attacks, Clarke argues that

such planning lacks functional utility since the actual outcome of such disasters lack precedent to draw upon when planning specific response procedures. Illuminating the symbols contained within the plan enables the rhetorical critic to apprehend claims to rational action by recognizing how plans create a vision of certainty and authority which may never be obtainable, given the unpredictability of omnipresent risks in communities. Because these fantasy documents have symbolic content taken for granted in their functional implementation, this thesis chooses fantasy theme analysis to unpack the baggage contained in the discourse of disaster management.

The Rhetoric of Social Movements

This thesis defines 'social movement' as a non-institutional collective working together to achieve a common goal whose primary method of change is persuasion. Stewart, Smith and Denton (1989) argue that "a social movement is not part of an established order that governs and changes …norms and values" (p. 6). What characterizes the movement as a movement is its challenge toward those norms and values created by authority. Unfortunately, such a view encourages students to focus on movements that are anti-establishment, movements which seek to overthrow the existing system of norms and values. Smith and Windes (1975) point out that such a conclusion is unfounded because it encourages social movement theorists to ignore collective actions that are not built around divisive, confrontational tactics. As such, those interested in social movement theory would be well served to examine what Stewart, Smith and Denton really mean when they say movements are not part of the established order.

Theoretically, disasters can serve as a front for challenging government, corporate and elite interests. In some cases, this directly coincides with the establishment-conflict model. Clarke (1999) uses the case of the Shoreham nuclear power plant on Long Island to document the actions of rich and poor citizens alike who used the prospects of failed evacuation in the

event of a reactor meltdown to deal a setback to the utility industry and the federal government. In this case, citizens developed tactics which drew upon "cultural resources" to win a "deeply rhetorical game" by shifting the focus of discussion from economic and defense interests to the possibility of losing children and family living in close proximity to the nuclear power facility (Clarke, 1999, p. 83). Arguing that mass evacuation of Long Island was logistically and practically impossible represented the critical task of the Shoreham's opponents to "control the language people use in their struggles with each other" (Clarke, 1999, p. 84).

A non-institutional collective can also assist institutions seeking to innovate and reform to better serve the needs of citizens. This sort of social movement is the subject matter of the present thesis. The "innovational movement …acts with the expectation that the changes it demands will not disturb the symbols and …existing values or modify the social hierarchy" (Smith & Windes, 1975, p. 143). Such movements seek to improve the administration of institutions which solidify symbols and values so that those institutions will fulfill their purpose effectively. In innovational movements, the elements that rhetors seek to change are "impersonal, scenic …[and] mute" (p. 144) as opposed to being some injustice, atrocity or mistake that justifies revolution. The movement seeks reforms that serve a "recognized need," where the institution challenged is less satisfying than it should be (p. 143-4). Instead of being against something, innovational movements are for protecting the status quo; they support improving the existing order so that it better meets its stated objectives.

In the context of this thesis, examining non-institutional collectives would mean recognizing that volunteer groups are "on the front line of any disaster response" (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 86). Localized groups of volunteers such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army fulfill important relief functions in disaster by providing food, shelter and clothing to

victims. The National Volunteer Organizations Against Disasters (NVOAD) is another example

of such a collective. NVOAD formed in 1970 to help coordinate and communicate efficient

disaster response procedures amongst its national, state and local members (Haddow & Bullock,

2006, p. 86).   Building a strong connection between "citizen groups and organizations provide[s]

support for incident management" by making organizations aware of collective concerns and

communities aware of opportunities to contribute to disaster management (p. 107). These groups

are innovational movements because of the fact they seek to fill a void where institutional

arrangements have made emergency management agencies incapable of effectively responding.

Persuasion is central to movement-based strategies. Movements are "carried forward

through language …strategic forms that bring about identification of the individual with the

movement" (Cathcart, 1972, p. 86). Recall that rhetoric is the means by which rhetors construct

communities by sharing knowledge and experiences that bind people together. Movements

depend upon rhetoric to "transform perceptions of history and society, prescribe courses of

action, mobilize…and sustain the movement" (Stewart, Smith and Denton, 1989, p. 13).

Persuasion is what draws members in, keeps members coming and fundamentally determines the

direction that the movement will take. As Stewart, Smith and Denton (1989) argue, persuasion

helps movements "interpret [events], to focus attention upon them …and to bring them back to

audiences" (p. 16) so that the momentum of the movement is sustained and built on the road to

achieving the new consciousness and/or conditions the movement hopes to accomplish. For a

social movement to exist at all, certain decisions must be made in order to generate interest in the

movement's cause so that plans of action can be developed that dictate the direction the

movement takes.

We can see parallels between this aspect of social movement theory and community disaster response. Recalling that volunteers serve on the front line of response, we must also recognize differing levels of motivation and experience in order to promote recruitment and retention of volunteers (Villagran, Wittenberg-Lyles, & Garza, 2006). This enables messages to be crafted that "draw on the similarities between the situations of evacuees and potential volunteers" so that citizens will be able to perceive themselves as part of the affected populations and become motivated to assist (p. 96). Simply put, in order for a social movement perspective of disaster response to be created within a community, citizens must be persuaded that disasters are not in their interest and that taking part in collective efforts to reduce their impacts serves to accomplish the objectives that motivate them.

Leland Griffin's (1952) three phases of social movement development provides evidence of the formation of social movements in disasters, albeit in a seemingly quicker fashion than assumed in its original application. First, a period of inception in which "the roots of a pre-existing sentiment… begin to flower… or when some striking event occurs which immediately creates a host of aggressor rhetoricians" occurs when citizens realize their shared vulnerability to hazards in their community (Griffin, 1952, p. 186). This period of inception coincides with demands by social networks for the development of specific plans by emergency response agencies to deal with those particular hazards in their community that may grow into full-fledged disaster or increase the severity of destruction when disaster does strike.

Next, "a period of rhetorical crisis… when one of the opposing groups of rhetoricians… succeeds in irrevocably disturbing [the] balance between the groups which had existed in the mind of the collective audience" occurs when these social networks bind together to make specific demands in the post disaster environment (Griffin, 1952, p. 186). In the case of

Hurricane Katrina, for example, the coalescing of thousands of New Orleans citizens around the

Superdome disrupted the balance between emergency managers and their constituent

communities by creating images of suffering that convinced the broader American public of the

need for action. Deliberate community efforts initiate a rhetorical crisis to demonstrate the

perceived lack of capability of those agencies to assist the community in the aftermath of

disaster.

Finally, "a period of consummation… when the great proportion of aggressor rhetoricians

abandon their efforts" takes place when these communities return to normal life, and the

perceived need for action subsides because of the end of the disaster (Griffin, 1952, p. 186).

Consummation occurs when communities determine that social priorities other than emergency

planning deserve the attention and resources communities have at their disposal, and

subsequently the public focus shifts to these other areas of concern.

These three phases very clearly occur in a truncated time frame; whereas other

movements require recruitment of membership, disaster communities build upon existing

relationships and develop new ties to others in their communities, creating a vision that serves as

the driving force for collective action (Kirschenbaum, 2004). Moreover, the goals and

organization of a disaster community make them more akin to innovational movements. The

spokespeople of disaster communities are often "members of the established order" speaking out

in favor of citizen led initiatives as a supplement to official first responders (Smith & Windes,

1975, p. 143). Disaster communities "emphasize the weakness of traditional institutions and the

strength of traditional values," detailing the difficulties that emergency response agencies will

face in disasters while still providing praise for the functions and methods such agencies serve

(Smith & Windes, 1975, p. 143). While disaster communities are not anti-response, their rhetoric and tactics still qualify such groups as social movements worthy of rhetorical analysis.

J. Kevin Barge's (2003) study of the *Imagine Chicago* project, while not focused on disaster communities specifically, may help inform rhetorical scholars of the ideological framework used by communities to inform their outlook on the way things are. Barge (2003, p. 63) draws upon the notion of hope, namely "a positive motivational state that occurs when people engage in agency thinking that affirms the expectation they will accomplish a goal if they direct energy toward it," to argue that communities can fight a sense of loss and deprivation by developing collective thinking and behavior that emphasizes productive thinking. Barge (2003) describes hope as uniquely discursive: "richly textured vocabularies that hold out the belief that the future is open and can be influenced by developing inspiring imagery and mobilizing our resources to turn images of the future into action in the present" (p. 64).

While seemingly difficult to locate, hope appears in the actions of ordinary citizens, who use their own resources and skills to better their community. Volunteer firefighters, Red Cross and Salvation Army workers, religious organizations and other like groups are often the first to pour out their resources to help afflicted communities get back on their feet. For Barge (2003, p. 65), "these approaches start with exploring 'the best of what is' within the community… [which] represents a unique way of fostering collaboration and managing conflict within communities" so that it becomes possible to generate new images of the collective that demonstrate the will to survive. Massive amounts of donations and relief assistance that pour out in the aftermath of disasters testify to the possibility of understanding how communities and individuals help each other by using what they have to build relationships and systems that overcome feelings of despair and loss.

Community Response as a Social Movement

Deficiencies in analyzing group behavior stem partly from misconceptions and faulty expectations inside and outside of the organizations responsible for disaster response. Indeed, the public and unfortunately some emergency managers have bought into the Hollywood depiction of disaster response which portrays individual behavior as "socially disorganised and even personally disoriented" (Perry & Lindell, 2003, p. 49). This depiction contrasts strongly with the actual rational, pro-social behavior on the part of community members responding to disasters. Despite claims of hysteria and social breakdown, "the typical response to a variety of physical threats is neither 'fight or flight' but affiliation – that is, seeking the proximity of familiar persons and places" (Mawson, 2005, p. 95). Uninjured victims are often the first group on scene capable of searching for survivors, caring for the injured and assisting in efforts aimed at reducing further damage (Perry & Lindell, 2003, p. 50). This convergence provides space for cultivating a social movement perspective on disaster response.

For Dynes (1970), an individual's role in the community determines the actions deemed appropriate in a specific situation (p. 96-7). People are aware of the communities they are a part of and what role they play in those communities. Normative expectations develop during disasters which expand an individual's perceived citizenship beyond narrow forms of participation that existed prior to the event. Now that political institutions and government are missing or delayed, more individuals are inclined to assume the role of self-help and prescribe their own agency to act based upon their social position and the relationships developed by membership in different social networks.

Sociologist Alan Kirschenbaum establishes the basis for defining the term 'disaster community' in his study of Israeli response and recovery strategies. Kirschenbaum (2004) maintains that geographic proximity and the accompanying local interactions situate

communities towards particular social actions (p. 94-5). The direct impact of a disaster does not limit itself to those physically, financially or socially impaired; disasters have the capacity to disrupt social activities well beyond the impacted area by imposing a sense of fear within the larger social fabric of society. As such, studying disaster communities should be expanded to include those in adjacent and neighboring communities who serve as critical networks for information and supplies flowing to victims.

Second, individuals participate in social networks that implicate their sense of loss following disaster. Kirschenbaum (2004) notes that humans are inclined to seek inclusion in local relationships in their community to build a sense of physical and emotional safety that brings trust and cohesion to groups of people (p. 97). Simply put, people perceive themselves to be tied to their families, neighbors, religious groups, civic organizations and other like social systems because of the need to feel included and attached to those around them. Because disasters arise in a particular social context influenced by these networks, studying social perceptions is far more fruitful than limiting attention to geographic proximity alone. Links to these social networks require those outside of the immediately impacted area to assume a role in response and recovery in order to maintain existing social connections in the face of the devastation that grips a segment of the population that individuals perceive themselves as a part of.

Susan Cutter (2006) would agree with Kirschenbaum, namely that the geographic organization and the social arrangements of a community are critical factors in studying vulnerability to disaster. Cutter sees two failures in the aftermath of Katrina: first, an inadequate response by the entire emergency management system and second, a failure of the social support systems designed to assist impoverished populations. Despite running drills designed to simulate

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events like Katrina, the local, state and federal levels all failed to recognize the social geography of the city. Settlement patterns create differential access to health care, adequate shelter, and overall quality of life. The impacts of disaster are not neutral – race, class and gender play a role in one's ability to access capital, representation and the basic lifelines needed to prepare for and respond to disaster. The solution is for planners to reduce social vulnerability and increase community resilience to lessen the inevitable impact of disasters. Disasters will always occur but addressing the social inequalities that make some populations more vulnerable and less able to cope with disasters is essential for any organizational strategy to work.

Procopio and Procopio (2007) further expand these findings in their study of the aftermath of Katrina. Events like Katrina cause affected populations to seek their geographic community, those in close physical proximity to them because they associate this closeness with security and stability. The breakdown of traditional methods of communication and community in Katrina caused people and groups to adapt their communication processes in order to reconnect with their social networks. By creating digital communities on the Internet, Katrina survivors were able to access up-to-date information about their homes through local news sources and spread that information in ways that provides emotional support to survivors. In addition to seeking information about their geographical 'home,' survivors of Katrina were also found to use the Internet to activate social networks by contacting distant members of one's community and using such contacts to reestablish relationships that were disrupted by the disaster, relocation and recovery.

Rather than simply changing form, "new groups can *emerge* to influence local, state, or federal agencies and legislators to take actions they support and to terminate actions that they disapprove" of in the aftermath of disasters (Lindell & Prater, 2003, p. 180). Neal and McCabe's

(1984) study of emergent citizen groups (ECGs) provides direct support for this conclusion; while not involved in political revolutions or direct forms of action like establishment-conflict movements, ECGs are often part of local, regional or national social movements because their political activity aims to fill the void left when disasters undermine the capacity for government to act efficiently. Using field data from a nationwide survey, the authors found that ECGs politicize actual or potential disasters in elections; support candidates on the basis of the group's view of the situation; and though not likely to swing whole elections, these groups do find varying degrees of success generating awareness amongst the public and response from the government. These findings solidify the case for examining citizen behavior as characteristic of social movements by demonstrating that the knowledge and experiences developed in specific incidents influence the way communities organize political action beyond the disaster scene itself.

Abramovitz (2001) also provides evidence of social movements which have formed to address the issues that arise in disasters. In South Africa, the Ukuvuka, Operation Fire Stop Campaign, creates employment for disadvantaged communities that helps increase these populations' ability to cope. In India, 'barefoot' engineers introduce safe building designs to reduce the impact of future earthquakes. In Bangladesh, communities have worked together to build mounds that serve to protect community water and structural resources from floods. Also, community volunteers have worked in Bangladesh as teams to provide warning and evacuation information and to assist in search and rescue and other emergency assistance operations. It is estimated that in the case of the 1991 cyclone, the activity of these Bengali volunteers contributed to the protection of thirty thousand lives (p. 45). Examples of American disaster communities will be described with the discussion of the artifact, but for now the case for

studying a social movements approach to disaster response is supported based upon the experiences of other cultures.

This chapter introduces the conceptual basis for creating a social movement theory of disaster response. The first section provided background information about the study of disasters from an emergency management perspective. The second section described the rhetorical dimensions of disasters by explaining how disaster response contains social and symbolic dimensions that are revealed in the rhetoric used to discuss such events. The third section defined what a social movement is and explained why community behavior in disaster response can be characterized as a social movement. Finally, the last section exposes the potential for a social movement approach by detailing the importance of rethinking existing community response strategies and giving specific examples of movement activity in disaster management.

Knowing that disasters contain a rhetorical dimension often taken for granted, we now turn toward an examination of the method of rhetorical criticism and the artifact undergoing criticism in order to explain how CERT assists emergency managers and communication scholars working to fashion a theory of social movements that recognizes the complexities of a disaster situation.

Chapter Three

There is growing recognition within the field of emergency management that organizational difficulties will grow as a result of deficits in communication that arise between the various parties involved in disaster response. As 9/11 and Katrina taught us, the magnitude and scope of disasters have begun to outpace official capabilities. In Chapter Two, we learned that disasters are social phenomena that generate a tremendous amount of public discourse, much of which flows in the direction of improving citizen response when official emergency management agencies are hamstrung. This critic uses this realization as the basis for formulating the research question addressed in this thesis: **How does the rhetorical vision created by emergency management agencies embed disaster response within the social life of the community?** The research question is answered by performing a fantasy theme analysis of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) website to determine whether the rhetorical features of the program constitute a social movement and what implications arise under such a model.

This chapter provides information about the method of rhetorical criticism used in this study and the artifact undergoing critique. The chapter begins by describing the central aspects of fantasy theme analysis and argues for the appropriateness of this method in studying social movements, particularly within the context of disasters. The chapter then describes the artifact, its creator and various audiences as well as the rhetorical history surrounding the CERT program. After establishing the theoretical basis for examining the CERT program, rhetorical analysis can

occur that contributes to the academic study of communication issues in disaster response and communication as a discipline.

Fantasy Theme Analysis

Fantasy theme analysis is a method of rhetorical criticism that looks at how messages encourage audience members to ratify a rhetorical vision. The fantasy theme critic uses the message contained within an artifact as the starting point for critique (Jackson, 2000, p. 194). The rhetorical critic searches for words and symbols that construct a rhetorical vision which brings the audience into "symbolic convergence" over some aspect of social reality (Bormann, 1982, p. 303-4). To put it another way, fantasy theme analysis looks at how ideas of what is true, appropriate or reasonable are woven into texts that aim to bring outsiders to some level of symbolic agreement about the nature of whatever it is the rhetor is communicating about, whether that communication is a description of social reality, the limits of permissible behaviors under such a reality, or some other mode of action. This thesis is concerned with how rhetors use the manifest content of their artifacts to connect the audience members with some past experience that the group has shared and/or an ideal future world that the group hopes to create (Bormann, 1972, p. 243).

Fantasy theme analysis is rooted in symbolic convergence theory, Bormann's general theory of human communication (Duffy, 2003; Jackson, 2000; Jackson, 1999; Olufowote, 2006). Symbolic convergence theory emerged in the 1970s to explain how individuals create common interpretations of reality that transcend the individual situation to create groups of shared meaning, "rhetorical communities" which serve as the basis for interpreting and understanding reality in general. Stories and rituals communicated through rhetoric "create a common consciousness – a shared understanding of the group and what it means to be a member" (Duffy,

2003, p. 293). Symbolic convergence theory holds that there is something about the rhetorical elements contained within a message that calls upon people to understand reality in a particular way which is consistent with some sort of collective identity that people begin to share.

The way that convergence takes place is through dramatization. By stringing together recognizable elements that appeal to the audience member's sense of community, a message silently pushes that person into agreement about the nature of reality. Such rhetorical techniques as pun, figure of speech, analogy, anecdote, allegory, fable or narrative compel people to buy into a seemingly credible interpretation of the 'here-and-now' (Jackson, 1999, p. 357). Symbolic convergence occurs when the audience and the rhetor come to share emotions, meanings and responses, even going so far as compelling action (Olufowote, 2006, p. 455). By framing rhetoric in such a way that people can see themselves as being part of a common response to a message, dramatic content allows the rhetor and the audience to join together in symbolic convergence persuading the audience to accept the interpretation of reality put forth by a message.

Fantasy themes are the rhetorical elements that make dramatization possible. Fantasy themes can take the form of words, phrases or statements that interpret the past, envision the future or depict the present to form an interpretation of reality contained within a message (Jackson, 2000, p. 194). Such fantasy themes aim to connect the speaker and the audience together by convincing the audience member to see themselves as part of a community that understands reality in a particular and specific way. The critic looks at the content of a message to see how the rhetor seeks to orient the audience towards particular feelings, responses and actions that are shared by a collective community. Tracking and hierarchically organizing dramatic content in a message reveals recurring ideas that conceal a common orientation towards

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reality (Olufowote, 2006, p. 456). By identifying these fantasy themes, the critic can piece together the rhetorical vision put forth by a message that aims to solicit the ratification of the audience.

The proper selection of fantasy themes allows the rhetor to dramatize values and attitudes in order to create and sustain an audience's sense of community, petitioning them to act in conformity with a rhetorical vision that sparks a common response amongst the group members (Bormann, 1982, p. 303-4). In its simplest form, "a rhetorical vision is a view of how things have been, are, or will be" (Duffy, 2003, p. 293). Rhetorical visions create a collective consciousness and common understanding of reality, "rhetorical communities" that serve as the basis for an individual's response to messages (Olufowote, 2006, p. 458). Any time a person encounters familiar words, images or metaphors (fantasy themes), they are compelled to fall back upon their rhetorical community as justification for how they should act in the world.

Foss (1996) recognizes that this method, originally developed to deal with small groups, can be applied to the study of social movements (p. 121). What makes fantasy themes powerful is the way "people converge or come to hold a common image as they share fantasy themes" (Duffy, 2003, p. 294). Bormann (1980) argues that people learn to communicate based upon their identity within a rhetorical community. Identifying oneself as part of a "group of people who …share common rhetorical visions" makes certain types of communication and action appear legitimate while others are devalued (p. 61). In the context of social movements, Griffin (1969) notes that "key terms prefigure (consciously or unconsciously) the lineaments of the 'perfecting myth' that draws the [social] movement futuristically," so that some agreement can be created amongst participants as to what purpose the movement will serve (p. 463). Each repeated performance of the rhetorical vision passes that myth on to newcomers by

communicating the acceptability of a particular communication style. While one may be involved in multiple rhetorical communities simultaneously, performing one communication style reflects a shared vision that serves as a guide for practice.

At the forefront of any social movement is the responsibility to make others aware of some need for change. In order for a movement to truly exist, others must be brought on board with the dream of accomplishing the desired outcome that the movement hopes to achieve. That connection can only be made through rhetoric. According to McGee's (1975) reading of Bormann, rhetors construct 'The People' as a figure in order to legitimize a collective fantasy. "The advocate… dangles a dramatic vision of the people before his audience," a rhetorical description of what the audience should think and do, so that audience members may be encouraged to adopt and share this vision (McGee, 1975, p. 239). More specifically, the movement uses its communication with the general public to talk about what it hopes to achieve in an attempt to get the public to support its cause.

Fantasy themes are a way that social movements legitimize this collective dream. The rhetor "is a 'flag-bearer' of old longings, and by transforming such longings into a new idea, he actualizes his audience's predisposition to act, thus creating a united 'people' whose collective power will warrant any 'reform' against any other power on earth" (McGee, 1975, p. 241). By appealing to a past experience that the public can associate with their collective identity, the movement is able to bring the audience into symbolic convergence with its rhetorical vision. And by repeatedly performing these fantasy themes within their artifacts, social movements create a rhetorical community that its members draw upon to understand social reality and the way each person should act in a particular situation.

Duffy (2003) uses symbolic convergence theory and fantasy theme analysis to identify the rhetorical vision used by hate group websites. Because the Internet has become such a "powerful tool of persuasion" (p. 292), Duffy seeks to explain how dramatized images and the rhetorical content of four hate groups create a rhetorical vision that one is part of "God's Chosen People" and is working towards the idea that "We Shall Overcome" (p. 308). In this case, buying into these ideas makes one part of a rhetorical community built on the use of group identity and notions of which group is superior to others. This case demonstrates that social movements use the Internet to attempt to persuade people to join their cause through the use of fantasy themes that dramatize collective experience in a way that encourages individuals to buy into the movement's rhetorical vision.

While Duffy's study documents the use of fantasy themes by an establishment-conflict movement, Jackson (1999) applies Bormann's theories to an innovational movement, in this case, the organizational movement that espoused effective corporate management techniques (p. 354). Jackson found that the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* are connected to principles for living and that the book's author, Stephen Covey, appealed to audiences through the use of specific fantasy themes, such as "Back to the farm," "Working from the 'inside out'," and "Finding 'true north'" (p. 365). Each of these fantasy themes was found to be connected to a specific motive and communicating about the habits in this way enabled Covey to provide cues that informed the basis for how people should live (p. 371). Jackson's critique of the "effectiveness movement" demonstrates that the rhetorical content of messages used to communicate about acting and living in the world does affect the propensity for people to join the cause of a movement.

Fantasy theme analysis is an appropriate method for this thesis because of the symbolic dimensions involved in planning for and responding to disasters. "When disasters disrupt the routine functioning of a community, its members collectively define the situation and creatively adapt to ambiguous circumstance. Their definition of the situation manifests itself in the items they produce; these cultural products, both material and nonmaterial, are important and should be studied" (Webb, Wachtendorf, & Eyre, 2000, p. 9). The CERT page is such a product; it documents how emergency managers see disasters and how communities should respond to such events. Drawing out the content of these products helps reveal how communities go about collectively defining a situation and how they adapt to it by uncovering the rhetoric used to point people towards particular actions. Examining the words and symbols on the CERT webpage will show how fantasy themes are "developed and used to form opinions, make decisions, and motivate coordinated actions within a community" (Palenchar & Heath, 2002, p. 136).

Palenchar and Heath (2002) use fantasy theme analysis to measure a community's sense of risk in relation to messages put forth by the chemical industry. The researchers convened focus groups of individuals who had encountered emergency response messages that describe the probability of emergency and the actions used to respond. Use of fantasy themes by community members contributed to the belief that "we can do things," we should "accept and move on" from the risks described or we just "don't want to know" about risks (p. 143-5). Common words, phrases and images were found amongst various individuals that contributed to an overall rhetorical vision about how communities perceive risk. These repeated rhetorical visions suggest that framing messages around the first two visions would enable industries to more effectively manage the sense of risk present in a community (p. 150-1). Thus, the way that an emergency

management agency frames disaster beforehand can be said to affect the way that a community perceives and responds to risks as they arise.

Clarke (1999) applies principles similar to fantasy theme analysis to study disaster plans for evidence of "apparent affinities," attempts by organizations to tie disasters with no historical precedent to hazards that are common in a community (p. 71). All-hazards planning, which generically assumes that planning for one hazard applies to all other dangers (p. 74), allows planning agencies to assume control of risk by creating "fantasy documents," written plans which show that organizations have thought about risks beforehand, even if there is no functional basis for assuming control (p. 16). For example, by connecting rush hour traffic to the assumed evacuation behavior during a nuclear attack, agencies are able to say that they have planned and people are supposed to believe them because that idea has been put into writing. While not specifically connected to Bormann's work, Clarke's book demonstrates that emergency managers do attempt to make symbolic connections to the public through the rhetorical choices they make to describe disasters and the procedures used to respond to them.

The analysis performed in Chapter Four will follow the three steps that Foss (1996) uses to describe fantasy theme analysis (p. 127-9). First, I will search for evidence of shared fantasy. By briefly outlining the rhetorical history of the program, we can see whether the rhetorical vision put forth by the CERT model has chained out within the larger discourse of disaster response. During the analysis, I will also provide specific examples to demonstrate the extent to which dramatic content chains out within disaster literature. Second, I will code the artifact for fantasy themes by searching the website, page by page, sentence by sentence. In this case, the analysis is concerned with the two types of fantasy themes that Bormann (1972) identifies in his seminal work: fantasy themes that connect audience members with a shared past experience and

fantasy themes that connect the audience with the dream of an ideal future (p. 243). Going

through each link on the website, I will catalog every instance that the webpage references past

experiences during a disaster or prescribes how citizens should act in the future, noting this as

evidence of symbolic convergence. From this examination, I will move to the third step,

constructing the rhetorical vision. By piecing together the fantasy themes present on the

webpage, I will determine whether or not the rhetorical community that espouses this vision

meets the criteria for a 'social movement' as defined in Chapter Two. Chapter Five will

conclude this study by discussing the implications of such a rhetorical approach for emergency

management and the study of communication.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Model

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is *the* model citizen response

organization created by the federal government. In fact, FEMA adopted the CERT program's

approach in 1993 as the basis for preparing citizens and since then, "28 States and Puerto Rico

have conducted CERT training" (About CERT page, para. 6-7). CERTs educate people about

disasters and what they can do to reduce their impacts. Members of the teams undergo

classroom training and simulated exercises designed to provide support for emergency response

agencies.

Undoubtedly, the CERT program has a rhetorical history; however, that history is not

well documented in scholarly literature. An examination of reports about previous CERT actions

from various rhetors can satisfy the need to examine how the rhetorical vision espoused by

CERT has chained out through the realm of public discourse. Jackson (2000) notes that "a single

text is insufficient to conduct a proper fantasy theme critique" (p. 195), and so, this rhetorical

history demonstrates that CERT is described consistently "across discourse situations," allowing a "genuine thematizing [to] be established" (Jackson, 2000, p. 195).

Flint and Brennan (2006) begin with a recognition of their grounding in rural experience (p. 2). CERT holds promise in rural areas particularly because it provides a "roadmap for how people and organizations can organize themselves to address important local issues" (p. 5). Generally speaking, the CERT program holds the possibility for not only facilitating effective disaster response, but also the capacity to build a sense of community by blending a "bottom-up appreciation for the role of local volunteers in a top-down institutional framework" (p. 2). Drawing upon the experiences of citizen response to Japanese earthquakes, the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) created CERT, which then expanded following Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and to a greater extent after 2001 (p. 3-4). Flint and Brennan urge CERT programs to expand their definitions of disasters beyond hurricanes and floods to include economic decline and environmental changes so that local capacity can be built prior to disasters and recovery from such events can be easier (p. 7).

FEMA (2006) provides an important case study of CERT involvement in evacuation and sheltering activities following Hurricane Katrina. The Harris County, Texas, Citizen Corps was commended for their assistance in sheltering fifteen thousand Louisiana residents at the Houston Astrodome. The document describes this effort as successful because of three factors: "use of the online member directory to call for volunteers," "formation of an organized process for enlisting, training, and assigning…volunteers," and "the seamless integration of…CERT members…into the…Incident Command [system]" (para. 5). Pre-incident organization, formation and tracking of member capabilities using online directories, and partnerships between various community groups beforehand set the stage for the response's success (para. 17-19).

What is particularly unique about this account is the recognition of the value of the Internet: within twenty-four hours of issuing a general e-mail call to interested community organizations, over eight thousand volunteers were processed, with an average of 3,500 spontaneous volunteers each day after (para. 9).

Franke and Simpson (2004) use the case of Hurricane Isabel in Virginia to document the specific response activities of a CERT in an affected community. Eleven CERT programs were involved in this particular response and the authors interviewed the program director of each within six weeks of the hurricane. The study found that most programs receive funding from state emergency management agencies and utilize local fire departments for training purposes (para. 17). All responding programs were found to have abided by FEMA program modules, which were sometimes adapted to meet community needs (para. 18). The lessons learned in this event included communication as a recurring theme, the general approval of volunteer techniques and the feeling that the event gave the program legitimacy to gain more recruits (para. 27). Finally, the goals after this response included the need for more public discussion to foster recruitment, seeking solutions to funding needs, bolstering team development through continuous training and building outreach programs to reach other community organizations (para. 29).

FEMA (2003) describes the CERT program as an opportunity for citizens to "give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site" (para. 1). This document discusses the history of CERT as originating in the 1985 LAFD implementation, followed by its expansion in 1993 (para. 2). FEMA describes the twenty hour course with its modular skills program that is taught by a trained team of official first responders (para. 3). CERT programs are to be involved before a

disaster strikes by holding drills, neighborhood clean-ups and disaster education fairs (para. 7). This document, prepared by the agency that oversees training for CERT, demonstrates that even in 2003, the objectives and descriptions of CERT repeatedly appear in public discourse.

Similarities in discursive framing of the CERT program have now been established through a brief rhetorical history of various CERT activities in the past five years. This thesis will focus on the CERT program as a national model, rather than studying specific instances of CERT activities. Limiting analysis to the CERT website is possible because this rhetorical history demonstrates that the arguments put forth in favor of the CERT model chain out through time and across rhetors. Moreover, because CERT affects a diverse audience, examining the program from a national level will expose the most significant and prominent claims advanced on behalf of the program.

The CERT website (artifact) was created in order to centralize information on the model viewed as most effective by emergency management authorities. The website contains background information, including an overview of the program and links to information about how to start a program, a directory of other CERTs throughout the nation and a page with frequently asked questions. The website also contains links to training materials and contact information for interested parties.

The creator (rhetor) of this artifact is the US Citizen Corps program. The United States Citizen Corps program administers CERT and coordinates citizens "through education, training, and volunteer service to help make communities…better prepared to address…disasters of all kinds" (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 107). Citizen Corps is a national service program that encourages volunteer involvement in emergency situations. Citizen Corps is overseen by the Department of Homeland Security (About Citizen Corps page, para. 4). Citizens Corps created

the website with the intention of spreading awareness of and participation in the program. Therefore, an examination of the rhetoric contained on the webpage should help reveal how the rhetor frames the rhetorical vision in which communities respond to disasters.

For the purposes of this thesis, the audience for the artifact is any person or group interested in citizen disaster response. The audiences to messages about disaster response are diverse (Haddow & Bullock, 2006, p. 196). Internal customers such as staff and other agencies review such web pages for information about performing their tasks for the organization. External customers like the general public, elected officials, business leaders and the media all look to emergency managers' communication strategies in order to evaluate the performance of disaster management agencies. Those interested in getting involved in volunteer service, gaining experience in emergency management and expanding existing community organizations can be reasonably expected to encounter the arguments put forth by the artifact because of the value placed upon CERT by emergency management authorities.

Focusing on the website is critical because of the growing role of Internet communications in disaster response and society at large. The Internet is part of the new "revolution" taking place in communication and will undoubtedly play a role in understanding disasters (McEntire, 2007, p. 315). The benefit of using the Internet can be captured at all levels of emergency management, including in local communities and individual households, if this technology is easily accessible and is able to meet the unique needs of the community in question. Revealing the rhetorical vision advanced by the CERT program determines whether the model supports or impedes a social movement perspective on disaster response.

From the emergency manager's perspective, the Internet is a critical tool for researching specific types of disasters, reading case studies in order to understand how others handle similar

threats, comparing notes with other professionals about the best equipment, and accessing vital information from research institutes and other governmental agencies (McEntire, 2007, p. 318-9). From the perspective of potential victims and other concerned citizens, the Internet is important for being able to access and print off instructions about what to do in the event of specific disasters (McEntire, 2007, p. 319). The Internet can also provide information about ongoing incidents that would drastically reduce the amount of phone calls coming into dispatchers and the office of emergency management.

Some may question the reliability of the Internet as a tool for emergency management. However, previous experiences testify to the effectiveness of the web (Dimitruk, 2007, p. 85). During 9/11, the Internet was one of the few mediums that escaped without substantial damage: automatic rerouting and system reconfiguration allowed the Internet to make a quick recovery and made it available for those seeking friends and loved ones and information about the attacks. Moreover, new wireless technologies and satellite connections enable the level of connectivity to grow and become more reliable, as the infrastructure of the web improves everyday.

Similarly, the Internet has been seized upon by social movements as a tool for organizing and raising awareness (Van Aeist & Walgrave, 2002). Political action is made easier, faster and more universal by lowering the costs of organizing when formal support or funding is difficult to acquire. Because the Internet is relatively cheap, interactive and open, activists are able to go to websites to become more aware and discuss modes of actions. The "fluid, non-hierarchical organization of the Internet" gives activists a "good match" against the structures they seek to challenge (p. 487). Because multiple users can be engaged in discourse at once, the Internet represents an ideal place for organizing an effective social movement.

Undoubtedly, the influence of the CERT program has grown since its inception and it continues to expand today. The arguments put forth on the CERT website document what emergency management agencies see as legitimate citizen roles in disaster response. The next chapter analyzes the website for evidence communicating what constitutes effective citizen response. The critic is concerned with how specific words, phrases, or images are used on the CERT webpage to communicate about past experiences of disasters and future activities to be undertaken by citizens and whether these fantasy themes contribute to a rhetorical vision of a community that meets the criteria for what constitutes a 'social movement.' From there, a discussion of the implications of a rhetorical approach to disaster response is elucidated in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four

Communication and organizational difficulties are commonplace in today's disaster response situations. Often times, emergency managers find themselves without adequate resources to serve the citizens in their charge. Other times, response agencies do have the resources, but are unsure how to deploy them effectively, because of the damage to infrastructure. These challenges can be exasperated further when they intersect with communication issues. CERTs have become a valuable tool for filling the gap when official responders face barriers to providing assistance. The CERT program started in Los Angeles, but has since grown into a national model for citizen response. Examining the justifications used for this program is essential to ensure that the message put forth by emergency response agencies adequately prepares citizens for situations that they will face when disaster strikes. Mapping out the rhetorical vision presented by the CERT website thus represents a starting point for fashioning a social movement perspective of disaster response.

This chapter performs a fantasy theme analysis of the CERT website in order to compare the rhetorical vision created by the CERT program to the rhetorical features espoused by social movement theory. The chapter will be broken down into two main parts. The first main part identifies the major fantasy themes used on the CERT website. The two main categories of fantasy themes that the critic focuses upon are fantasy themes which appeal to a shared past experience and fantasy themes which dream of achieving an ideal future. Identifying the rhetorical vision of the CERT program is only possible once we discuss how these fantasy themes chain out into the larger public discourse, creating a rhetorical community who ratifies the vision put forth by the artifact.

The second main part of this chapter compares this rhetorical vision to the features identified as central to social movements by rhetorical scholars. We will first determine whether the rhetorical vision put forth by CERT meets the social movements criteria put forth in Chapter Two. Then, we shall see if CERT falls within the parameters used to define an innovational movement. Both of these tasks will be accomplished by weaving together major works of social movement theory with the manifest content of the CERT website. This part of the analysis will even go so far as to apply Griffin's (1952) seminal work on social movements to the CERT website. The purpose of this section of the chapter is merely to demonstrate that a social movement approach to disaster response is possible. Chapter Five will undertake the critically important task of evaluating such efforts to read rhetorical criticism across the CERT model and will discuss the implications of such a critique for emergency management and the study of rhetoric, respectively.

When possible, the critic identifies connections to and departures from modern disasters in order to apply this rhetorical analysis to real world emergency management situations. These examples also provide the basis for understanding how the rhetoric contained within the CERT program has chained out within the larger discourse of disaster management. Primary attention is paid to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) and Hurricane Katrina, because, as we learned in Chapter One, these two events have become influential to how Americans perceive contemporary disaster management. When possible, the use of other examples demonstrate the wide-reaching implications of the rhetoric of disaster response, but these connections are made with the explicit recognition that such events have not had the same impact experienced during 9/11 and Katrina.

It is not my intention to attack or second-guess the actions of emergency workers and/or victims in the incidents examined. Instead, analysis of rhetoric solidifies the case for critically examining both the successes and failures involved in disaster response while still applauding the efforts of first responders. At any rate, by connecting the rhetorical features of the CERT program to the real world, where disaster response unfolds, the critic is able to begin to build an approach that recognizes the role of social movements in disaster response procedures.

Rhetoric in Disaster Communities

We begin by cataloging fantasy themes that encourage audience members to recall their previous experiences with disaster management. One such fantasy theme focuses on the difficulties faced by official responders in past incidents. This act of remembering begins in the opening paragraph of the program's homepage with the bold claim that "CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help" (para. 1). The reader may rightly ask him/herself why professional responders may be unavailable. As we learn from the first paragraph of the About CERT page, "first responders who provide fire and medical services will not be able to meet the demand for these services" (para. 1). This statement is so powerful that it reappears verbatim in the first paragraph of the CERT Roles section when the visitor decides to explore creating his or her own program (Start a CERT Program page). Factors that contribute to high demand for emergency services include the "number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages" (para. 1).

Each one of these factors can be broken down individually as the basis for compelling website visitors to recall their previous experiences with disasters. The number of victims is a common theme that resonates with audience members when they hear about disasters. In the

case of 9/11, writers from the New York Times published a story in 2002, noting that eleven

thousand people were trapped in the World Trade Center (Dwyer, Flynn, & Fessenden, 2002).

This story, from arguably the most popular newspaper in America, leads audiences to believe

that even if the planning and resources are there, they may not be enough to address the scope of

devastation. This is especially true given that the 2,819 individuals that died that day (New York

Magazine, 2002) pale in comparison to some of history's largest disasters. Included among these

are such events as the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean which claimed 275,000 lives, the 1985

volcano and mudflow in Columbia that claimed 25,000 and the 1976 earthquake in China that

claimed anywhere between 255,000 and 655,000 lives (Crossley, 2005). This makes the one

thousand plus lost in Katrina seem remarkably low, given that the hurricane affected the entire

Gulf Coast region of the United States (Crossley, 2005). Though some events are more

memorable than others, alluding to the "number of victims" compels the website's visitors to

recall specific catastrophes that resonate in the collective psyche. Even if readers of the website

fail to remember a specific number, the amount of discourse surrounding such events ensures

that the possibility of being a victim is never forgotten.

Second, as we learned in Chapter Two, communication challenges are an ever-present

obstacle to official responders. As the New York Times writers state, "when the firefighters

needed to communicate, their radio system failed, just as it had in those same buildings eight

years earlier" (Dwyer, Flynn, & Fessenden, 2002). In addition to outdated technology, the

building's construction made it difficult for firefighters' radio transmissions to pass from floor to

floor (McEntire, 2007, p. 293). Coordination failures also undermined the official response

because the two largest emergency departments (FDNY and NYPD) did not liaise or share

intelligence with one another (Dwyer, Flynn, & Fessenden, 2002).   In the case of Katrina,

residents were simply unable to get their messages out to official responders because of the extent of the damage. Everything from text messages to ham radios were rendered useless because the storm knocked out wireless towers and sent wiring mechanisms flying throughout the Gulf Coast, denying service to 1.75 million customers (Mohammed & Krim, 2005). These scenarios call upon audience members to recall instances when they have found themselves facing busy cell phone circuits, weak signals, knocked out power transformers or downed power lines in even the small emergencies that they have faced in their lives. Such recollections beckon website visitors to create contingencies for situations when assistance is required but they cannot reach authorities through the channels they have come to rely upon.

Third, even if response agencies know that people need help and know where they are, the reality is that sometimes authorities just cannot get there. Infrastructure damage and staffing shortages may come into play. As the website explains in Step One of the Start a CERT Program page, "it is too cost prohibitive for response agencies to staff for major disasters or even for large emergencies" (The CERT Role in Your Community Section, para. 1). In the case of 9/11, the damage experienced was to the World Trade Center itself. Structural fires raged out of control on the upper floors of the North Tower which required that firefighters climb flight after flight of stairs before they could even begin suppression efforts. Lack of helicopter exercises beforehand prevented those above the impact zones from being rescued (Dwyer, Flynn, & Fessenden, 2002). In the case of the 1994 Northridge (CA) earthquake, over seven million cubic yards or 95,100 tons of debris had to be removed (McEntire, 2007, p. 225), with who knows how much blocking emergency services from reaching victims in need. The fact that one can recall feeling alone and cut off from relief compels visitors to take part in CERT, so that we can help

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ourselves in instances where official responders can answer our call but cannot get to us in a timely manner.

Knowing up front, in the first two paragraphs, that future disasters may be like the ones that remain etched firmly in our minds allows the website to recast such events as both warnings of what the future might bring and opportunities for learning. The reader is led to believe that everything that they know, saw or experienced in previous disasters has been noted by official responders who are working to avoid repeating historical errors while creating the CERT program as a backup, just in case the worst-case scenario materializes again.

Confirmation of CERT as backup appears with the presence of the second fantasy theme that appeals to the past. Describing the behavior of ordinary citizens in previous disasters as successes allows the CERT program to summon visitors' memories of selfless acts of volunteers working together to help themselves and others. Visitors to the website are introduced to the possibility that even though fire departments, police and other authorities may be hamstrung, there is something that they can do by working together with others. In fact, the second paragraph of the About CERT page identifies this possibility as an expectation, "that under these kinds of conditions, family members, fellow employees, and neighbors will spontaneously try to help each other" (para. 2). Dynes (1970) explains this expectation in terms of role expansion (p. 96-7). During normal times, citizens have a normative expectation about what role they are supposed to fulfill. They know their job and they go about performing their role to the best of their ability. However, during a disaster, a citizen's perceived role expands. When one feels that he/she is part of a group who is suffering a common plight, a person is compelled to act out based on their own position within the community.

The only actual incident specifically mentioned on the entire website is proof of such expectation. The same paragraph goes on to state that "following the Mexico City earthquake… untrained, spontaneous volunteers saved 800 people" (About CERT page, para. 2). Other incidents document similar cases as well. During the 1994 Northridge earthquake in California, sixty-five percent of citizens were involved in the response (McEntire, 2007, p. 51). Donations, emotional care for victims and search and rescue operations were but a few of the contributions made by ordinary citizens during the Northridge incident. On 9/11, off-duty firefighters and police officers were joined by doctors, translators and counselors at the towers, individuals looking to assist the official response using their own capabilities (McEntire, 2007, p. 197).

Even in light of these spectacular stories, the need for CERT is still apparent. As the CERT webpage puts it, one hundred lives were lost while attempting to help victims during the Mexico City earthquake, "preventable" losses had spontaneous volunteers received training beforehand (About CERT page, para. 2). The brief applause for citizens is brought to an abrupt halt by these startling figures. Beyond these hard numbers, the website's message does not refer to the specifics of the Mexico City earthquake or the actions taken by ordinary citizens under such conditions. Anything beyond a short recognition of spontaneous and accidental success might discourage CERT recruits from looking deeper and taking part in the training regimen. Regardless of the reason no other examples are given on the page, the fact that the CERT program recognizes that people are likely to expand their role does tap into the reader's recollection of volunteers in action and the accomplishments that ordinary citizens have achieved.

The response approach used by CERT is the third fantasy theme that appeals to previous experience. In Step Five of the Start a CERT Program page, readers learn that the "basic CERT

training materials use an all-hazards approach" (para. 1). Clarke (1999) writes that such an approach is an attempt to create an "apparent affinity," a rhetorical mechanism that assumes a catastrophic possibility is sufficiently like something we already know (p. 14). Identifying the training approach with this paradigm allows the program to transform the uncertainty of any particular disaster event into a generic risk that can be controlled and managed with a common set of training and procedures. The "all-hazards" label in this text communicates the rational basis used by emergency managers: by framing the program's purview and management capacity as inclusive of all possible risks, the website invites the audience's ratification since the reader can rest assured that their training applies to every possible disaster scenario.

Applying the "all-hazards" label is significant in this regard. As the website points out in Step One of Start a CERT Program, determining which hazards to train for requires that team members review their community's hazard analysis by contacting their local emergency manager (The CERT Role in Your Community Section, para. 1). The fact that visitors are encouraged to interact with official response agencies allows the training program to acquire the utmost degree of precision and credibility. However, even the process used by emergency managers to determine what is a hazard is not as clear cut as the "all-hazards" label leads visitors to believe. After all, the emergency manager must make his/her judgment about what constitutes an acceptable level of risk for any hazard that may affect the community. Such a judgment requires the input of a pool of scholars who have not built consensus over any particular disaster scenario.

We have all been there watching continuous media coverage of a disaster event. Expert after expert appears on the screen, giving their take on what is unfolding. The seismologist has a different perspective from the geologist, who disagrees with the geographer, who agrees to some extent with the city planner. Each of these takes, in a time of chaos, is laden with different

graphics, vocabularies and experiences, but somehow, in the case of the local emergency manager, response agencies have figured it out.

By relying on the "all-hazards" approach, CERT training may "normalize danger" by creating the illusion of an organization's actual capacity to act effectively, when in reality planners lack the required knowledge to act with certainty (Clarke, 1999, p. 74). Even if Santa Ana winds power twenty wildfires in a two-week time span, each incident will require a different response based on the location where the fire breaks out, the resources in that community and a variety of other conditions that dictate the fire's behavior. Because Step Five on the Start a CERT Program page encourages the reader to "use only information about those hazards that present a threat" (Reviewing the CERT Content section, para. 3), some hazards may be left out and CERT members may find themselves in a situation where they feel they are adequately trained. Applying the "all-hazards" approach to the CERT website encourages the reader to connect the program with an authoritative judgment for determining risks and appropriate responses, even when the authorities who make such judgments are not present to inform team members that they are inadequately prepared for specific circumstances.

Before moving to fantasy themes that connect the audience to the dream of an ideal future, let us summarize the CERT program's appeals to a shared past experience. Deep reading of the website has taught me that the sheer demand for emergency services is likely overwhelming for official responders because of the scope of the disaster, communication and damage to critical infrastructure. In light of this probability, we should expect ordinary citizens to take it upon themselves to help their fellow citizens meet time sensitive needs and demands. In order to prepare them to do so, response agencies should advocate an approach that prepares citizens to deal with the vast array of possible scenarios under a rubric of common plans and

procedures. The next set of fantasy themes reveals how the CERT model establishes itself as the ideal framework for the way citizens should organize themselves in order to respond effectively to future disasters.

The first fantasy theme that appeals to the dream of an ideal future is the ability for CERT teams to provide hope. Hope is a powerful tool for community building because it focuses conversation on what works well within a community and uses that as the basis for fostering collaboration and collective action (Barge, 2003). After learning that citizens are likely to find themselves without the assistance of response agencies, the About CERT page issues the statement that "CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety and doing the greatest good for the greatest number" (para. 16). CERT members who manage utilities, put out small fires, provide basic medical care, and organize volunteers "can make a difference" (para. 16) by performing tasks that are within their capabilities. Such actions provide immediate relief to those in need and buy time for official responders to make their way through the various obstacles.

Barge (2003) notes that the essence of "hope is a positive motivational state that occurs when people engage in agency thinking that affirms the expectation they will accomplish a goal if they direct energy toward it" (p. 63). The CERT program's website leads its visitors to engage in this type of thinking by cultivating the awareness that taking part in training programs will enable team members to fulfill their obligation to help themselves and others until official assistance arrives. The tools to help themselves and others are the basic disaster response skills outlined on the homepage: fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations (para. 1). Carefully compartmentalizing these skills within modules on the

Training Materials page illuminates "workable routes toward goal achievement" (Barge, 2003, p. 63) for those CERT members desiring to make a difference for themselves and their community.

Furthermore, the use of "richly textured vocabularies" (Barge, 2003, p. 64) is another example of hope-based rhetoric employed by the website. The website lists several rewards that visitors may receive if they choose to join. CERT programs across the nation are instructed to use thank you notes and awards ceremonies (Start a CERT Program page, Step 2: Maintaining Partnerships, Communicating Successes section, para. 10) as well as issue ID cards, vests and helmets (About CERT page, para. 13) in order to award team members for their contributions. These small acts "hold out the belief that the future is open… [by] developing inspiring imagery" (Barge, 2003, p. 64), as groups wearing similar vests and helmets might create a sense of comfort for victims when official responders are not available following a disaster.

The CERT program also fosters hope about the future by "tap[ping] into the lived experience of community members" (Barge, 2003, p. 74). Each step in the Start a CERT Program roadmap includes a section where existing CERT program coordinators offer insight about their experiences creating and running programs. "Words of Advice" come from people across the country, individuals who actually list their name and location. The fact that visitors can name people who are going through the same thing they are becomes an opportunity for the reader to experience changes as "meaningful and directly relevant to their lives" (Barge, 2003, p. 74) as the information presented on the site is directly tied to a more humanized identity.

The second fantasy theme that appeals to an ideal future is the ability for the CERT program to fulfill a social function beyond disaster response. Schneider (2003) notes that emergency managers must demonstrate their organization's "public value" in order to receive the attention and resources needed to respond the next time a disaster strikes (p. 7). Even though

CERT is a response organization by name, the About CERT page admits that the program must take additional steps to keep volunteers involved and practiced after the initial training program has been completed (para. 12). In an ideal world, the CERT program would "develop a role… as a participant in the local consensus building effort" (Schneider, 2003, p. 12).

One opportunity for the CERT program to take part in public life is by sponsoring drills, picnics, neighborhood clean up and disaster education fairs (About CERT page, para. 12). Holding these events before and after the response phase "proactively" initiates and reshapes public enterprises by embedding team members within their communities (Schneider, 2003, p. 7). Though CERT members may not come out in full force, such events provide critical opportunities to expose outsiders to CERT messages, recruit new members and make others aware of the community's emergency management priorities. Even if the picnic does not include any formal training exercises, the fact that people become aware that there is a CERT program may motivate individual citizens to visit the program's website and even join the team.

Another opportunity for the CERT program to expand is by forming partnerships. Establishing stakeholders allows the program to "gain knowledge and better understand the risks" affecting communities, "meet knowledgeable and enthusiastic people, gain ideas, and obtain financial assistance" (Start a CERT Program Page, Step 3: Gaining Support and Recruiting, Building CERT Partnerships section, para. 3). Moreover, by scheduling individual meetings (para. 11), partnerships can become networks for community leaders to discuss the "broader involvement in community planning" (Schneider, 2003, p. 13).

The third fantasy theme that appeals to the dream of an ideal future is that the CERT program creates a sense of order during a disaster. From the decision about who conducts the training to the topics covered and exercises performed, the CERT program organizes citizen

response under a common understanding of the need to fill specific roles and responsibilities during a disaster response. An established plan for how CERT will respond demonstrates "technical competence," convincing website visitors to accept the organization's legitimacy (Clarke, 1999, p. 16).

Who conducts the CERT program's training is critical to establishing the perception of order. When readers become aware that "the CERT course is delivered in the community by a team of first responders" (About CERT page, para. 9), the program receives an immediate boost in legitimacy because the team of experts is assumed to have thought problems through and developed the capacity to control them (Clarke, 1999, p. 41). The fact that CERT members receive training from the 'best of the best' encourages the reader to accept the organization as legitimate, even though those experts have their own difficulties and past failures that could equally apply to CERT program.

Moreover, the type of training received by CERT members also encourages the website's visitors to accept CERT as an organized response organization. Clarke (1999) notes that such training fails when its leaders "overpromise what they can do, and they overextend their own possibilities" to garner resources for success (p. 43). In the website's view, "continuing training, exercises and projects…will help CERTs to maintain and improve their skill, it will keep volunteer involvement and interest high, and it will benefit the entire program and community" (Start a CERT Program, Step 3: Planning Continuing Training, para. 1). Problems may arise when burnt out volunteers cut corners or take their training for granted, putting themselves and others at risk.

After a thorough reading of the artifact, three major fantasy themes that appeal to an ideal future world emerge from the rhetoric surrounding the CERT program. First, there is a hope that

using the skills and resources available can be a stopgap in the likely event that official responders are hamstrung. Second, there is an attempt to ground the CERT model within the broader public discourse by creating partnerships and opportunities to increase the CERT program's visibility in its constituent community. Third, there is a strong desire to portray the CERT program as bringing order to the scene of a disaster by backing CERT's ideas with the experiences of official responders and continuously reinforcing those ideas in training. Using fantasy themes in its website, the CERT program aims to solicit the reader's ratification of what the future of community disaster response should look like, inviting volunteers to join the program and use its model as the basis for responding to actual disaster incidents.

The rhetorical vision articulated by the CERT program "consists of characters, real or fictitious, playing out a dramatic situation in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now transactions of the group" (Bormann, 1972, p. 242). The characters of the rhetorical vision put forth in the artifact include official responders, members of the CERT program, potential recruits and victims. The dramatic situation played out by these characters is how emergency response will unfold in a world with or without CERT members taking the initiative to act. The setting is far removed from the here-and-now in the artifact because viewers of the CERT website are obtaining information about how to form a CERT program without any specific incidents to use as examples for how they should actually act when disaster strikes.

Official responders and CERT members are part of a rhetorical community of emergency managers. For their part, official responders fulfill two tasks. First, when possible, they respond to disasters to provide emergency services to victims. Second, they provide training to CERT members so that citizens might fill-in when response agencies face obstacles to emergency response. For their part, CERT members use the skills that they have learned through training to

encourage others to participate in the program and to respond to life-threatening circumstances when official responders are unavailable.

Victims and members of the community who have not joined the CERT program are not part of the rhetorical community that official responders and CERTs use as the basis for responding to disasters. Victims and community members are potential recruits, but they must become familiar with the opportunities presented by CERT. The fact that CERT takes an all-hazards approach without applying training or information to specific types of disasters leaves visitors wondering how to use the training provided in specific scenarios. By combining the two sets of fantasy themes, these undecided parties are encouraged to ratify the rhetorical vision of CERTs acting to complement official responders in a well-rounded disaster management strategy. By ratifying the vision, these individuals are allowed to use what they know about past disasters to bring more members to the rhetorical community and/or take part in exercises and drills that ensure that CERTs are able to contribute when crisis falls upon the community.

We realize now that the use of fantasy themes on the CERT website possesses several characteristics of a rhetorical community that enable the critic to answer the research question: **How does the rhetorical vision created by emergency management agencies embed disaster response within the social life of the community?** Recognition of past failures and successes, establishing a common vocabulary for how responses should unfold and portraying the future as hopeful yet ordered are the means by which emergency managers embed disaster response within the social life of a community. Creating symbolic convergence through the manifest content of the website allows response agencies to justify their own shortcomings in a way that motivates citizens to take proactive steps to protect themselves and their communities when disaster strikes. After carefully analyzing the text of the CERT website through the lens offered

by fantasy theme analysis, we can compare the program's rhetorical vision to the criteria established in Chapter Two for defining and studying the rhetoric of social movements.

Disaster Communities in Rhetoric

This thesis defines 'social movement' as a non-institutional collective working together to achieve a common goal whose method of change is persuasion. As Stewart, Smith and Denton (1989) explain, "a social movement is not part of an established order that governs and changes… norms and values" (p. 6). The CERT program is a non-institutional collective by virtue of the fact that "CERTs are formed by members of a neighborhood or workplace" (Start a CERT Program Page, CERT Overview Section, para. 1). The partnerships that the CERT program encourages are with 'ready-made' non-institutional stakeholders "such as homeowner's associations, Neighborhood Watch groups and school groups" (Start a CERT Program page, Step 3: Gaining Support and Recruiting, Building CERT Partnerships section, para. 5). The fact that CERTs are formed within the public sphere and seek recruits and partners from local, grassroots organizations substantiates the claim that CERT is a non-institutional collective.

Building partnerships is precisely how CERT programs work collectively to achieve a common goal. The website cautions that "regardless of how you organize your CERT program, it can't succeed unless you have the support of the key stakeholders in your community" (Start a CERT Program page, Step 3: Gaining Support and Recruiting, para. 1). While the list of stakeholders includes elected and appointed officials and professional responders (Start a CERT Program page, Step 3: Gaining Support and Recruiting, para. 1), it is the members of the CERT, volunteers who make up these citizen-led groups, that create change by offering workable strategies that contribute to the well-being of the whole community (Start a CERT Program page, Step 1: Communicating with Volunteers, para. 3). Continuing to work together after receiving

the initial training is what keeps the CERT program alive. Success breeds success: "Seeing CERTs in action and involved in the public safety of… the community can motivate volunteers and sponsors to want to become involved with the program" (Start a CERT Program page, Step 2: Maintaining Partnerships, para. 3).

Cathcart (1972) outlines the role of persuasion in movements when he states that movements are "carried forward through language… strategic forms that bring about identification of the individual with the movement" (p. 86). Recognition of the role of persuasion in getting people to join the CERT program is evident in the use of fantasy themes. But the website also explicitly references the importance of persuasion many times, such as when partnerships are discussed: "It is important that potential partners realize that beyond the basic training, CERT is a unique program that will be developed based on local needs, and that it is up to the partners to help create the strategy" (Start a CERT Program page, Step 3: Gaining Support and Recruiting, Building CERT Partnerships section, para. 14). As Stewart, Smith and Denton (1989) see it, movements depend on rhetoric to "transform perceptions of history and society, prescribe courses of action, mobilize… and sustain the movement" (p. 13). This is why the CERT website goes to great lengths to discuss the need to communicate with volunteers and partners, to keep them interested and involved, to determine followup training needs and to recruit new members (Start a CERT Program page, Step 1: Communicating with Volunteers, para. 1).

Weaving together the texts used to describe social movements theory in Chapter Two with the CERT website as a rhetorical artifact demonstrates that, at its base, the CERT program does match up with the criteria for social movements. More clarification will help demonstrate the fact that CERT is a slightly unconventional type of movement. After all, many of CERTs

partners are part of the establishment and many collective actions taken are directly supported by members of official response agencies. But weaving together more social movement theorists demonstrates how the CERT program assists official response agencies in ways that make the program a prime candidate for social movement studies.

Two features characterize the innovational movement (Smith & Windes, 1975). First, such a movement aims to assist institutional efforts seeking to better meet citizen's needs. The initial development of CERT was such an attempt, in that "CERT programs were developed to assist communities… in the aftermath of a major disaster when first responders are overwhelmed or unable to respond" (Start a CERT Program Page, CERT Overview section, para. 2). Rather than focusing their collective actions against real agents who hold power, the rhetorical vision of an innovational movement condemns impersonal scenic elements for eroding society's values (p. 144). The reasons CERTs deploy are not because official responders are actively choosing to abandon their roles, but rather because communication challenges, the scope of the disaster and damage to critical infrastructure impede response agencies. In the case of CERT, members are not blaming firefighters, police officers or other emergency workers, but merely reacting to the circumstances so that they can protect themselves and others.

Second, an innovational movement acts with the "expectation that the change it demands will not disturb the symbols… and existing values or modify the social hierarchy" (Smith & Windes, 1975, p. 143). The CERT program explicitly recognizes that "the best source of help in an emergency is the paid or volunteer professional responder ….CERTs are not intended to replace a community's response capability, but rather, to serve as an important supplement to it" (Start a CERT Program, CERT Overview section, para. 4). This is especially proven by the fact that CERTs utilize the Incident Command System, the same approach used by first responders

every day to organize response efforts (Start a CERT Program, CERT Resources section, Organizing CERT Teams, para. 1-3). But if CERTs are deployed effectively, they can "enhance first-response capabilities…by ensure the safety of themselves and their families…[by] working outward…and beyond until first responders arrive. CERTs can then assist first response personnel as directed" (Start a CERT Program, CERT Overview section, para. 9). Given that CERT programs receive their training and equipment from first responders, severing ties with the establishment would be detrimental for the long-term success of the movement.

Given that Griffin's (1952) original article focused upon establishment-conflict movements, some may question whether CERT deserves movement-based rhetorical analysis since it is administered by emergency management officials with support from governmental institutions. Using Griffin's analysis of historical movements is critical for sustaining a social movement perspective because it allows emergency managers to recognize the importance of communication in the various stages of disaster management. Zarefsky (1977) provides justification for including the CERT program in movement studies by demonstrating how Johnson's War on Poverty, a top-down administered program, fell within the phases prescribed by Griffin.

Like the war on poverty, "it is difficult to identify a single enactment of the negative in the inception of [CERT's] struggle" (Zarefsky, 1977, p. 354). However, events like the Mexico City earthquake, the Northridge earthquake, 9/11 and Katrina all provide evidence of such an enactment. When a CERT holds a public exercise and invites local leaders and the media to observe (Start a CERT program, Step 3: Gaining Support and Recruiting, Gaining Support from Local Leaders section, para. 6), movements make ineffectiveness the enemy. "Each of these specific events… increase awareness of a problem" (Zarefsky, 1977, p. 354) by providing

opportunities for viewers to examine the need to prepare themselves for disaster response in a world without official agencies. Such initiatives are not counter-movements oriented at a specific sector of society (Zarefsky, 1977, p. 354), but rather the need for people to help themselves and others can be seen as the enemy within ourselves that can be resolved by joining the CERT program.

The period of rhetorical crisis occurs when CERT is able to disturb the balance of forces in the minds of the collective audience by redefining the problem of disasters as something each person must confront (Zarefsky, 1977 p. 355). For example, hearing the claim that "disasters can occur unexpectedly and overwhelm the response system" (Start a CERT Program page, Gaining Support and Recruiting section, para. 7) forces the public to confront the possibility that they may be victims. There are no "opposing groups of rhetors" in this case (Griffin, 1952, p. 186), for one would be hard pressed to find a credible advocate for letting people fend for themselves when disasters occur. However, anytime the CERT deploys and hold their obligatory debriefing afterwards, a period of rhetorical crisis may come about as members discuss amongst themselves the best way to institute policy changes based upon what they learned in the previous incident.

Certainly, creating and training in a CERT can be the consummation phase. However, the CERT website identifies several checks against this propensity for the movement to die out. By building partnerships, one can establish a "broad base of support" that keeps people coming to CERT meetings and exercises (Zarefsky, 1977, p. 356). If members of the team receive awards for "hours given, special projects completed, consistent support, etc." (Start a CERT Program, Communicating with Volunteers section, para. 8), then the program may be seen as a "businesslike scheme offering return on an investment" (Zarefsky, 1977, p. 356). By continuing to train together and providing incentives for members to maintain their readiness, the CERT

program can avoid the consummation phase. Failure to do so could easily mean a local program folds due to a lack of support, interest or involvement.

This chapter has analyzed the CERT program's website for evidence of fantasy themes in order to construct the rhetorical vision used by emergency response agencies to embed disaster response within the social life of the community. The use of fantasy themes that appeal to a shared past experience and fantasy themes that dream of an ideal future create a rhetorical community which takes part in CERT in order to deal with the inevitability of disasters and the possibility that citizens may be on their own. Such a rhetorical community meets the criteria for an innovational social movement which seeks to improve institutions through collective action and persuasion of others. While seemingly defying traditional definitions, the CERT program does establish a framework for considering the implications of a social movement perspective on disaster response. Chapter Five will discuss these implications in the context of emergency management and the study of communication, respectively.

Chapter Five

The CERT program represents a unique opportunity to address many of the technical and symbolic issues involved in disaster response. By improving citizens' ability to cope with disasters, shared communities are created, new avenues for persuasion emerge and communication scholars can sink their teeth into the Internet as a site for social deliberation. Indeed, educating students of communication to look carefully at each piece of information that they read on a website causes them to reflect on how rhetoric creates the circumstances in which we act and interact.

Emergency response agencies use rhetoric to embed disaster response within the social life of the community through the use of fantasy themes. By appealing to shared past experiences and the dream of an ideal future, the audience to emergency response messages are encouraged to see themselves as part of a collective group. Prior to disaster occurring, agencies must persuade their communities that the possibility for disaster is real and that actions can be taken to minimize these events when they do occur. Once a disaster occurs, communities draw upon the information that they learned through sources such as the CERT website to expand their role and take actions based upon the skills and capabilities available at the time. Fantasy themes dramatize the collective experience of the audience by placing disaster events within a context that is understandable for the individual audience member. When the audience member ratifies the message by going deeper into the website's links or joining the organization, they become part of a rhetorical community whose shared tactics and collective action define the group as a social movement working together to fulfill the needs and demands that arise in the aftermath of a disaster.

This chapter will conclude the examination of the potential for a social movement perspective on disaster response. Practical implications of performing a fantasy theme analysis for emergency managers will be identified first. Then, we will discuss how the approach used furthers our understanding of rhetoric, social movements and fantasy theme analysis. After discussing these implications, the thesis will conclude by recognizing where rhetorical critique situates us in terms of its limits and its possibilities.

We begin by placing the findings from line by line analysis of the CERT website squarely within the cultural and historical context that emergency managers find themselves in today. It seems prudent to once again state that it is not my intention to attack or second-guess the actions of emergency workers and/or victims. Instead, what follows should be seen as particular instances of why emergency managers should critically "consider communication's symbolic functions" (Byers & Richardson, 2006, p. 19).

At a practical level, this thesis calls upon emergency managers to rethink the way they train official and citizen responders. The National Response Framework, *the* playbook that the federal government uses to coordinate federal, state and local responses to catastrophes, uses the same "all-hazards" approach as the CERT training materials (DHS, 2008). While that playbook does contain portions applicable to specific scenarios, we have already learned that such planning documents are likely to unravel because of the sheer scope of disasters, communication challenges and/or damage to critical infrastructure. Encouraging citizens to turn to CERT as their backup plan means that communities are going to be acting under the assumption that "natural calamities are the same as technological, and especially nuclear, calamities" (Clarke, 1999, p. 274). And this means next time there is a chemical release, people are going to assume that being proactive is desirable, go outside and expose themselves to dangerous conditions. Or

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when there is a hurricane, people will take it upon themselves to search for and rescue their neighbors as the storm's eye passes over them because they are cut off from the television news. Without references to specific disaster scenarios, the "all-hazards" approach put forth by CERT and other emergency response agencies could possibly worsen the devastation experienced in a community.

Moreover, emergency response agencies should reconsider the audience of their messages about CERT. As the experience of Katrina documents, the poor and racial minorities are often the ones who are subjected to the worst conditions during a disaster (Cutter, 2006). Rhetorical choices such as "the CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it" (About CERT page, para. 7) ring hollow when they are followed four paragraphs later by the statement "during each session participants are required to bring safety equipment (gloves, googles, mask) and disaster supplies (bandages, flashlight, dressings)" (para. 11). Providing the Student Manual in "English and Spanish on the CERT website" (Start a CERT Program page, Step 4: Acquiring Training Materials, para. 1) does little for those who live on flood plains, who cannot speak English or Spanish and who barely have the financial capital to provide for themselves. Perhaps revising the materials at least once since 2002 (Start a CERT Program page, Step 5: Tailoring Training, Updating CERT Materials section, para. 1) would help "spotlight" the program's attempts to be reflective, sensitive and accommodating (Waymer & Heath, 2007, p. 106).

Embedding the CERT program within the social life of a community is one way in which emergency managers can foster a social movement perspective. Emergency response personnel should make it a point to reach out to community leaders and ordinary citizens alike, promoting sustainable development as one of the themes for connecting with the broader community (Abramovitz, 2001; Schneider, 2003). Including mitigation techniques can bring CERT

members and the community together by creating more opportunities for interaction, collaborative effort and deliberation. Helping others modify their building design by laying concrete or going to city council meetings to take part in discussions of zoning laws brings "emergency management to the center of the vital task of planning and implementing sustainable community development" (Schneider, 2003, p. 9). Improving the livelihoods of citizens before disasters are even on the horizon helps demonstrate the "public value" of the CERT program and expands the focus beyond the preparedness and response phases. Not only will the outside community perceive the CERT program in a more favorable light, but members will have taken part in the continued evolution of their project, creating a sense of personal accomplishment.

The rhetorical criticism performed helps communication scholars gain a clear picture of an area of increasing academic dialogue. Often times when we hear about disasters, most of the focus is on what the firefighters have done or where FEMA is sending money. By centering the discussion firmly upon how communities respond to messages about what the government is doing, communication scholars can "inform and enhance crisis communication research and best practices" by teaching students to be cognizant of the effects their messages have for those who receive them (Waymer & Heath, 2007, p. 96). Paying close attention to what is said speaks volumes of the capacity for communication scholars to cultivate awareness of the need for critical thinking, deep deliberation and persuasive practices. Even in messages as seemingly straightforward as a website that provides information about joining an organization, one should be careful of how messages are framed and received so that we grow as ethically committed individuals.

The analysis provided by this thesis also illuminates a critically important text. Rarely does a day go by without the transmission some message about the nature of collective risk.

While few will probably join the CERT program as a result of reading the analysis provided, perhaps next time we turn on the news about approaching thunderstorms, hail and tornadoes, we will know where to go so that we can actually do something about it, other than simply sitting and watching others suffer personal losses to their property and loved ones. Perhaps instead of calling all our friends to talk about our own perspectives of such events, readers will be compelled to leave the phone on the hook for a while, so that those who need help can have a chance to get it. This thesis began from the premise that the frequency and severity of disasters is increasing. Making readers aware of that simple reality can go a long way in changing the choices we make as individuals about how to communicate, what to say and who to say it to.

The CERT program is an unconventional model for social movements. Administered from the top, but ran at the local level, studying CERTs from a social movements perspective allows messages formerly neglected as straight forward and to the point to be deconstructed. We can see how the public discusses "groups [which aim] to improve their society through innovation" (Smith & Windes, 1975, p. 152). The use of rhetorical visions as the basis for cultivating a sense of community can be compared to other instances in which communities work to achieve consensus and change. Instead of building a movement against something, perhaps the hope based framework put forth by CERT may encourage activists to be in favor of something.

Moreover, reading the CERT page across theories of social movements helps communication scholars navigate the continuum between establishment-conflict movements and innovational movements, as suggested by Smith and Windes (1975, p. 155). Movements can no longer be understood as emerging within a strictly established three-step process. Movements can not be classified as purely pro-establishment or pro-people. Instead, the interacting mixture

of agents involved in the CERT program, with citizens taking actions prescribed by official first responders, suggests the possibility that movements can work with and outside of institutions in ways previously ignored. The actions taken to recognize institutional deficiencies and to supplement their efforts reveal how rhetoric shapes the perception of institutions and actors.

Further, analyzing the use of fantasy themes assists Griffin's (1952) attempts to "discover the various configurations of public discussion," where "rhetorical patterns repeat themselves" (p. 188). By reading the CERT website within the context of the overall rhetorical history established in Chapter Two, we can see how consistent "rhetorical patterns" make a difference in continuing the movement's success (p. 188). CERT recognizes that the use of a "consistent appearance…so that CERT will become a symbol for the benefits it provides to the community" (Start a CERT Program page, Maintaining a CERT program section, Step 2 Maintaining Partnerships, para. 13). By virtue of its innovational style and its consistent message, the CERT model is able to avoid the consummation phase that seems to characterize many of the establishment-conflict organizations traditionally used to codify the term 'social movement.'

Some may rightly criticize the approach advocated as overly expansive. Others may see the connection between CERTs and social movement theory as contrived or trivial. However, even if one is not interested in the CERT program, the critique performed in Chapter Four shows that the "essence" of movements is rhetoric (Zarefsky, 1977, p. 371). How else would you get people to give up their weeknights and weekends to learn first aid? Or ceramics? Or karate? No matter what goal it is that an individual hopes to achieve, anytime they encounter others, the seeds for a social movement are present as long as individuals learn to collaborate and bring others in line with the goal that the group is hoping to achieve. And it is the rhetoric of social movements that makes such an achievement possible. Finding ways to communicate to appeal

to the listener is critical for any attempt to live peacefully in a community filled with conflicting beliefs and ideologies.

The contribution that this critique makes to fantasy theme analysis as a method is simple and straightforward. By cataloging the fantasy themes present on the CERT website and using those themes to construct the program's rhetorical vision, this thesis has "enriched" the method (Bormann, 1982, p. 302), as each study does add to the "a taxonomy of rhetorical visions [that make it] possible [for] comparative analysis" to occur (p. 303). This thesis may be yet another in a long list of rhetorical criticisms, but the more critiques performed, the deeper we come to understanding "the relationship between rhetoric and culture and the role of rhetoric in generating social knowledge" (Bormann, 1982, p. 297).

The shortcomings revealed in this thesis also provide opportunities for future research. That the analysis focused upon the CERT website may leave some wondering how important one webpage is to social life. However, knowing that the main site for the model citizen response organization has been mapped out allows future research to compare the CERT program's changes in rhetorical vision throughout time by judging this critique against analyses of regional and local CERT programs. The fact that this thesis focuses upon rhetoric at the expense of an approach that goes out into the community and observes CERT training exercises should not cause readers to devalue the role that rhetoric plays. In this context, combining theory and practice requires an understanding of the theories underlying emergency management. Otherwise, observers will not be able to comprehend the purpose of exercises. Now that we have documented how citizens are told to act under the official model of citizen response, we can compare the rhetorical vision of CERT to other unofficial response initiatives such as the Red Cross. And, adding CERT to the taxonomy of rhetorical visions collected by fantasy theme

analysts allows the social movement perspective of disaster response to be compared to non-disaster related social movements.

Disasters are an inevitable part of every person's life. No matter where you go or what you do, you will always remember those times that affected you most. Even if your idea of a disaster is losing your wallet, being shunned by a friend or simply having a bad day, the message behind this thesis is that we all have the tools to deal with such crises. A tornado does not have to be on the horizon to compel you to interact with those around you. Humans are social creatures and rhetoric is the way that we humans communicate. Use the fact that people have common experiences and goals as the basis for building up yourself and others. This awareness should be enough to compel even the biggest naysayer to take part in community because when the time comes, no one is on an island and no one can be left behind.

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