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Policing Charities: A genealogy of the American nonprofit in the context of neoliberalism

Jaclyn Carroll
James Madison University

Policing Charities:

A Genealogy of the American Nonprofit in the Context of Neoliberalism

Jaclyn D. Carroll

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Abstract

This project offers a critical rhetorical history of "the nonprofit" over the last 50 years of American political discourses. The author explicates the value of genealogy and rhetorical history as methodologies in critical communication studies. She then examines three discursive junctures. Beginning with Ronald Reagan's public addresses and his deployment of the neoliberal epideictic, the author traces different rhetorical treatments of "the nonprofit." The author then examines the emergence of nonprofit watchdogging agencies in the 1990s, and discourses of surveillance and resistance that developed at this time. Particular attention is paid to the discursive shifts surrounding September 11, 2001.

The author discusses how rhetorical trends have conditioned contemporary conversations surrounding social service provision and social change, and the political implications of this current juncture. Finally, the project addresses contemporary rhetorics of nonprofit resistance and the advocacy movement for "de-nonprofitization." The author offers an archive to scholars and activists by presenting a history of "the nonprofit" as a centerpiece of American politics and American identities.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

As I understand it, the nonprofit industrial complex is a set of symbiotic

relationships that link together political and financial technologies of state and

owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse,

including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements, since

about the mid-1970s. (Rodriguez, 2008, p. 21-2)

As a young activist, I had experienced extraordinary frustration with the

contradictions of the "social change workforce," and I was compelled by the argument

made in INCITE!'s (2008) anthology, *The Revolution Will Not be Funded*. Its

contributors offer that the nonprofit sector has evolved into something of an industrial

complex and that the result has been a tangled wreck of neoliberal ideologies, capitalist

activism and cultural appropriation. I was excited by the evocative, oxymoronic pairing

of "industrial complex" and "nonprofit," a phrase born out of a war critique and a

classification of tax exemption that I had imagined to be politically neutral.

I recognized the development of the phrase as a tactical choice and a rhetorical

strategy (whether intentional or not). I became interested in how it might be at once

constructive and constraining to center this critique on such incongruity of terms and how

this rhetorical strategy might resonate with different audiences. This project is the result

of these interests. It is an attempt to trace a rhetorical history of American nonprofit

discourses since the 1980s, such that it might enable a better understanding of

contemporary conceptions of American charity and volunteerism. Rather than exploring

nonprofits as a legal or social structure, it considers how designations like "nonprofit,"

"volunteer," and "charity," have functioned discursively in the past 50 years of mainstream public discourse.

Genealogical Inquiry

"Herein we find an invaluable philosophical contribution: recognition that that which is conditioned can condition its own conditions. Only one who does not take history seriously will find this paradoxical. No doubt, many will" (Koopman, 2013, p. 103). The first chapter of this project offers a justification for a critical, historical approach to nonprofits. Specifically, it outlines the tenets of rhetorical history and genealogical inquiry. Based on the tenets of Foucauldian genealogy and rhetorical historiography, I argue that one can best understand the contemporary politics of American volunteerism and charity with an eye towards history. As Koopman (2013) explains, "genealogy at its best involves a practice of critique in the form of the historical problematization of the present" (p. 2). Furthermore, this project responds to Ashcraft and Trethewey's (2004) call for historical inquiry, as put forth in their special issue synthesis on "tension" in organizational communication studies. They explain:

> [C]lose examination of history – particularly, the conflicted histories of organizational, industrial, and occupational cultures – constitutes an important applied endeavor. To better understand contemporary dilemmas, organizational communication practitioners and applied scholars would do well to conduct genealogies of discourse among professional, organizational, and market communities. (Ashcraft & Trethewey, 2004, p. 174)

Ashcraft and Trethewey offer that an historical, discursive analysis might enable critical organizational communication scholarship. While there is a large body of work that

examines nonprofits structurally, the discursive history of the "nonprofit" designation in

relation to national understandings of American volunteerism is uncharted territory.

In the following three chapters, I consider three junctures that are particularly

significant to the evolving meaning of the American nonprofit. They represent three

distinct treatments of nonprofits and are not intended to represent a causal lineage.

Rather, they represent three different treatments of nonprofits and the character of the

American volunteer as they are culturally fixed on a national scale. The first chapter

examines President Ronald Reagan's call for the reassignment of social service

responsibilities from the federal government onto the nonprofit sector, which took place

over the course of a series of addresses. I classify Reagan's treatment of American

volunteerism as highly epideictic, and discuss how his casting of praise and blame

conditioned the American public to a particular vocabulary for talking about nonprofit

money and nonprofit work. The second chapter addresses the emergence of nonprofit

proctorship agencies in the 1990s, and their call for the public and/or private surveillance

of the nonprofit sector. I argue that the neoliberal and epideictic vocabularies of the

1980s re-appeared in these conversations, and enabled a very particular (though

contradictory) national understanding of what charity ought to be and be controlled by. I

argue further in this chapter that the attacks on 9/11 and the resulting boost in charitable

donations (of blood, time, and money) changed the landscape of nonprofit work and

nonprofit giving and intensified existing discursive trends having to do with the public's

duties to police nonprofits. The third, and final chapter, addresses the contemporary

moment – The mainstream celebration of a nonprofit sector that is larger in breadth and

budget than ever, and the emergence of a largely overlooked de-nonprofitization

movement among activist scholars. This chapter builds on the prior two chapters to

engage a discussion about the rhetorical choices of nonprofit-critical activists, using the

past as a prism for examining the present. It asks how the de-nonprofitization movement

has developed its own particular vocabulary, and how this vocabulary differs from more

celebratory discourses. Ultimately, I will speak to the constraints of the latter discourse

over the former and argue that these arguments draw more effectively on historically

situated vocabularies and ideological work tracing back fifty years. At each of the three

junctures considered in this project, I look to the assignment of praise and blame, the

negotiation of responsibility, constructions of citizenship and civic duty, and the making

of what American volunteerism means to the public.

     The project will be guided by three inquiries – one historical, one genealogical,

and one implicative:

1. How have the American nonprofit, the American charity and the American
   volunteer functioned rhetorically and ideographically at each of these three
   junctures, and how has the idea of what they are been discursively
   constructed in the last 50 years?

2. What has the use of volunteer and nonprofit language enabled and
   constrained at each of these junctures? How did these terms evolve in the
   context of power structures? How did their use negotiate, resist, and
   reinforce existing power structures?

3. What does a rhetorical history of these discourses tell us about the problems
   of the present? What can activists make of this kind of archive?

While the American nonprofit has both legal and social structure, my argument

centers on how the cultural meaning of the nonprofit has been rendered discursively, in

relation to other charismatic terms, and how discursive actors have played the term

"nonprofit" against ideographic language ("American spirit," "investment," "hero") in

order to project different meanings and different political agendas. It is an exploration

into how meaning emerges in the relationships between and among ideologically charged

terms, and it is meant to address how the cultural meaning of the nonprofit has been

constructed.

<div align="center">Context</div>

Foucault's (1977) genealogy of the prison, aptly subtitled "*Naissance de la*

prison," traces the prison from its birth to its modern form. These bookends serve as his

book's infrastructure: How did "we" get from point A to point B? As Foucault famously

wrote, "less than a century separates them" (p. 7). This project attends to a similarly

dramatic shift in discourse and culture. In the chapters that follow I show how the way

political and activist leaders have talked about nonprofits has evolved dramatically over

the past fifty years. Additionally, I offer that the American nonprofit, and how it is and

continues to be discursively positioned in the construction of national identity is of

incredible relevance to scholars and practitioners of social change and social service

provision. In this chapter, I will situate the project by offering some political and

historical context (beginning in the 1980s) and highlighting some points of tension.

The American welfare system is made up of income support and direct services,

the latter of which is primarily facilitated by nonprofit organizations (Marwell, 2004;

Salamon, 1995; Smith and Lipsley, 1993). Beginning in the 1980s, most of the latter half

of the welfare system (direct services) was outsourced to third party facilitators, primarily

nonprofit organizations (Marwell, 2004; Salamon, 1995; Smith & Lipsley, 1993). This is

important to note for several reasons. First, the federal government directly controls only

the distribution of income support. Federal control of service distribution is heavily

outsourced and only partly controlled on a federal level. However, because the supply of

funds for social services is almost always less than the demand for them, private NGOs

are in competition with one another. "Their positioning between the state and citizens

creates a layer of policy, decisions and implementation issues absent from the delivery of

income transfers" (Marwell, 2004, p. 267). This is to say that the nonprofit sector's

position between the State and the public is extraordinarily complicated by mechanisms

of "discretion" (Marwell, 2004). When the State's responsibilities for public service

were outsourced to nonprofits, there was a sense that the work of these nonprofits needed

to be monitored in some way. This project attends to four decades of this very

complicated dynamic.

      Ronald Reagan's decision to outsource these responsibilities was largely due to

his espousal of Milton Friedman's neoliberal ideologies. He offered a two-tiered

approach to neoliberal policy (1) "privatization," outsourcing federal responsibilities to

third party groups like churches and charities (Marwell 2004), which boosted the growth

of America's nonprofit sector in the 1980s (Marwell 2004; Salamon, 1995), and (2)

"devolution", outsourcing "discretionary measures" for government spending to states

and counties (Marwell, 2004). Above all, he dramatically renegotiated welfare

distribution for people with disabilities or dependent children in an attempt to cut Aid to

Families with Dependant Children (AFDC) caseloads.

I am interested in the discursive elements of Reagan's policies. How were these policies presented, and how was "the nonprofit" rhetorically fixated in these conversations? I focus on what the Reagan administration said about itself, how the Reagan administration rhetorically packaged these policies, and on notable publics responses to these changes.

In 1992, The Department of Health and Human Services predicted that Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) would result in a caseload reduction of 400,000 families and annual federal savings of $1 billion (Englander & Kane, 1992). Reagan "boasted" that his reforms cut 364,630 recipients (Columbia Journalism Review), and trumpeted affirmations for volunteers and volunteerism. American volunteers were absolutely central in his privatization and devolution strategies. Reagan also attempted to dissociate the federal government from anti-poverty efforts and progressives expressed concern and frustration in media outlets that the federal government was proctoring nonprofit behavior too closely and in inappropriate ways. It was during Reagan's presidency that nonprofit tensions began to boil.

Ten years later, proctorship agencies like Guidestar emerged and promoted *public* surveillance of nonprofit organizations using *federally regulated* yardsticks (like IRS-registration and validation and 990 forms). These organizations were designed to collect massive amounts of data about American nonprofits in order to rate their efficacy and trustworthiness. Guidestar is careful to clarify that it "is not a charity evaluator" (Wasik, 2013), rather it is a measure of verification. Media coverage of organizations like Guidestar point to a new kind of public paranoia surrounding "crook-charities." Nonprofit watchdogs offer "tracking," and "standards for charitable accountability" (The

IRE Journal, 2003), but even these public-run, public-facilitated servers default to

federally-determined standards. "If a new group is raising money, the simplest way to

determine if it's tax exempt is to go to the source: The Internal Revenue Service" (The

IRE Journal, 2010). News outlets and nonprofits themselves have contributed to these

watchdogging discourses, offering their takes on the most important validity standards for

nonprofits. A United Way Vice President in Roanoke, for example said, "You want to

see a board of directors of at least 10 people, which indicates a strong community base

[…] There should also be several funding sources, which gives the agency financial

stability" (Pleasant, 2009). Information Today described the anxiety of the modern donor

narrating, "'Will they really spend my contribution on the cause or on some executive's

mansion?' It's a dilemma because we don't want to be miserly and suspicious, yet the

world is still full of crooks" (O'Leary, 2007); and offered further:

> With such stakes, transparency and accountability in the nonprofit sector are
>
> essential. Not only must this money be properly spent, donors must have
>
> confidence if they are to keep giving. So, whatever amount you give, check the
>
> charity watchdogs to see that it's well used. (O'Leary, 2007)

The Guidestar server (and others) enables or disables organizations based on their

standards of validity. A member of the ASSE Foundation noted, "Guidestar is the

premier source of information on nonprofits in the U.S. Valued partner status is achieved

only after nonprofits provide verifiable information concerning their IRS status,

executive and board compensatory practices, and other information on their finances and

programs" (ASSE Foundation, 2012). At this juncture, "nonprofit" is positioned in

relation to a very different network of buzzwords: "crook," "watchdog," and "accountability," for example, rather than "welfare," "volunteerism," and "America."

By 2012, the United States had recognized over 1.42 million tax-exempt organizations, and public charities reported over $3 trillion in total assets (NCCS, 2014). As a point of reference, one might compare this to the total expenditures of the US federal government, which that same year clocked in at $3.5 trillion. America's nonprofit sector is enormous and expanding rapidly. In the last decade, total charitable giving has increased by $34.6 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars (almost $100 billion in current dollars) (Giving USA, 2014). Total contributions have jumped 12.3% since the recession ended in 2009 (Giving USA, 2014); foundation giving between 1999 and 2009 increased 84% (The Urban Institute, 2010); revenues of registered nonprofit organizations grew 40% between 1998 and 2008 (The Urban Institute, 2010); and the number of registered nonprofits increased 31% between 1998 and 2008 (IRS reporting nonprofits grew closer to 50%) (The Urban Institute, 2010). The nonprofit sector is empowered by the contributions of more than half of the residents of the U.S. 64% of American citizens contribute to organizations as volunteers, and 51% donate to charities (Giving USA). In 2013, Americans donated $335 billion to nonprofits, at a per-household rate of $2,974 (Giving USA).

The sector's growth since the 1990s has been categorically celebrated as the advancement in American charity, but tensions in contemporary nonprofit discourse are intense in the mainstream. Nonprofit watchdogging discourses become complicated by calls for government intervention and the post-recession adaptation of nonprofit policy. At the same time, a counter-discourse to "nonprofitization" emerges. INCITE's (2008)

anthology, *The Revolution Will Not be Funded*, presents an unforgiving critique of

America's "nonprofitization." Its contributors examine the sector's growth critically,

with an eye towards the ideologies that have fueled its growth. They suggest celebrating

the size and expansion of not-for-profit work is reductive, and that it overlooks both the

potential of other forms of collective action and the ideological restraints of the existing

model. In this context, "nonprofit" and "nonprofitization," are aligned with very new

buzzwords: "neoliberalism," "capitalism," and "white supremacy," to name a few.

Neither the mainstream discourse nor this quieter, radical counter-discourse, have served

to resolve contemporary problems.

"The nonprofit's" position in American discourses of service, citizenship,

economics and duty has shifted dramatically since the 1980s, and has gone largely

understudied. This project problematized the "neutrality" of the American nonprofit by

exhuming a history in which the nonprofit is not at all politically neutral. As Koopman

(2012) offered, ideologies draw on pasts that have enabled their emergence and forecast

futures that they take part in creating. My intent, therefore, is not to establish cause; it is

to explore formations, deactivations, conditions, and potentialities. All together, I

address a discursive lineage that begins during the Reagan presidency, traces through the

rise of nonprofit proctorship in the 1990s, and culminates in current critical discourses of

"de-nonprofitization." Consider these two statements, which represent dramatically

different orientations towards State responsibility, surveillance, and American

volunteerism. In the early 1980s, Ronald Reagan commented that, "The work of

volunteer groups throughout our country represents the very heart and soul of America.

They have helped make this the most compassionate, generous, and humane society that

ever existed on the face of this earth." He commented also that, "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help" (Reagan, 1986). Activist scholar, Andrea Smith, spoke thirty years later with the hindsight of 23 million newly established nonprofit organizations, saying that a so-called "nonprofit industrial complex […] controls dissent by incorporating it into the state apparatus, functioning as a 'shadow state' constituted by a network of institutions that do much of what government agencies are supposed to do with tax money in the areas of education and social services" (Smith, 2008, p. 8-9). The weight of the relationship between the State and the nonprofit weighs heavily on each of these comments, which display two dramatically different understandings what The State is and should be. They invite us to consider the vastly different rhetorical treatments of the nonprofit over this short window of time.

Chapter 2

Methodology:

Foucaultian Genealogy & Rhetorical History

Doing Genealogical, Rhetorical History

This project demands analysis that is both critical and historical. I engage diverse archives of media, public address, scholarship and activist press in order to examine discursive trends and discursive changes. As a result, my methodological toolbox must enable criticism across time and in these diverse contexts. Having chosen among a great many historical and archival methodologies, I engage rhetorical history and Foucaultian genealogy. In this chapter, I offer a brief description of each methodology, their merits and shortcomings, and their theoretical underpinnings. I argue that elements of each methodology can be combined constructively to guide inquiry. Finally, I speak to the construction of this project, and my decision to focus much of my discussion on networks of "charismatic terms" as they have been theorized by McGee (1980) and Weaver (2011).

Rhetorical history and genealogy enable social movement criticism in different ways. Their incarnations can be traced back through decades of critical scholarship; and these incarnations are diverse and at times contradictory. There are formulations of these methods, though, which are particularly emblematic of effective social movement criticism. I focus on Condit's approach to rhetorical history and Foucault's rendering of genealogy. I will argue here that these two approaches to critical history offer different, compatible (and therefore complementary) benefits.

Rhetorical History: Arguing from the Past

Zarefsky (1998) has offered that rhetorical histories fall into four categories -- histories of rhetoric (how rhetoric has changed historically), rhetorics of history (how histories are communicated), historical studies of rhetorical practices, and rhetorical studies of historical events. Each of these approaches has a distinct purpose, and operates

based on different assumptions. For example, the goal of examining rhetorics of history

might be primarily philosophical. Historical studies of rhetorical practices might be more

diagnostic and prescriptive. Zarefsky's argument, though, is that all of these approaches

represent a way to "argue from history" (p. 28), and that arguing from history enables us

to better understand collective memory.

This methodology often assumes a constructivist epistemology and a

constructionist ontology. Clark and McKerrow (1998) explain that the constructionist

approach is what enables historical methods to produce "critical literature." For them,

power is mediated presently in the narrative negotiation of the past. The present is and

always already has been constructed in tellings of history. Gronbeck (1998) calls this "the

appropriation of the past for presentest purposes" (p. 54), a "constant dialogue" between

the past and the present in "a hermeneutical circle where neither can be comprehended

without the other" (p. 57). "Knowing," therefore, for the rhetorical historian, is not

something that the critic can speak about in the past tense. (As I will explain later, this

articulation of "knowing" is much more similar to Foucault's genealogy than to Condit's

enactment of rhetorical history.)

Gronbeck identifies some of the epistemological underpinnings of rhetorical

history, which I will argue offer points of overlap with genealogy: that the past is

unknowable, that history is a discursive practice, that history is bivocal, both narrative

and argumentative, that professionalization has separated academic histories from public

records of the past, that the past is more than historical interest, that multiple rhetorics of

the past have been practiced by various groups (p. 48-50). Condit (1990), having perhaps

more explicitly political goals, speaks both to this constructivist perspective *and* the

pragmatic value of historical inquiry. She traces, for example, how rhetorical choices

shaped political outcomes of the abortion debate (assuming that rhetorical actors make

free choices which *shape* political outcomes), while also acknowledging that discourse is

constitutive of and constituted by social change (assuming that political conditions enable

and constrain a rhetor's choices). Most importantly, she offers insight into how powerful

rhetorical histories can be for social movement criticism.

Condit enacts the rhetorical historical method in three book-length projects

between 1990 and 1999, and in each of them, she argues "from history" in order to build

an argument about the collective memory of Americans. While very different from one

another, each of Condit's projects identifies a fixture of American culture that has been

misremembered in some way. Rhetorical history enables Condit to examine the political

undercurrents of what appears to be not political at all. Conversely, she examines the

happenstance of some seemingly intentional political changes. Rhetorical histories, as

composed by Condit, address the way things "are" and the way things came to be. They

unearth and overturn assumptions of things that have been naturalized and things that the

public has been anesthetized to. Condit shows the critical, historical value in "describing

'what people have said'" (p. 2). She shows that this description is more complicated and

more relevant than many would imagine.

Condit makes many of her assumptions explicit. She acknowledges the role of

power in facilitating the popularity and traction of public argument, but she understands

rhetoric to be a persuasive tool that can be *harnessed* and this requires some finessing as

we connect her to Foucault. She writes that "there is always the potential for the public

interest to be hijacked, via persuasion" (Condit, 1990, p. 6). Rhetoric (and discourse), for

Condit, is tangibly real. At times, her motives are empirical -- to uncover what *really* was. Rhetoric is a "process" that "functions" with "impacts." Rhetoric is the "materialization" of the idea (1990, p. 9) and "therefore may communicate social change to people by using language as a medium that negotiates a collective 'expression' of social conditions and social interests" (1990, p. 9). Rhetoric, for Condit, is the "social force" that makes ideas persuasive to an audience through either "sheer repetition" or "effective expression." She is careful to clarify that suggestions of a "duped public" are superficial, and that renderings of a single public are not productive. Ultimately, though, the value of rhetorical history, for Condit, lies in the following passage:

> Charting the changes in the units of discourse that appear in a controversy across time and relating these changes to the general and specific forces of rhetoric can produce better explanations of the processes that operate to bring about the particular forms that social changes take. (p. 11)

Studying rhetoric has value to the social critic because rhetoric is a *force,* influenced by the collective thoughts of an unstable, amoebic public, which effects social change. Archives of rhetoric offer a somewhat stable picture of an unstable public, and examining discourse can lead the scholar to veiled political realities.

If we accept Condit's assumptions, that discourse and political realities are mutually constitutive of one another, that they are dialectically linked, that actors are conditioned by circumstances which enable and constrain the construction of their own conditions, then rhetorical history has a great deal of merit for the cultural critic and the social movement scholar alike. The role of agency in the Catch 22 minefield of constructivism is complicated, but as Jasinkski (1998) explains, it is the reason why the

question of power hinges on rhetoric. Rhetorical history, he says, can be a site for agency.

He cites Rorty's argument that "change is not a matter of choice or decision... [rather] a

by-product of continuous linguistic redescriptions of the world" (Rorty as cited in

Jasinski, 1998, p. 79). This belief, that description is both the lock and the key of

criticism, undergirds both Condit's and Foucault's approaches. In the most extreme

(Foucualtian) approach, objectivity is displaced, and criticism becomes a matter of

radical description, not empirical deduction. Condit works toward both goals at once,

blending post-structuralism with pragmatism.

  Ball (1998) has echoed the sentiment that the communication discipline has

overlooked the critical value of descriptive historical work. She notes that the very root of

"history" is *"histor*," meaning "to judge" (p. 61). These scholars look to "description,"

then, as a highly political process. Drawing on the tenets of *Begriffsgeschichte*

(conceptual history), they see "conceptual change" to be a central fixture of the

methodology, what Stephen Greenblatt calls "self-fashioning" (Jasinski, 1998). Put

another way, text production is dialectically linked to human subjectivity, a relationship

in which each is the artifact of the other and each constitutes the conditions of the other.

At the most fundamental level, for rhetorical historians, description *is* change.

  The radical possibilities of historical description as change-making are one merit

of the rhetorical historical approach. McGee (1998) argues that the solution of

ideological problems must be ideological, rather than infrastructural. "It's got to be done

term by term, argument by argument." And this spotlights yet another benefit of the

method -- rhetorical history makes the examination of culture, of ideology, manageable --

extraordinarily complicated when done with precision -- but doable.

Swidler (1986) offers that rhetorical history examines how cultural symbols function as "toolkits" that enable and constrain action, impacting cultural actors particularly in "unsettled periods" when these ideological scripts for action are relied upon heavily. The examination of cultural symbols, therefore, offer a toolkit for the researcher. Cathcart (1972) has also argued that rhetorical examination of tokens and symbols and their deployment enables a more precise study of large, ideological, political problems. If Foucault offers a more nuanced and perhaps more theoretically complicated explanation of how discourse functions in the context of social change, we might ask why we would use Condit's articulation of rhetorical history at all. My answer is that Condit offers specific "units of discourse" that enable her to examine rhetoric "at work." These are ultimate terms, stories, and characterizations. I'll return to a more nuanced discussion of these units after explaining the tenets of genealogical inquiry.

<div align="center">Genealogical Criticism</div>

Genealogy, while overlapping with rhetorical history a great deal, more radically accepts the transformative powers of description, the instability of knowing, the disjointedness of "the public," and post-structuralist imaginings of political "reality." There are two questions worth asking then -- Where genealogy is similar to rhetorical history, why do both, and where they are different, are the inconsistencies irreconcilable for the critic?

Like rhetorical histories, genealogies start with the present and trace conditions back (Koopman, 2013). Foucault would agree with Condit's presumption that "'the public' is not a simple entity" (Condit, 1990, p. 7) and with her argument that "public discourse is an active, change-producing, transformative process, not merely a passive

conveyor belt" (Condit, 1990, p. 11). Foucault addresses the past, and futures told from

the past that never came to be. In doing so, Foucault considers junctures rather than

lineages, networks of possibilities in which ways of knowing power were negotiated and

not at all inevitable. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, Foucault considers a lineage

from elaborate public spectacles of torture, through the instantaneous corporeality of the

guillotine, to an understanding of punishment as "the most hidden part of the penal

process" (p. 9). But he addresses also "the dream of reformers... the city of punishments

in which a thousand small theatres would have provided an endless multicoloured

representation of justice" (p. 307).   Genealogy, facilitated in this way, offers analysis of

both the *Nacheinanderung* (one-after-anotherness) and the *Nebeneinanderung*

(relationships between simultaneous events) of discursive history (or as McGee would

say, the vertical and horizontal trajectories of terms).

One of the most significant overlaps between Foucault and Condit is their focus

on unveiling neutralities. Foucault (1977) writes:

Today we are rather inclined to ignore [the disappearance of torture as a public

spectacle]; perhaps, in its time, it gave rise to too much inflated rhetoric; perhaps

it has been attributed too readily and too emphatically to a process of

'humanization,' thus dispensing with the need for further analysis. (p. 7-8)

He excavated archives of punishment and engaged the effects of this "humanistic" shift

on the Western psyche and imaginings of violence and "public responsibility" for it (p.

9). "It is the certainty of being punished and not the horrifying spectacle of public

punishment that must discourage crime" (p. 9). More than Condit, he is explicit about

what history can do for the critic.

I would like to write the history of this prison, with all the political investments of

the body that it gathers together in its closed architecture. Why? Simply because I

am interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in

terms of the present. Yes if one means writing the history of the present. (p. 31)

Rhetorical historians and genealogists agree on this point: Historical examinations are not

for the purpose of examining the past. They are for the purpose of examining the present.

Foucault's earlier work in archeology (1972) offers a similarly nuanced approach

to historical inquiry, with some clear deviations from his genealogical approach. In

archeology,

[Foucault] had turned instead to an examination of the space that determined, if

not the existence of discourses, at least the possible forms in which configurations

of knowledge and practice could emerge. Rather than focusing on *what* was

known (history) or *why* knowledge is possible (epistemology), he investigated

how fields of knowledge are structured (archeology). (Major-Poetzl, 1983, p. 21).

Major-Poetzl (1983) articulates clearly that Foucault's goals were not at all objective in

his archeology. Rather, "[h]e examines various perceptions" (p. 149). Koopman (2013)

offers that genealogy is not an alternative to archeology, but an expansion of it, having

different but not contradictory goals. Archeologies examine false continuities of history

by taking discourse as its focus, genealogy examines false continuities, false neutralities,

and potentialities. Archeology asks how collective memory is structured and structurated.

Genealogy asks further, how it might have been structurated otherwise, why these

potentialities were foreclosed on, and what these foreclosures tell us about the matrices of

power that facilitate collective knowing.

Fusing the Methods

Condit's fashioning of rhetorical history is similar to archeology in style, and similar to genealogy in purpose. That is, Condit's rhetorical histories are critical of continuity, and examine apparent neutralities in political history and political discourse. They do not, however, examine potentialities. Condit attempts to unhinge discursive trajectories from apparent neutralities (for example, that "equality" is an incontestable goal of anti-racism, and that scientists guide scientific developments). My comparison to Foucault's archeologies is not to say that Condit's work is in any way "classical." As Major-Poetzl (1983) has explained, Foucault's archeology represents not only the development of a new historical method, but an epistemology that deviates from evolutionary ways of thinking about history, lineage, and the presence of the past. Koopman (2013) explains that genealogy is the work of "emergence and transformations" while archeology is the work of "existence and targets of transformation." As he explains, archeology is necessary but not sufficient for genealogy. I would say the same of rhetorical history.

Rhetorical history's similarities to archeology make it compatible with genealogy. Foucault asks the question, how did we get from point A to point B in just a century's time, but answering this question is not his final question.

This crucial point of Foucualt's philisophico-historical work has been so widely misunderstood that it is today commonplace that the central message of Foucault is *that* things could be otherwise than they are when indeed the real force of his thought is to show us *how* things might be transformed on the basis of the

materials furnished by our contingently constructed persons. (Koopman, 2013, p.

44)

Foucault attempts to understand prison reform as something other than a humanitarian

effort, unveiling matrices of power in the process. Foucault is not re-visiting history, he

is re-annotating it. He is, above all, concerned with "submerged problems" (Koopman,

2013, p.1).

Rhetorical history is not only complementary to genealogy, but a necessary

component of it. Furthermore, Condit's performance of rhetorical history makes the

practice more accessible to the critic with a political focus. Taken together, rhetorical

history and genealogy enable the critic to unveil false neutralities and identify potential

areas for transformation.

Units of Analysis (Archives & Terms)

Fusing these two methodologies requires clarification with regard to the unit of

analysis and the scope of analysis. Foucault had a megalomaniacal approach to data

collection – He drew on institutional records, biographies, private diaries, news, building

blueprints, medical encyclopedias, apparently anything he could get his hands on. I have

narrowed the data set for this project to two or three kinds of data per chapter, focusing

on presidential speeches, news media responses to relevant tropes and topics,

organizational archives (mission statements, organizational histories, advertising

materials, public reports, etc.), activist newsletters, activist news, and published activist

scholarship.

Narrowing my field of criticism further, I center my analysis on particular

"charismatic terms," ultimate terms, God terms and devil terms (conceptualized by

Weaver), ideographs (as conceptualized by McGee) and the tropes, terms, charged

language, and characters that are used in conjunction with these ideology-terms. These

networks of charged terms emerged through the excavation of hundreds of pages of

archives. This style of examination echoes Condit's work.

Despite their incongruities, components of early theorizations of ultimate terms

and ideographs align with genealogy. Specifically, I found genealogical value in

descriptions that call for the examination of language and the ideas it represents. Weaver,

McGee, and Foucault, while differing dramatically in their conceptions of power and

their definitions of "ideology," all offer methodologies that treat rhetoric and ideology as

intrinsically linked and wholly inseparable. For Weaver (2011), this linkage is a kind of

ordering of terms, whereby particular language is accepted as more capable or more

politically "absolute" than others. Terms that are rendered unimpeachable are of

particular interest to Weaver, as beliefs, values, and rhetorical power are somehow

contained within them.

Weaver explains,

[D]espite the variations of fashion, an age which is not simply distraught manages

to achieve some system of relationship among the attractive and among the

repulsive terms, so that we can work out an order of weight and precedence in the

prevailing rhetoric once we have discerned the 'rhetorical absolutes' – the terms

to which the very highest respect is paid. (Weaver, 2011, p. 212)

Overlooking the causal relationship between rhetoric and belief for a moment, we might

adopt part of his argument, that terms become vessels for ideas, and that terms are

"ranked" as a result. Weaver takes "progress" as one of his examples:

'Progress' becomes the salvation man is placed on earth to work out; and just as

there can be no achievement more than salvation, so there can be no activity more

justified in enlisting our sympathy and support than 'progress.' (Weaver, 2011, p.

213)

Focusing on "terms" in this way allows us to examine specific rhetorical moves that are

not branded as essentially good or bad, but so bound up in networks of familiar values

(Foucault called them "warm" values) that they come to appear obvious, politically

neutral, and therefore dangerous.

Weaver (2011) offers, "There are but three ways for language to affect us. It can

move us toward what is good; it can move us toward what is evil; or it can, in a

hypothetical third place, fail to move us at all." Foucault (and more contemporary

rhetorical historians like Condit) would cringe at this quote, as they would more likely

say that language and ideas mutually constitute one another. While Foucault is not

concerned with ideology as something that veils free thought or direct the masses towards

evil (as Weaver and McGee are), he *is* concerned with apparent objectivities (the

humanism of prison reform, the repressive silencing of sex-talk) that neutralize and are

neutralized by particular discursive trends. Taken together, one can engage in rhetorical

historical examination that addresses neutralizing discursive shifts *and* what Weaver

(2011) calls the "potency" of single terms. In this way, their approaches are not entirely

incompatible. We cannot, in a genealogical project, examine how ideologically charged

terms define public beliefs. We can, however, explore how individual terms (and

networks of charged terms) have conditioned ways of discussing ideas and ways of

understanding social problems. What we gain, though, by looking back to Weaver's

work, is his argument that charged terms compel sacrifice on a national level. He

explains:

> [Progress] is probably the only term which gives to the average American or West
>
> European of today a concept of something bigger than himself, which is socially
>
> impelled to accept and even to sacrifice for. This capacity to demand sacrifice is
>
> probably the surest indication of the 'god term,' for when a term is so sacrosanct
>
> that the material goods of this life must be mysteriously rendered up for it, then
>
> we feel justified in saying that it is in some sense ultimate. (Weaver, 2011, p. 214)

A discussion of the relationships between discourse, power, and *material sacrifice* does

not re-emerge in contemporary discussions of genealogy and rhetorical history, but is at

the crux of my questions about American volunteerism and charity.

This project revisits the question of value-laden, discursively driven sacrifice,

from a position of social constructivism. Weaver (1985) suggests, in the spirit of

rhetorical history, that the critical examination of charged terms can unveil power

structures and enable resistance. "Perhaps these observations will help the speaker who

would speak against the stream of 'progress,' or who, on the other hand, would parry

some blow aimed at him through the potency of the word, to realize what a momentum

he is opposing" (p. 91). A genealogist would not be so interested in resisting ideology,

but she *would* have a political orientation and an eye for subjugated discourse.

McGee's (1980) conception of the ideograph offers a kind of bridge between

Weaver and Foucault. He debunks the ideal of political "truth," offering "no matter how

firmly we believe, [it] is always an illusion" (p. 4), but still clings to ideology as a sort of

veil that interrupts free thought. Not unlike Weaver (2011), McGee (1980) is concerned

with language's coercive capacity; it's ability to create the portrait of truth while enacting

something unrighteous. However, he moves toward an understanding of rhetoric as a

conditioning force, rather than a mechanism of control. He introduces a communicative

lens to Marxist theories, arguing that "Human beings are 'conditioned,' not directly to

belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants,

reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief" (p. 6). The danger in this, for McGee, (and I

would argue for Weaver and Foucault as well) is that we will "forget" that semantics are

political. He worries that we will "make a rhetoric of war to persuade us of war's

necessity, but then forget that it is a rhetoric and regard negative popular judgments of it

as unpatriotic cowardice" (p. 6). Again, it is important to note that Weaver (2011) and

McGee (1980) concern themselves specifically with the enactment of State power onto

the public and that Foucault offers a much more amorphous and much less episodic

understanding of "power." But the three scholars share a concern for discourses that

appear obvious and apolitical. All three scholars would be concerned, for example, with

McGee's example, the "hero" who goes to war for God and apple pie, and the "coward"

who "reasonably" moves to Montreal.

McGee (1980) offers us a methodological bridge. First, he offers a point of

transition between Weaver's (2011) notion of sacrifice and Foucault's treatment of non-

localized discursive power by beginning a discussion of rhetorical *conditioning*. Second,

he offers a way to examine the force of *particular terms* in the context of broader

political trends, giving us a fixed and somewhat manageable focus for close reading.

Third, he offers examples that clearly display the relationship between ultimate terms (or

ideographs) and the power of epideictic discourse in the "obvious" casting of praise and

blame and definitions of civic duty (p. 11). And finally, he names the "ideograph," and

offers that part of its power is in its fluidity, it's ability to "expand and contract" in

meaning (p. 10), its changing yet constant situation in vertical time, (p. 11).

This Project

The project I have organized draws on the goals and questions posed in

genealogical inquiry. It examines a forty-year period between 1980 and the present.

Specifically, it focuses on "junctures" (moments where a discursive shift occurred or

almost occurred), subjugated discourses (opposition to dominant discourses that has been

largely unacknowledged), potentialities (shifts that almost occurred), and the influence of

power-knowledge on the development of public discourse. However, in order to distill

the immeasurable archive of American history down to a manageable scope for a project

of this size, I have adopted the structure of a rhetorical history, specifically as it has been

theorized and practiced by Condit (1993, 1994, 1999). I focus my analysis on artifacts of

public discourse (political news media, presidential speeches, activist news, etc.), and

attend particularly to discursive formations as they are powered by the movement of

ultimate terms, ideographs, and other powerful tropes that have empowered and disabled

particular discursive trends.

My assumption is that both dominant and subjugated discourses of American

volunteerism, nonprofit organizations, and tax exemption tracing back into history have

enabled and constrained the way that these ideas are discussed, labeled, and given

political power in the present. Each chapter of the project addresses a different juncture

in the development of these concepts. The following chapter examines the 1980s, and

specifically Ronald Reagan's contribution to the movement of tropes surrounding welfare

reform, the nonprofit sector, American heroes, and American volunteerism. I explore

Reagan's conditioning of the American public to particular ways of talking about

volunteerism as a precursor to a second juncture that took place in the 1990s. I analyzed

transcripts of Ronald Reagan's campaign speeches, presidential addresses and states of

the union. Additionally, I examined over a hundred newspaper articles that respond to

Ronald Reagan's public address.

The next chapter addresses the emergence of nonprofit watchdogging agencies

and nonprofit proctorship discourses in the 1990s. I considered hundreds of newspaper

articles and advertisements discussing the emergence of watchdogging agencies or their

benefits and drawbacks. Additionally, this chapter considers the mission statements and

histories of many of these watchdogging agencies. I examine how volunteer epideictics

evolved into typologies of good and bad donors, and good and bad nonprofits, and how

this typology came to hinge on a new, neoliberal subject.

The final chapter addresses two competing discourses, one dominant and one

subjugated, which paint dramatically different portraits of the modern state of America's

volunteer sector. First, it explores celebratory discourse that identifies the present day as

an age of American humanitarianism and praises the unprecedented size and breadth of

tax-exempt work. Second, it speaks to a competing (largely overlooked) discourse,

emerging from activist circles and activist scholarship, which laments the

nonprofitization of America, and advocates for an anti-racist, poverty politic of de-

nonprofitization. This chapter will examine the different meanings that these two publics

have drawn from the many tropes and terms that have emerged and gained traction since

Reagan's presidency. Above all, these critical examinations of discursive archives aim to answer the three questions that were introduced in Chapter 1:

1. How have "American volunteerism," "nonprofit," and their associated network of charismatic terms functioned rhetorically and ideographically at each of these three junctures?

2. What has the use of these terms enabled and constrained at each of these junctures? How did these terms evolve in the context of power structures, and how did their use negotiate, resist, and reinforce existing power structures?

3. What can this rhetorical history tell us about the problems of the present? What can activists and applied scholars do with this kind of archive?

Chapter 3

A New Heroism for a New Liberalism:

Ronald Reagan's Epideictic

Introduction

Genealogists examine the discursive events, shifts, and trends that condition

current political trends. The past becomes a prism through which we learn the present.

Rhetoric enabling today's volunteer sector -- its force, its breadth, and its resonance with

the American public -- emerged decades ago, even centuries ago. A history of nonprofit

politics, for example, would begin as far back as the American Revolution, the

emergence of early fraternities and secret societies, and the laudation of individual

freedom, when nongovernmental associations represented a threat to liberty (Hall, 2005).

I aim to examine discourses of American volunteerism as they relate to more current

conceptions of freedom, individualism, competition, and enterprise. Specifically, I trace a

history of the relationship between American volunteerism and neoliberal discourse since

1980. In this chapter, I investigate Ronald Reagan's rhetorical contributions to the

American Public -- the terms, tropes and characters that Reagan brought to life, and how

they were received. I will argue that Reagan's pulpit primed Americans with language

that promoted a neoliberal understanding of what it means to serve. I will show that he

primed the public with regard to three tenets of neoliberalism: individualism,

privatization, and entrepreneurship.

I refer to neoliberalism as a discursive formation, rather than an economic trend or

an ideological shift (a distinction outlined by Gilbert, a la Foucault):

'The discursive formation is not ... a developing totality, with its own dynamism

or inertia, carrying with it, in an unformulated discourse, what it does not say,

what it has not yet said, or what contradicts it at that moment; it is not a rich,

difficult germination, it is a distribution of gaps, voids, absences, limits,

divisions'. The explicit point here is that simply because a set of statements, ideas

and practices does not have the absolute uniformity of a pure doctrine, it can

nonetheless be identified and analysed [sic] as a coherent object. (Gilbert, 2013,

p. 8)

The discursive formation (as opposed to an ideology or hegemony) is amoebic in shape.

Reagan's neoliberal treatment of volunteerism is dynamic, gap-ridden, and at times

paradoxical. We must then take very seriously Foucault's point that we can examine an

impure doctrine with a level of coherency in order to broaden our analytical scope and

consider macro-level discursive trends.

Ronald Reagan's Presidency

Ronald Reagan's poverty politic was served to the American public with a keen

wit. He was "the man who joked that America had fought a war on poverty, and that

poverty had won" (Crafton, 2014, p. 27). Despite his light-heartedness, Ronald Reagan's

presidency oversaw a dramatic renegotiation of welfare, poverty response, and service

provision. Marwell (2004) notes that his efforts to "shrink the size and influence of the

federal government" catalyzed "privatization" and "devolution," both of which have

enabled the growth of the nonprofit sector since the 1970s (p. 267). His policies

effectively renegotiated the burden of responsibility for the poor and redefined the roles

of the public and the public sector.

As was discussed briefly in Chapter 1, Reagan offered a two-tiered vision,

displacing government-funded services and instating new responsibilities for private

citizens. Volunteerism was packaged as All-American, and big government framed to

sound bumbling and incapable. Reagan once stated, for example, "The work of volunteer

groups throughout our country represents the very heart and soul of America. They have

helped make this the most compassionate, generous, and humane society that ever existed

on the face of this earth." And famously, he offered, "The nine most terrifying words in

the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help'" (Reagan,

1986).

     During his presidency, most direct service welfare was outsourced to third party

facilitators, namely nonprofit organizations (Marwell, 2004; Salamon, 1995). The federal

government would only be responsible for distributing income support. Service

distribution was heavily outsourced and only partly controlled on a federal level.

Reagan's agenda with respect to anti-poverty work was fueled primarily by his adoption

of Milton Friedman's economic theory -- his rejection of Keynesianism, his promotion of

monetarism, and his formulation of Negative Income Tax (NIT), where families below

the poverty line are supported rather than taxed by the federal government. Perhaps

Reagan's most influential move was the development of the Omnibus Budget

Reconciliation Act (OBRA), a renegotiation of welfare distribution for people with

disabilities or dependent children; it was designed to cut AFDC caseloads (eliminating,

Reagan said, such problems as the "welfare queen"). OBRA represented a substantial cut

to public assistance and "combined categorical programs into the Social Services Block

Grant" (Stoesz & Karger, 1993). These changes were dramatic, and they were intended to

be so.

     While the economic and political impact of Reagan's rollbacks might be

contested (Englander & Kane, 1992), I am interested in the discursive elements of

Reagan's platform. How was his plan presented, and how was the nonprofit sector fixated

in these conversations? Above all, how did Ronald Reagan sell to the American public

that responsibility for the poor, the disabled, and the needy would no longer belong to the

government, but to volunteer citizens? How was it so effectively gift-wrapped?

<div align="center">Ronald Reagan's Public Address</div>

Reagan's rhetorical strategies were multifold, but on the broadest scale his

treatment of American volunteerism was highly epideictic and driven by ethos appeals.

He framed almost every mention of volunteerism, nonprofits, and welfare rollbacks, by

casting praise and blame and renegotiating the responsibilities of the upstanding

American citizen. Epideictic rhetoric most consistently concerns "issues of honor and

dishonor" (Murphy, 1992, p. 68). Further, it both assigns and *ritualizes* praise and blame

(Vivian, 2006). Murphy (2003) explains that it allows public judgment to be viewed

through a "prism" of honor and dishonor (p. 626). Condit (1985) is perhaps the most

specific in explaining that epideictic serves "three functional pairs: definition and

understanding, display and entertainment, and the shaping and sharing of a community"

(p. 288). In this case, Reagan used the epideictic to redefine the nation's understanding of

volunteerism, to build an enthusiastic community of American volunteers, and in true

Reagan form, to entertain. Some scholars have offered that the epideictic form is a

strategy that is preventative of radicalism, and divisiveness (Dow, 1989, p. 301), that it

"precludes dissent" (Murphy, 1992, p. 72). This point is particularly important to a

genealogy, as genealogies and rhetorical histories attempt to unveil the tensions that exist

in discourses that are without (or appear to be without) dissent. Reagan created a "prism"

of honor through which American volunteerism could be understood and adopted.

Praising the New American Hero, and Blaming Bad Humanitarians

In Reagan's pre-presidential and presidential addresses, he framed his welfare plan, his "tax burden relief" strategies and his economic overhaul. In doing so, he was forced to explain who would take on the responsibilities that the federal government would be abdicating in Reagan's ideal political landscape. This presented a rhetorical challenge for Reagan: The government will abdicate social service responsibilities, and volunteer Americans must fill the void. The federal government now had to sell this to the American public. One of Reagan's primary strategies was to spotlight "heroes" of American volunteerism, calling them heroes of the American "spirit." In Reagan's 1986 State of the Union, for example, he discussed four Americans embodying the American dream and the American spirit. The first two American heroes Reagan described were a medical researcher, and a child gospel music performer. But the final two speak to characters serving in a very particular way. The American dream is at risk, and is resurrected by the volunteer spirit:

> We see the dream being saved by the courage of the 13-year-old Shelby Butler, honor student and member of her school's safety patrol. Seeing another girl freeze in terror before an out-of-control school bus, she risked her life and pulled her to safety. With bravery like yours, Shelby, America need never fear for our future. And we see the dream born again in the joyful compassion of a 13 year old, Trevor Ferrell. Two years ago, age 11, watching men and women bedding down in abandoned doorways -- on television he was watching -- Trevor left his suburban Philadelphia home to bring blankets and food to the helpless and

homeless. And now 250 people help him fulfill his nightly vigil. Trevor, yours is

the living spirit of brotherly love. (Ronald Reagan's 1986 State of Union)

The American spirit of humanism is rendered brotherly and future-oriented.

Reagan tells the public that it is brave to step up and address poverty, homelessness, and

distress in an entirely non-political, non-systemic way. The spirit of the American

volunteer is so simple, so intuitive, so spur of the moment, that a child can do it. And

perhaps a child, unfettered by the desire to complicate poverty response, is best

positioned for Reagan's praises. American heroism is individuated, volunteerism is made

a goal for the individual, rather than the collective. And most importantly, heroes are

nongovernmental providers of good will. Civic volunteer heroism is for the every man,

unaffiliated and unobstructed, able to recognize unjust moments rather than unjust

systems and responding with a quick adrenaline rush, a step out of the suburbs and into

moving traffic.

This call for *individual* heroic responses to social problems was not unique

Reagan's second State of the Union. In his first State of the Union, he assigned praise to

individual civic heroes similarly.

[T]here are unsung heroes: single parents, couples, church and civic volunteers.

Their hearts carry without complaint the pains of family and community

problems. They soothe our sorrow, heal our wounds, calm our fears, and share our

joy.

A person like Father Ritter is always there. His Covenant House programs in New

York and Houston provide shelter and help to thousands of frightened and abused

children each year. The same is true of Dr. Charles Carson. Paralyzed in a plane

crash, he still believed nothing is impossible. Today in Minnesota, he works 80

hours a week without pay, helping pioneer the field of computer-controlled

walking. He has given hope to 500,000 paralyzed Americans that some day they

may walk again. (Ronald Reagan's 1982 State of Union)

Reagan's heroes not only address material needs of fellow Americans, they carry on a

particular American *affect* of service-provision, independent volunteerism and *solitary*

heroic action.

And then there's Larry Skutnik, the centerpiece of Reagan's epideictic. Larry

Skutnik was a government employee who, while off the clock, caught a glimpse of "a

chance to be a hero" (Washington Post, Jan 15, 1982). Skutnik, on his walk home from

work, witnessed a plane crash into the freezing Potomac River in Washington D.C.

Seeing a woman drowning in the wreckage, Skutnik dove into the water and pulled her to

safety. Though he had hypothermia, he lent his jacket to a crash survivor. He resisted

medical treatment, saying "I'd heard all these horror stories about hospitals and all the

forms. The first thing I said when I got there was 'is this going to cost me anything?'"

(Washington Post, Jan 15, 1982). He was welcomed by the media as the everyman's

hero, no frills, nothing fancy, just doing the right thing.

"Nobody else was doing anything," noted the Washington Post (Jan 15, 1982).

Skutnik said "it was the only way." And this is key -- Reagan noted that "Nothing had

picked him out particularly to be a hero, but without hesitation there he was and he saved

her life" (Washington Post, Jan 15, 1982). The child-like simplicity of Shelby Butler and

Trevor Ferrell is echoed in Reagan's descriptions of Skutnik. "Skutnik said he didn't

have any profound thoughts. 'I just did it'" (Washington Post, Jan 15, 1982). Americans

were conditioned to see Skutnik's spirit as resonating with all that it means to be

American.

Foucault (2008) explains that the conception of labor in American neoliberalism

is marked by a focus on enterprise.

> This is not a conception of labor power; it is a conception of capital-ability which,
>
> according to diverse variables, receives a certain income that is a wage, an
>
> income-wage, so that the worker himself appears as a sort of enterprise for
>
> himself.... the basic element to be deciphered by economic analysis is not so much
>
> the individual, or processes and mechanisms, but enterprises. (p. 225)

He goes on, "In neoliberalism -- and it does not hide this; it proclaims it -- there is also a

theory of homo economicus, but he is not at all a partner of exchange. Homo economicus

is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself" (p. 226). I would argue that the economic

rationalization associated with neoliberalism, which Foucault discusses here, was applied

to American understandings of volunteerism during the Reagan administration. The

individual's value comes from a source of self-propulsion. The body, as a solitary force

of entrepreneurial spirit, drives neoliberalism.

> The individual's life must be lodged, not within a framework of a big enterprise
>
> like the firm or, if it comes to it, the state, but within the framework of a
>
> multiplicity of diverse enterprises connected up to and entangled with each other,
>
> enterprises which are in some way ready to hand for the individual, sufficiently
>
> limited in their scale for the individual's actions, decisions, and choices to have
>
> meaningful and perceptible effects, and numerous enough for him not to be
>
> dependent on one alone. (Foucault, 2008, p. 241)

Reagan positioned Skutnik at the center of his State of the Union, and while the media

recognized his story prior to the State of the Union, it took off after Reagan's address. "A

young government employee who dived into the river to save a woman too weak to grip a

rescue line spent most of their time today giving interviews" (New York Times, Jan. 15

1982). He was "one bright patch on a black day," (Washington Post, Jan 17, 1982); a

perfectly ordinary looking young man… modest to the point of humility" (Washington

Post, Jan 17, 1982). Reagan used Skutnik to shout out, "Don't let anyone tell you that

America's best days are behind her. We've seen it triumph too often in our lives to stop

believing in it now" (Washignton Post, Jan 27, 1982). What made Skutnik so spectacular,

though, was his extraordinary resonance with the Reagan's audience. The Washington

Post covered Reagan's State of the Union:

> Most of the 21 bursts of applause that punctuated Mr. Reagans' speech came from
>
> the Republic side, with the democrats for the most part listening in icy silence. A
>
> number of Democrats laughed aloud at Mr. Reagan's pledge of support for
>
> women's rights and at his acknowledgement that the 1983 deficit would exceed
>
> his expectation. *The entire audience joined in a standing ovation for Lenny*
>
> *Skutnik*, who dived into the frigid Potomac River to rescue a victim of the January
>
> 13 airplane crash here. Mr. Skutnik sat with Mrs. Reagan during the address and
>
> was hailed by the President as epitomizing the heroic spirit in the United States.
>
> (Washington Post, January 27, 1982, Emphasis Added)

Lenny Skutnik's dive into the Potomac was the great bipartisan "icebreaker," good for

applause on either side of the isle. Skutnik was the centerpiece of the new American

Spirit, and he was rhetorically unimpeachable. For a moment, the term "Skutnik" was

currency.

Liberals were incensed. The Washington Post published a satirical piece in 1982

speculating about where Washington bureaucrats would go when Reagan succeeded in

fostering welfare families to churches and synagogues in 10 family groups. It ended:

> The bureaucrats? It is doubtful that any state would simply close their borders to
>
> them. The United Nations might protest, and the Soviets could make propaganda
>
> saying it was a violation of the Helsinki Accords. Possibly if they can get relatives
>
> in other states to sponsor them, they could make it to Nebraska or Kansas. What
>
> would they do back home? They might as well grow African violets, drink coffee
>
> and read the papers -- that's what the country thinks they do anyway -- and drop
>
> the name of Lenny Skutnik whenever possible. (Washington Post, January 31,
>
> 1982)

Skutnik's name was politically unstoppable, and it appears to have been maddening to

those in disagreement. Name-dropping Skutnik got the job done. Everyone knew it, and

nobody could stop it, so we might as well take up gardening.

Was Lenny Skutnik not unequivocally heroic? By any metric he is surely

deserving of praise. This, of course, is the wrong question for the genealogist. Skutnik's

very particular form of volunteerism was affiliated by Reagan with the American spirit,

and assisted in the reconstruction of American values and the American orientation

towards volunteerism. Foucault (2004) wrote, "the ordoliberal idea of making the

enterprise the universally generalized social model functions in their analysis or program

as a support to what they designate as the reconstruction of a set of what could be called

'warm' moral and cultural values which are presented precisely as antithetical to the 'cold' mechanism of competition" (p. 242). When Reagan commends Skutnik on the national stage, warm American values are tied to a charming and simpleton form of humanitarianism, which involves no forethought. Take an off-the-clock government employee with a down-home manner. Add a can-do attitude and a good hoisting of oneself by one's bootstraps. You've got yourself a praiseworthy American hero. Weaver (1985) describes this very phenomenon, where God terms are linked to political trends in such a way that one ends up going to war for apple pie.

No one would suggest that Skutnik ought to be painted as a villain, but Skutnik's irreproachable status is *political*. He is made uncontroversial, and rendered neutral, which for Foucault is a precarious position. Condit (1985) argued that the epideictic is marked by its assignment of praise and blame, its "colorful style" and most importantly, its "noncontroversiality" (Condit, 1985, p. 291). The epideictic form is notable not only for what it *is* but for what it is politically *capable* of. Murphy (2003) writes that the epideictic emerges in times of "communal rupture" and "brings particular values to life" (p. 610). In these moments, the epideictic valorizes heroes, "providing consolation to the living but dramatizing models of arête worthy of imitation in the present" (Vivian, 2006, p. 2). In this way, it is descriptive of a political moment, constitutive of that moment's importance, and highly prescriptive to the public. When it emerges from a position of power, the epideictic voice re-establishes order and social cohesion by reminding (or retrospectively creating a memory) of how good citizens ought to be and become worthy of praise. This was Reagan's primary epideictic mechanism. Reagan valorized a new kind

of American hero, a self-propelled private citizen, a spontaneous volunteer who is

unstained by politics, and therefore perfect for political deployment.

Reagan's use of epideictic rhetoric has been discussed in relation to national crisis

(Dow, 1989), but not in relation to welfare and poverty politics. Reagan's rhetorical

treatment of welfare and anti-poverty work is ripe for epideictic inquiry, especially in

light of Vivian's (2006) formulation of "the neoliberal epideictic." Vivian explains,

"neoliberal epideictic invests an ironically apolitical vocabulary of democratic excellence

with the authority of tradition, prosperity, and even sacred prophesy" (Vivian, 2006, p.

4). The "neoliberal epideictic consequently amounts to a willful, and therefore dangerous,

aestheticization of politics" (Vivian, 2006, p. 19). Vivian's description implies that there

are more than just descriptive questions at play and that there are material and political

implications at stake when neoliberal epideictic is deployed.

The American public is handed "warm," all-American humanitarians, and their

"cold" counterparts. It is not that Lenny Skutnik and a great number of middle school

traffic guards are not heroic. Rather, a particular brand of humanism becomes

characteristic of America, allowing us to dissociate from "the State's" help and

simultaneously associate with "the Nation's" values. And we cannot imagine an

alternative affect of American volunteers. The rendering of particular mechanisms as

'antithetical' and 'cold,' brings us to the second characteristic of epideictic rhetoric.

Blame is cast and set against the praiseworthy.

In this case, Reagan created a dialectic of good and bad humanitarianism, patriotic

and foolish citizenship, heroic and fair-weather volunteers. Reagan paired his praises

with the admonition of "bad" humanitarians and "bad" humanitarianism, honorable and

dishonorable volunteers. And this is how the epideictic operates. Reagan's assignment of

blame is particularly interesting to our "problem of the present," as he worried about the

haphazard humanitarian. In a 1964 speech, Reagan offered:

> There is only an up or down – [up] man's old – old-aged dream, the ultimate in
>
> individual freedom consistent with law and order, or down to the ant heap of
>
> totalitarianism. And regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives those
>
> who would trade our freedom for security have embarked on this downward
>
> course…
>
> Yet anytime you and I question the schemes of the do-gooder, we're denounced
>
> as being against their humanitarian goals. They say we're always 'against'
>
> something – we're never 'for' anything. (Ronald Reagan, 1964)

Reagan worries about good intentions gone astray, echoing his larger critique of the

Democratic Party. Liberalism, for Reagan is both to blame and unaware of its faults. The

above passage may strike us as ironic, given the thesis of this chapter -- Reagan seems to

create space for the criticism of humanitarianism. But this is the brilliance of his

messaging. He promotes the impeachment of the unimpeachable (care for the poor in the

form of welfare services), and immediately instates a new untouchable trope: The

Skutnik. The assignment of praise, the casting of blame, and the renegotiation of

responsibility.

<div align="center">The Responsibilities of the Individual</div>

As Reagan constructed his epideictic, he had to delegate the responsibilities of

anti-poverty work and service provision to the poor. He had to relocate these

responsibilities to a new, nongovernmental locus. Rather than pointing to a particular

agency, Reagan promoted individual forces, and isolated, solitary action. In 1979, Reagan

offered:

> The key to restoring the health of the economy lies in cutting taxes… this does
>
> not mean sacrificing essential services, nor do we need to destroy the system of
>
> benefits, which flow to the poor, the elderly, the sick and the handicapped. We
>
> have long since committed ourselves, as a people, to help those among us who
>
> cannot take care of themselves. But the federal government has proven to be the
>
> costliest and most inefficient provider of such help we could possibly have.
>
> (Ronald Reagan, 1979)

We can see here how Reagan is strained. Blame has been effectively assigned, but praise

and responsibilities are unable to compensate for the "big government problems."

Skutnik cannot distribute welfare, so to whom does this job fall? Reagan bypassed this

problem by focusing on citizens' responsibilities to uphold and spread *values* (as opposed

to material goods, for example):

> Together, let us make this a new beginning. Let us make a commitment to care for
>
> the needy; to teach our children the values and the virtue handed down to us by
>
> our families; to have the courage to defend those values and the willingness to
>
> sacrifice them. (Ronald Reagan, 1980)

He spoke directly to the value of "voluntary service," which is as close as he gets to

addressing the voluntary sector without doing so directly, and the family unit is the most

communal structure he refers to. He says in 1980, "Let us pledge to restore, in our time,

the American spirit of voluntary service, of cooperation, of private and community

initiative; a spirit that flows like a deep and mighty river through the history of our

nation." He expresses a similar hope again in 1981:

> Our basic system is sound. We can, with compassion, continue to meet our
>
> responsibility to those who, through no fault of their own, need our help. We can
>
> meet fully the other legitimate responsibilities of government. We cannot
>
> continue any longer our wasteful ways at the expense of the workers of this land
>
> or of our children. (Ronald Reagan, 1981)

Ultimately, Reagan's assignment of responsibility remains vague, and highly

individualized. It is the picture of Vivian's neoliberal epideictic, "politically

anesthetized" and ideologically charged. That is, Reagan's epideictic tells us what the

Nation is, and avoids telling us what the State does (or perhaps more importantly, what

the State will no longer be doing).

This non-specificity is not without its vulnerabilities. During Reagan's first

presidential debates, serious contradictions emerged. In response to a discussion about

abortion, Reagan offered:

> Now I have thought for a long time that too many of our churches have been too
>
> reluctant to speak up in behalf of what they believe is proper in government, and
>
> they have been too lax in interfering in recent years with government's invasion
>
> of the family itself, putting itself between parent and child… now, whether it is
>
> right for, on a single issue, for anyone to advocate that someone should not be
>
> elected or not, I won't take a position on that. But I do believe that no one in this
>
> country should be denied the right to express themselves, or to even try to

persuade others to follow their lead. That is what elections are all about…

(Ronald Reagan, 1980, Baltimore)

The moderator, then, stepped in to clarify and to prompt a question that goes un-

answered. She says, "Okay. I would point out that churches are tax-exempt institutions,

and I will repeat my question. Do you approve the Church's action this week in Boston,

and should a president be guided by organized religion on issues like abortion, equal

rights and defense spending." From there, Reagan redirected and never addressed the

"nonprofit problem." The contradictions of government interference and the pro-life

politic collide with Reagan's orientation towards individualism and the invisible

responsibilities of a voluntary sector.

Drawing out Implications

When Weaver defined "ultimate terms," he wrote, "Perhaps these observations

will help the speaker who would speak against the stream of 'progress' or who, on the

other hand, would parry some blow aimed at him through the potency of the word, to

realize what a momentum he is opposing" (Weaver, p. 214). Pinpointing these god terms,

the Skutnik, Reagan's heroes, allow us to unveil them as politically non-neutral.

Foucaultian genealogy aims itself at a similar goal, enabling us to feel those things which

have been, as Vivian says, politically anesthetized.

The epideictic contributes to the materialization of political realities. Sheard's

(1996) examination of the epideictic calls us to:

> "reconceptualize epideictic as discourse that serves more exigent social and civic
>
> functions than simply celebrating, reinforcing, or reexamining values… [it]
>
> moves its audience toward a process of critical reflection that goes beyond

evaluation toward envisioning and *actualizing* alternative realities, possible

worlds."

<div align="right">(Sheard, 1996, p. 787)</div>

Reagan's epideictic treatment of civic volunteerism may have done exactly this, and

enabled the actualization of a new American volunteerism that resembled private sector

ideologies and individualism far more than its earlier incarnations. The epideictic, Sheard

tells us, is not an inconsequential casting of praise and blame. It is politically momentous,

and ideologically charged.

 Undergirding the power of epideictic rhetoric is the deployment of ideologically

loaded terms. McGee's (1980) rendering of the ideograph, and Weaver's (1985)

discussion of "god terms" offer a starting point for a discussion of Reagan's deployment

of specific, ideologically infused terms within his epideictic. McGee (1980) developed

the term "ideograph" to refer to a gap in existing literature. He felt that we needed to

address the collectivity of human thought and behavior in a way that spoke both to

rhetoric and to ideology. "They are the basic structural elements, the building blocks, of

ideology. Thus they may be thought of as 'ideographs,' for, like Chinese symbols, they

signify and 'contain' a unique ideological commitment" (McGee, 1980, p. 7). His

definition enables a very particular kind of conversation about rhetoric. He explains that

we are conditioned to *vocabularies* of concepts, rather than explicit beliefs, and that these

vocabularies "function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief"

(McGee, p. 6). This calls us, for example, to consider how Reagan's epideictic

conditioned publics to specific ideological vocabularies, rather than particular beliefs,

ways of talking about heroism and volunteers rather than beliefs about them.

McGee (1980) offers the example that "we make a rhetoric of war to persuade us of war's necessity but then forget that it is a rhetoric (p. 6). Reagan made a rhetoric of heroism to persuade us of anti-poverty policies, rendering invisible that heroism is a rhetoric. Most importantly, for McGee, ideographs are forces that match and connect to other ideographs in ideograph clusters. In the context of Reagan's rhetoric, this calls us to consider the relationships between such terms as "hero," "America," and, "volunteer" for example.

Weaver (1985) writes that "[The] capacity to demand sacrifice is probably the surest indication of the 'god term,' for when a term is so sacrosanct that the material goods of this life must be mysteriously rendered up for it, then we feel justified in saying that it is in some sense ultimate" (p. 214). Presidential tributes to heroes of service and philanthropy surely fit this description and warrant this discussion of Reagan's epideictic.

An exploration into Reagan's epideictic sets up new genealogical questions as we look toward the evolution of American volunteerism in the decades that separate Reagan from modern critiques: How is it that the tensions Reagan experiences between the value of individual public heroes and the responsibilities of a unified public are manifest in far critical rhetorics thirty years later? Most importantly, though, Reagan's rhetorical strategies illustrate Sheard's proposition. Sheard argues that epideictic is not "mere rhetoric" as many have implied. My point, in examining Reagan's public addresses, is not to reinforce the epideictic as a "worthy" or "authentic" form of public address. I argue, instead, that Reagan's epideictic contributed to the actualization of political realities in the twenty first century.

Chapter 4:

Nonprofit Watchdogging &

New Discourses of American Volunteerism in the 1990s

Introduction

This chapter attends to a second juncture in the formation of American volunteerism discourses. It explores the emergence of nonprofit watchdogging agencies; discourses that promoted the public proctorship of nonprofits; and the citizen surveillance of tax-exempt donations in the 1990s. As this project offers a "history of ideas," the tropes, ideographs and rhetorical styles traced in this chapter are closely tied to the themes that emerged in Chapter 3. It also introduces new themes that are more intimately connected to neoliberalism as a discursive trend: the government's outsourcing of responsibilities and the promotion of widely dispersed surveillance behaviors that are facilitated by the public and not localized within the government.

I argue that the particular way that American volunteerism discourses were constructed in the 1980s enabled a way of communicating about the volunteer sector (and volunteers) as something to be praised and blamed in an epideictic script of proctorship. As Foucault wrote, "Liberalism in America is a whole way of being and thinking. It is a type of relation between the governors and the governed, much more than a technique of governors with regard to the governed" (Foucault 2008, p. 218). In other words, the kinds of surveillance we imagine to take place within a neoliberal landscape are not *imposed* by the State. Techniques of governing are more complicated, less episodic, less centralized, and more difficult to identify. This chapter examines the emergence of self-governing, non-governmental watchdog discourses that shaped constructions of volunteerism, both good and bad. In addition to arguing that the formation of discourses in the 1980s conditioned the American public to a particular way of talking about

volunteerism in the 1990s, I will argue that the attacks on September 11, 2001 marked a

distinct turning point that intensified already present themes and introduced others.

<div align="center">The Epideictic Reincarnated</div>

While Ronald Reagan used the epideictic form to cast praise and blame on

independent charity and government welfare, the 1990s saw public discourse that

assigned blame and praise to praiseworthy and blameworthy charities, and by extension,

good and bad donors. Newspapers covered nonprofit watchdogging agencies frequently,

and celebrated the rise of charity surveillance. This discourse hinges on the construction

of several neoliberal characters, each possessing an entrepreneurial, bootstrap-slinging

spirit reminiscent of Reagan's heroes.

The first of these characters is the "wise donor" who emerges frequently in

Guidestar advertisements and op. ed.'s alike:

> "'The wise donor is going to look into an organization before deciding to devote
>
> efforts to it,' said Bennett Weiner, head of the business bureau's philanthropic
>
> service in Arlington, Va. In many cases, people's time may be an even larger
>
> commitment than money, he said, and 'that's all the more reason that they should
>
> be comfortable with the choice they have made.'" ("Level of giving climbs,"
>
> 1997)

The ethic of donating is driven by the independent choices of the donor. The wise donor

does not devote his precious resources, his personal capitol to something he has not

thoroughly investigated. And of course, investing his time, his body, to this effort

represents a more intimate investment. Research makes the donor wise. This wise donor

ought to "Demand detailed written descriptions of the charity's mission and spending,

resist overly emotional "emergency" appeals and don't commit on the spot to unfamiliar

groups" ("Level of giving climes," 1997). He is driven by logic, not pathos, and only

invests in the stable organization that does not need money *immediately.*

The wise donor can be best understood alongside his counterpart, the foolish donor

who does not treat his donation as an investment.

> Most of the charities are legitimate. But using mail solicitations to pick your
>
> charities is about as smart as investing in a mutual fund because you think its
>
> manager has great hair. (Block, 1998)

Rather than relying on the charity's own advertisements, the wise donor makes use of

objective scales for surveying and ordering the worthiness of organizations. He ought to

"ask for an annual report" and inquire as to "how much of each dollar it spends on

programs, how it pursues goals" ("Level of giving climbs," 1997). And he is to "ask

whether [he] is being solicited by a professional fund-raiser, and, if so, how much goes to

that outfit and how much to the charity itself. If doubts persist, check with the charity to

verify the legitimacy of the solicitation" ("Level of giving climbs," 1997).

Deliverables become a mechanism for "true charity." This mirroring of a market

mentality, of investment and scrutiny, marks a component of neoliberalism as a

discursive formation.

> [T]he economic grid will or should make it possible to test governmental action,
>
> gauge its validity, and to object to activities of the public authorities on the
>
> grounds of their abuses, excesses, futility, and wasteful expenditure… It involves
>
> scrutinizing every action of the public authorities in terms of the game of supply

and demand in terms of efficiency with regard to the particular elements of this

game. (Foucault, 2008, p. 246)

In this case, the economic standard becomes a tool for the evaluation of not only

government action, but tax-exempt action as an extension of the State. "You wouldn't

invest in a mutual fund just because it sent you a letter with a sad-eyed dog on the

envelope," offered the *New York Times*, "Yet, every holiday season, thousands of

otherwise smart investors send money to charities based on little more than a heart-

tugging appeal" (Block 1998). Legitimate charities are marked clearly by this kind of

press. Legitimate charities "will be just as happy to receive your donation tomorrow as

today," they will not attempt to sway you with "sob stories or other emotional appeals"

(Paradis 1999), they do not "describe the organization in vague terms, notices that you

have won a prize and offers to send someone over to pick up your donation right now."

Furthermore, the illegitimate nonprofit is elusive. "'With homicide, you have a body, a

victim. Charity fraud is more of an invisible crime,'" Karl Emerson, the director of the

PA Bureau of Charitable Organizations told *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (Carr,

2000). Tom Steckler, the assistant director of consumer services at the Florida

Department of Agriculture, told *The Atlanta Journal* charity fraud is "a hard animal to

capture" (Carr, 2000).

This anxiety, surrounding charity fraud as a particularly wicked crime, is

fascinating and points to the dispersal of these proctorship mechanisms. The State's

responsibilities are clear, but as social services are made tax exempt and outsourced, the

proctorship of these organizations becomes complicated for the neoliberal subject. The

result, in this case, was that the neoliberal donor feels anxiety, and feels compelled to

engage in surveillance himself. The purity of charity depends on the scrutiny of the

public by the public. This idea is particular to American neoliberalism, as Foucault

explains it, and the need for constant proctorship over State activity, in this case over tax-

exempt money, marks part of the transition from liberalism to neoliberalism in America.

> So it is a matter of a market economy without laissez-faire, that is to say, an active
>
> policy without state control. Neoliberalism should not therefore be identified with
>
> laissez-faire, but rather with permanent vigilance, activity, and intervention.
>
> (Foucault, 2008, p. 132)

This turn towards vigilance (a major development since Reagan's diagnosis that

Americans felt unable critiquing good intentions), promoted suspicion and anxiety in the

context of increased giving. American media outlets whirled around the idea that charity

giving was hot, and trust was not. "Charitable giving is up, but giving with confidence is

not. Americans harbor more than a grain of suspicion about the calls, mail and door-to-

door seekers wanting a piece of their philanthropic pie" ("Level of giving climbs," 1997).

Jon Pratt, the executive director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits in St. Paul told

the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* that, "'Trust is down everywhere…' public disclosure is

'absolutely preferable to any content regulation' such as the government determining

ticket prices or how much can be spent on fund-raising" (Selix 2000). In other words, the

public's surveillance of charities at every turn is preferable to the State's control over

them.

Some referred to a sort of vague origin of these suspicions. One newspaper

offered that "Ever since some folks pocketed money raised during World War I for the

doughboys in the European trenches, charity checkers have been waving red flags over

suspect philanthropy, estimated by federal officials to consume $ 1.5 billion a year"

("Level of giving climbs," 1997). Of course, this origin is imagined to some extent, as

the boom of charities, and the rise of watchdogging agencies took place in the 1990s, as

did the burst in news coverage of good and bad charities, and good and bad charity

"investors." A story emerges, though, that there is something American about this kind

of surveillance over treasonous, philanthropy bad-guys. Proctorship is American,

donations are investments, and charity is not just about giving, it's about giving that must

be made to count. "They say a bit of investigating before giving can be something of a

charitable act in itself" ("Level of giving climbs," 1997). This new way of understanding

investment and the work of capital is an arm of the formation of neoliberal discourse.

> In their analysis of human capital, you recall, the neo-liberals tried to explain, for
>
> example, how the mother-child relationship, concretely characterize by the time
>
> spent by the mother with the child, the quality of the care she gives, the affection
>
> she shows, the vigilance with which she follows its development, its education,
>
> and not only its scholastic but also its physical progress, the way in which she not
>
> only gives it food but also imparts a particular style to eating patterns, and the
>
> relationship she has with its eating, all constitute for the neo-liberals an
>
> investment which can be measured in time. (Foucault, 2008, p. 244)

Jut as the neoliberal mother invests capital in her child with time, care, and affection, so

too does the neoliberal patron invest capital in his charity of choice. Care is an

investment, charity is an investment, and it must be given a metric for evaluation.

Furthermore, this kind of care is what makes "the experience of having money" more

meaningful. Having wealth and finding meaning in wealth becomes its own lifestyle.

One magazine that highlighted the importance of watchdogging agencies described itself:

"Our publication focuses on the personal side of what it's like to have more money than

other people. How to make the experience of having money something positive and

meaningful." And what appears to define the experience of having money across the

board, even the experience of having very little disposable income, is the intense desire to

control what happens to your donation.

> You're all set to contribute to a charity -- let's call it Worthy Cause. But there's
>
> a hitch: you have heard the stories about charity administrators spending more
>
> money on limousines and lunches than on helping the poor. You want to insure
>
> your money is put to good use. (Roberts, 1998)

And even the watchdogging agencies themselves are hesitant to offer this feeling of

control. They continue to "outsource" responsibilities back to the public.

> Users of Helping.org will have to do their own research on the effectiveness and
>
> integrity of the charities. The site simply lists every nonprofit registered with the
>
> Internal Revenue Service. "We don't want to be in the vetting business. The
>
> liability would be horrible." (Henry, 1999)

The individual becomes the vector for a culture of surveillance that is necessary and

completely decentralized. The watchdogs themselves are hesitant to be the locus for

watchdogging. Foucault refers to this shift, from a competitive "supermarket society" to

an "enterprise society, in which "the homo economicus sought after is not the man of

exchange or man the consumer; he is the man of enterprise and production" (Foucault,

2008, p. 147). The individual, within the neoliberal framework, is the locus of

production and the vector of power. Power is not imposed on him by the State, the

State's power runs through him as a limb of the State, an arm of proctorship.

Donations in these years are portrayed as investments that enable the donor to

maintain control and access transparency long after money has been given away.

Furthermore, something is increasingly expected in return for donations. As in the liberal

framework, donations become a mechanism of exchange, not gift, and as in the neoliberal

framework, the individual views the donation as an investment to be controlled and

surveyed *by* the public. The president of the American Antiquarian Society shared with

The Sunday Telegram that "I think that, when people make a contribution to a nonprofit,

they're making an investment. And just as they turn to the Web for information about

corporations they might invest in, [Guidestar] is a useful way to get information about the

charities they invest in" (Bodor, 1999). Others told *The Atlanta Journal* that "Disclosure

and transparency are essential to maintaining that public trust" (Carr, 2000).

Gifts can't exist in the neoliberal framework, as they have to be filtered through

the "enterprise" understanding of what it is to be a citizen. Not surprisingly, it is in these

years that donations in the form of "adoption" become particularly popular. "Charity

becomes less a gift than a transaction" (Leland, 2000). Mason Weinrich, the executive

director of the Whale Center of New England, told the *New York Times* that, at "the

nation's first adopt-a-whale programs… potential adopters play favorites. Baby whales,

for example, draw swarms of adoptive parents. 'Mature males tend to be adopted the

least.' The program uses donations to study all the whales and their habitat, but that

doesn't mean that some whales don't get their feelings hurt" (Leland, 2000). We see in

this trend, the emergence and intensification of the homo economicus as an entrepreneur

of philanthropy, a patron of investment. Philanthropists were encouraged to adopt everything from baby whales to rare manuscripts. The *Times* said, "As the literature promises, 'An artifact's adopter becomes as important to a piece as does a parent to a child.' Unlike charities that use your donations for things like postage or office supplies, adoption charities promise to love you back" (Leland, 2000). The adoption format offers a win-win. The donor is guaranteed not to fund those shameful administrative costs (after all, what legitimate nonprofit uses pens?), and they engage in an affective enterprise. They produce a *relationship* of patronage.

Debra Snider, the communications director at Guidestar told *The New York Times* that "recent scandals involving the United Way of America and other charities, potential benefactors [have become] wary of giving money to nebulous causes, where it might be used up in overhead and staff salaries. 'They want to know exactly what their money is being used for. People would rather buy a cow than give $100 to relieve third-world hunger" (Leland, 2000). This desire for the "feeling" of doing good, the relief associated with knowing exactly where one's donation goes, is akin to these "warm moral and cultural values" Foucault describes that soften the coldness of enterprise" (Foucault, 2008, p. 242).

Foucault explains that, "In neoliberalism – and it does not hide from this; it proclaims it… homo economicus is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself… being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings" (Foucault, 2008, p. 226). The neoliberal philanthropist, then, requires strategies for "maximizing good." It's neoliberal biopolitics at its height.

If you've noticed an increase in the number of solicitations from charities in your

mailbox, you're not alone. We're gearing up for the time of giving. Non-profit

organizations and causes, most worthy, some not, are hoping to benefit from your

spirit of generosity. Making donations is a good thing; just be sure your dollars

are being put to maximum good use. Do the following before you whip out your

checkbook or reach for your wallet… (Paradis, 1999)

The decision to give circulated not around the worthiness of the issue, but the question of

the decade: "Will my money be wasted or well spent?" (Johnston, 2000). The desire for

one's control over one's money is ever-present, and these attempts at control promote a

second desire for transparency.

Transparency, in turn, becomes a feature of progress. "My goal was for the public

to be able to get that information in a minute because the more transparency charitable

organizations have the better," Mrs. Hodgkinson, a charity statistics expert, told *The New

York Times*, "and, I believe, transparency will result in more contributions." Daniel

Langan, the director of public information at the National Charities Information Bureau

offered a similar sentiment to *The Washington Post*: "Anything that makes for a better-

informed contributor is excellent" (Henry, 1999). It's clear that information is power.

While the desire for transparency is produced and reproduced by so many

neoliberal "enterprises," it does seem to have an origin, or at least a catalyst that set the

epideictic train back into motion. "The cost of exposing charity finances to widespread

scrutiny is being financed by charities themselves – notably the Ford, Kellogg, and

Mellon foundations – and [Guidestar] is operated by another charity, Philanthropic

Research Inc. of Williamsburg, VA" (Johnston, 1999).

The Ford, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and other foundations have made grants to

Philanthropic Research to have each line on each Form 990 keypunched into a

data base. Philanthropic Research must raise $2 million a year to continue the data

entry until the I.R.S. accepts electronically filed reports from the charities, now

scheduled for 2007. (Johnston, 1999)

We are faced with an absolutely bizarre set of contradictions here. First, we learn that at

its outset, the "transparency" project required $2 million a year in data management

costs, which would be provided by tax-exempt donations from registered nonprofit

foundations, and that this project was designed to alert the public to nonprofits that spent

too much money on administrative needs. Second, the transparency movement was

fueled by four of the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful philanthropy giants in the

country. These foundations have no need to pay board members due to their

extraordinary wealth and influence, a very small percentage of their operating budget

would cover massive administrative costs, including those required to track progress,

trace deliverables, and advertise this information to the public. We must ask, at this

point, a very important genealogical question: At this juncture, who stood to benefit from

nonprofit transparency?

All of these changes are presented under the banner message that they are

indicative of national progress, that the outsourcing of proctorship represents a changing

landscape of humanitarianism, and that nonprofits are the future in the age of a shrinking

federal government. "We're riding a monumental interest in the subject of philanthropy

and giving back," Randall Jones, the chief executive of Capital Publishing told *The New

York Times* (Pogrebin, 1997). "'People are looking more to philanthropic sources for

new ideas and leadership in a period when government is shrinking,' said Susan Vail

Berresford, the president of the Ford Foundation'" (Pogrebin, 1997). Government was

out, and nonprofits were in. Furthermore, many offered this as a sort of concession that

the government would be incapable of policing the nonprofit sector anyway:

> 'Congress for some time has viewed the 990 and public access to the 990 as an
>
> important compliance tool almost independent of the IRS,' said Marcus Owens,
>
> who recently left the IRS as director of the Exempt Organizations Division in
>
> Washington, D.C. 'It's a tacit recognition that the IRS will never be able to review
>
> all tax-exempt organizations.' The government considers public scrutiny a part of
>
> the privilege of not having to pay taxes. Tax-exempt groups that regularly bring in
>
> $25,000 or more per year are required to file 990s. If a nonprofit refuses to give
>
> out a 990, it faces federal penalties. (Selix, 2000)

The publication of nonprofit tax returns online was referred to as "by far, the most

important development ever in making charities accountable and making their finances

transparent," by Virginia Hodgkinson, a founder of the National Center for Charitable

Statistics (Johnston, 1999). The President of Philanthropic Research told *The New York*

Times that "We are on the verge of a whole new era of nonprofit accountability. The 990

will move rapidly from being this obscure, obnoxious reporting document to something

informative and acceptable and transform itself into a useful document" (Johnston, 1999).

It becomes clear that the landscape of service provision had shifted dramatically. "'There

is certainly an expectation that the genie is out of the bottle…' Instead of treating the 990

as a document that must be filled out and filed, many nonprofit groups are now aware

that their reports will be studied by the public and by charity watchdogs" (Johnston, 2000).

Discourses of American charity were dominated in the 1990s by this very particular way of talking about nonprofits. These discourses were, not coincidentally, in the form of the epideictic and overlapped frequently with neoliberal discursive formations. They represent an understanding of the nonprofit sector as something subject to praise and blame, and more importantly, subject to scrutiny. Furthermore, they display the understanding that this scrutiny ought to be the responsibility of the individual, rather than the State. These patterns of surveillance point to a Foucaultian understanding of neoliberal power, where governmentality is not imposed on the public by the government. Governing is nuanced, discursive, non-episodic, non-localized, and somewhat elusive. Above all, we can see how these non-localized surveillance discourses echo the epideictic rhetoric that emerged the decade before. The emergence of Guidestar, the popularity of charity watchdogging agencies, and the presence of surveillance discourses in the 90s all lead up to another juncture. American discourses of nonprofit policing changed dramatically following the attacks on September 11, 2001. This juncture yielded the intensification of existing patterns, and introduced entirely new ways of communicating about American volunteerism.

<center>The Post-9/11 Landscape</center>

The attacks on September 11, 1991 recolored every corner of American politics, and discourses of American volunteerism were not immune to these changes. The most immediate impact that 9/11 had on the volunteer sector was that Americans rushed to make donations in every form. "Americans responded to the terror by giving

frantically: their blood, their millions, their pocket change. The disaster triggered a

staggering response that has overwhelmed non-profit agencies" (Boudreau, 2001a).

Each citizen stepped up to the plate, from corporate barons to the poorest of folks.

"Chief executives are reaching into corporate coffers. Children are breaking open

piggy banks. And the Internet is demonstrating its capabilities as a rapid-response

conduit for philanthropy in a way never before seen" (Boudreau, 2001b). Americans

mobilized to "pour money at unprecedented rates into an array of charitable funds"

(Salmon, 2001), and as several news outlets were quick to point out, Americans had

"opened their hearts and their wallets after the terrorist attacks on the East Coast"

(Boyd, 2001). It was estimated that over 70% of Americans were prompted by

September 11th to give money, blood or time. "58% made a financial contribution;

13% gave blood; 11% donated their time and; 73% plan to donate as much or more as

they usually give to other charities" (Block, 2001). These donations of time, money,

and blood changed the landscape of charity in many ways, and the anxieties associated

with the attacks promoted additional stress to the nonprofit sector.

In the same newspapers that covered nonprofit surveillance, existing patterns

intensified. Concern for nonprofit fraud became more severe, and all of a sudden,

there was a fear that a super-villain was among us, attempting to rob the most giving

among us. *The Washington Post* wrote, "The river of cash is raising some concerns,

however. Donors face a confusing assortment of funds, including some that have

formed in just the last week, after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that killed thousands. As

a result, the potential for fraud or mismanagement is high, consumer groups say"

(Salmon, 2001). The American turn towards post-terrorism charity was yet another

vulnerability. Bennet Weiner, the COO for Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving

Alliance told *USA Today* that "Unscrupulous and questionable charities tend to emerge

whenever a crisis occurs. But this time, givers may be particularly vulnerable…Many

of these problems have happened in the past, but I think the attention to charitable need

is magnified because of the intensity of the disaster" (Block, 2001). Reminders about

fraud and checklists outlining what a legitimate charity looks like became more

frequent, and scams were called "particularly heartless" in almost every way

imaginable.

What was even more complicated was that charities could not use all of this

money to respond to immediate needs that were not yet clear. Money could not heal

the national consciousness, yet there was an extraordinary amount of money pouring

in. Some nonprofits, particularly the American Red Cross had no choice but to invest

some of the donations in infrastructure: refrigerators for blood banks being the most

well-documented. This infuriated donors. Guidestar's communications director,

Suzanne Coffman, offered, "Since 9-11, I've seen many more people asking, 'How can

I tell if they're using my contribution wisely?'" The *Telegraph Herald* went on to

explain that, "The American Red Cross was criticized for directing some Sept. 11

donations to other purposes, and subsequently overhauled its disaster fund-raising

policies" (Crary, 2002). Somehow, the post-9/11 anxieties collided with the neoliberal

understanding of charity as an investment to promote hyper-scrutiny and an intensified

desire for control over one's donations.

This desire for increased control took full form after the 9/11 shift. Media

outlets published "control" language frequently. One business owner told *The San*

Jose Mercury News "'If every business could send in $100, imagine the impact we could have,' … before choking up. 'It is a way of taking action at a time when we feel so powerless'" (Boudreau, 2001). Another business owner offered, "I gave what I could give now… If I can't be in New York helping, at least I can donate funds" (Boudreau, 2001). 9/11 struck the national consciousness, and revitalized a sense of intensified civic duty. Those who could lend a hand did so, and those too far to lend a hand lent a buck. A spokeswoman for Freddie Mac told *The Washington Post,* "It's a national tragedy, and we're a large corporation that feels like we have a civic duty to be part of this" (Salmon, 2001). Freddie Mac pledged $10 million in 9/11 response, the largest donation they'd ever offered a single cause. Further, the attacks revitalized a discussion of the humanitarian American spirit.

> That spirit has been abundantly evident in this country's response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Blood donations have soared. Companies have offered supplies and money to the rescue and recovery efforts. And throughout the country, ordinary Americans are opening their hearts and their wallets to charitable relief funds. (Block, 2001)

Ordinary Americans are once again featured as a focal point of charity, producing and investing in causes even if one has very little.

The American public had experienced a dramatic and sudden "loss of control," and there was a very palpable need for citizens to regain their grip on their citizenry, which was exhibited in American media. This was exacerbated when Americans (and media representatives) felt their donations had not been used as they had imagined:

Money [donors] thought was going directly to the victims or families of victims

in the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Pennsylvania crashes is instead being

diverted to charitable agencies' infrastructure and technology needs and

administrative costs, as well as to relief workers. The American Red Cross, for

instance, announced that $105 million of the agency's Liberty Disaster Fund

would go to tolerance, grieving and healing programs, infrastructure upgrades

and technological improvements for blood storage." Preparedness is a big part

of what we do," said Audrey Kintzi, chief development officer of the St. Paul

American Red Cross, and these donations help fund that as well as provide

direct service in disaster areas. (Boyd, 2001)

People felt that they had lost control twice over. Having hoped that at least, in the

context of the panic and the fear, their donations would create a relationship between

those who were affected and those who were most intimately affected, people were

horrified to find out how impersonal their donations really were. "I want to make sure

there is enough money for the kids -- not for buying freezers for blood," Maria Ortega

of Woodbury, who gave to the Red Cross Liberty fund, told the *Saint Paul Pioneer*

Press (53). Charitable and emergency response organizations were forced to respond

to allegations that donations were being mishandled and misappropriated.

"Sometimes…disaster money goes for related expenses. During the 1997 floods in the

Grand Forks, N.D., area, the organization had to buy forklifts to transport donated food

and other supplies. Disaster donations do not pay for salaries" (Boyd, 2001). People

must understand that part of a charity's operating budget must contribute to salaries

and administrative costs. They just don't want *their* money to be *that* money. *Their*

money needs to make a special, direct impact.

So the media mobilized to help people navigate these additional fears and

regain a sense of control. They prompted: "How do you know whether your gift to a

charity will be used as you intended?" (Johnston, 2001). The *New York Times* wrote,

"With upward of 200 organizations, many of them new, raising money in response to

the Sept. 11 attacks, and with 1.2 million charities on the cumulative list kept by the

Internal Revenue Service, is anyone making sure this money is not diverted to a

different cause or to a crooked charity organizer's personal bank account?" (Johnston,

2001). This trust crisis was well documented, as the Brookings Institution

demonstrated:

> In July, just 26% expressed "a lot" of confidence in consolidated appeals like
>
> United Way vs. 39% a year earlier. Some givers say they're also taking a
>
> harder look at charities. Stephen Bloom, owner of Capcom Consulting in
>
> Atlanta, says he's giving only to local charities he knows well. 'If I give to the
>
> United Way, it's being designated to a specific organization at which I'm
>
> involved,' Bloom says. (Fogarty & Block, 2002)

They noted also that there were other contributors to this drop-off than the news around

Sept. 11 donations. The same year, Catholic charities had to manage suspicions after

the sexual abuse scandals, and "Muslim charities [were] fending off suspicions that

they [were] tied to terrorist groups" (Fogarty & Block, 2002). Across the board,

though, it was determined that 2002 was a "nightmare for charities" (Fogarty & Block,

2002). Some of Reagan's old tag lines re-emerged. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* shared

that these cases are "cautionary tale[s], with a moral that we've heard before but that's

always worth repeating: Just because someone says 'it's for a good cause' doesn't make

it so" (Gelles, 2003). People were reminded once again about resisting emotional

appeals, and the prevalence of charity fraud (Gelles, 2003; Boudreau, 2003). There

was a particular concern that emerged surrounding the value of unpaid board members.

The New York Times wrote, "experts say there is seldom any reason to pay directors on

charity boards. The board members should also be drawn from a broad pool and not be

closely tied to the charity's executives. Most charities list their board members on their

letterheads, in their annual reports and on their Web sites" (Johnston, 2001). Board

members of even international aid organizations are expected to be so wealthy that

they do not require salaries of their own. This would be anti-charity. In fact, those

who view nonprofit work as a paid profession are at once heroicized and vilified.

> You might have expected better from the public-spirited folks in the nonprofit
>
> sector. But any such notion was dispelled by this week's series in The Post on
>
> the Nature Conservancy by Joe Stephens and David B. Ottaway. Let me state
>
> upfront that I don't think the Nature Conservancy's bona fides as an
>
> environmental organization are called into question by having corporate
>
> executives on its board of directors and working closely with the oil and timber
>
> companies…. To me, however, the most disturbing revelation of The Post's
>
> series was that even a large and well-respected nonprofit -- a pioneer in
>
> adopting corporate best practices -- turns out to be no more open or transparent
>
> than most money-grubbing corporations. (Pearlstein, 2003)

One chief executive, Jerry Doyle, told *The San Jose Mercury News*, "We expect our

board members to give us money, we don't give them money" (Nalder & Boudreau,

2003). People rejected the idea that service provision was a form of work that

deserved pay, and the idea that the people filling these positions might be a part of the

communities they serve. "There's this feeling that to get the right-stuff people you've

got to pay them," said Pablo Eisenberg, of the Georgetown University Public Policy

Institute to *The San Jose Mercury News.* "That's absolutely ridiculous. I can get you

thousands of really good board members who will do it for nothing" (Nalder &

Boudreau, 2003).

News outlets offered old tried and true suggestions as well as more nuanced

recommendations for nonprofit analysis. It was observed that by this time, "Many

more people are paying more attention to the inner workings of charities" (Boudreau,

2002). With this belief came a call for more than the analysis of nonprofits financial

statements. "Looking at a non-profit's financials is not the only way to assess its

effectiveness," she said. "It doesn't tell you anything about the quality of leadership of

the organization. It doesn't tell you about how effective its programs are" (Boudreau,

2002). There were still concerns about "a serious lack of oversight in the nonprofit

sector" (Pearlstein, 2003). Philanthropy is presented, at once, as "a very personal

decision" (Ballard, 2002), and something subject to extreme, nuanced public scrutiny.

It is hardly realistic to expect nonprofits to come clean about their screw-ups if

the reward for their candor is likely to be public vilification and an immediate

cutoff of funding. Establishing a culture of candor… will require a culture of

tolerance for reasonable risk-taking and the occasional, well-intentioned failure.

(Pearlstein, 2003)

And all at the same time, charity remains an investment. "As any legitimate fund-raiser

will tell you, you have to spend money to raise money. But just as consumers want to

make sure they get the best value for the dollars, contributors typically want the best bang

for their bucks" (Gelles, 2003).

Conclusions

The 1990s saw the emergence of a very particular way of talking about

nonprofits, which was intensified after the attacks on September 11, 2001. These

discourses circulated around the assignment of praise and blame, and the behavior of the

neoliberal subject-surveyor. These conversations display the understanding that

nonprofit policing is a worthy public responsibility and a part of the enactment of

American citizenship. Furthermore, these non-localized surveillance discourses echo the

epideictic rhetoric that emerged the decade before. The attacks on September 11, 1991

and the resulting shifts in American charities spawned more changes. These donations of

time, money, and blood changed the landscape of charity in many ways, and the anxieties

associated with the attacks promoted additional change.

Chapter 5:

Contemporary Nonprofit Discourse

The Contemporary Juncture

Contemporary discourses surrounding "the nonprofit" include rhetorics of promotion, prescription and resistance, which are often paradoxical. At times, the nonprofit sector is celebrated, upheld as a great solution to American social problems and as the centerpiece of humanitarianism. Today's nonprofit sector is larger in revenue and in number of registered organizations than it has been in history. Some players I discuss in this chapter see this as a major triumph and an indication that the sector should take on more responsibilities in American service provision. At the same time, American media outlets discuss and debate volunteerism in ways that renegotiate the relationship between nonprofits, the public, and the private sector. Others paint the contemporary nonprofit in a kind of crisis, along with the private sector, in post-recession years. These discussions point to many of the tensions examined throughout this project, but they also represent a turn to more explicit, mainstream examinations of the *problems* alongside "the nonprofit's" potential. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 examined the tensions that emerged as the nonprofit sector was presented as a proxy-government and as a market bureaucracy. This chapter shows that these tensions crystalized during the millennium, and took hold in calls for the dramatic renegotiation of policy, and the reallocation of responsibilities among the State, the Market, and the nonprofit sector.

In this chapter, I examine a contemporary discourse, which contains both dominant and resistant rhetorics associated with "the nonprofit." Resistant discourses present a paradoxical picture of a nonprofit sector positioned unstably between the State and the Market, awkwardly answering to two masters; they present political action as incompatible with contemporary models of service provision; they present the nonprofit

sector as a tool of profit for a white wealthy class; and they offer suggestions for new forms of nonprofit accountability. Each of these resistant conversations calls in some way, for some degree of "de-nonprofitization," a dramatic scaling back in the growth and breadth of the nonprofit sector.

What is striking about the grassroots calls for de-nonprofitization is that they employ some very powerful rhetorical strategies, namely the use of the logos appeals and perspectives by incongruity, even deploying the epideictic. Players in these conversations at times make use of strategies similar to those used in mainstream rhetoric: the presentation of complicated structural constraints and the assignment of praise, blame and responsibility. They also promote the picture of incongruity in their portrayal of wealth, control and whiteness. These competing rhetorics can be understood in Foucaultian terms as a juncture, where dominant and subjugated discourses "face off," until one is successfully written into history.

In this chapter, I compare the rhetorical strategies of "de-nonprofitizers" to the rhetorical strategies of nonprofit promoters, and I examine a question that is particularly relevant to grassroots activists: how do the rhetorical strategies of de-nonprofitization advocates differ from those promoting and designing the sector's growth and how might activists learn from these distinctions? In other words, what, rhetorically, is giving mainstream rhetorics a head up over resistant rhetorics at this contemporary juncture?

Appealing to Logic: The Nonprofit's Tenuous, Depoliticized Position

Dylan Rodriguez famously named the "nonprofit industrial complex" in an anthology published by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence in 2007. Rodriguez offers:

More insidious than the raw structural constrains exerted by the

foundation/state/non-profit nexus is the way in which this new industry grounds

an epistemology – literally, a way of knowing social change and resistance praxis

– that is difficult to escape or rupture. (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 31)

INCITE!'s anthology presents a series of essays that examine the contemporary

paradoxes of the nonprofit sector, as they are understood by activist scholars and leaders

in the feminist, anti-violence, anti-racism, anti-incarceration, and queer power

movements. Rodriguez portrays a nonprofit industrial complex that is epistemic, a way

of knowing what service and change look like in America, and his description invites

rhetorical inquiry.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, another contributor to the volume and founding member of

Critical Resistance, advances that the grassroots nonprofit organization abides "in the

shadow of the shadow state" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 47). She writes,

They are not direct service providers but often work with clients of such

organizations as well as with the providers themselves. They generally are not

recipients of public funds although occasionally they get government contracts to

do work in jails or shelters or other institutions. [...] The government is often the

object of their advocacy and their antagonisms [...] But the real focus of their

energies is ordinary people whom they wish fervently to organize against their

own abandonment. (Gilmore, 2007, p. 47)

The position of tension between the public and the State is Gilmore's concern, as it

creates multiple, vague channels of accountability and displaces the State as a locus of

responsibility.   The nonprofit sector has, as Gilmore suggested, opened up a bizarre third

sector that is neither public nor private but somehow indebted to both. Her rhetorical

choices are of particular relevance to this project, as she contributes to a broader rhetoric

of resistance. Gilmore appeals to fact, to the way things are structured. She has

beautifully excavated these structures looking for contradictions, points of contention,

and places where unproductive tensions are produced in the grassroots. She ultimately

produces her argument by building and presenting causes, causation, and implications.

Joseph (2007) writes, "Nonprofits mobilize for capital – but not only for capital –

subjectivities that are non (only) of it – are in fact its absent center – and yet set in

motion" (Joseph, 2007, p. 118). Many of the INCITE! contributors express a similar

concern that this untenable positioning of the nonprofit sector and the State promotes a

schism between service provision and political change-making. Mananzala (2008) offers,

"By ameliorating some of the worst effects of capitalist maldistribution, then, [nonprofit]

services became part of maintaining the social order, in part because they primarily

operate through a depoliticizing charity framework rather than a social change model" (p.

56). As the public becomes dependent on the sector, and the sector becomes an object of

surveillance, it is forced into deliverable, short-term quota models, and disabled from

political work. This criticism is particularly interesting giving the mainstream push for

nonprofits to become politicized in order to advocate for the nonprofit sector itself, rather

that to "selfishly" advocate for their individual interests. Mananzala, Joseph, and

Gilmore each offer an explicit discussion of the nonprofit as it navigates "tenuous

positions" in American political infrastructure. These contributors provide a framework

for understanding the grassroots perspective on contemporary nonprofit tensions. They

also offer a platform for understanding the tensions behind the strategic, rhetorical

choices made by the other contributors in the volume. These writers trace timelines and cause-effect relationships. Because the nonprofit is situated here, it is constrained in this way. Because the nonprofit reports to this sector in this way, it experiences these limitations. These activist-scholars, Mananzala, Joseph, and Gilmore, offer appeals to logos. They present a series of political contradictions to make their argument that the nonprofit, positioned as it is, cannot function "properly" or meet the needs of their constituents and clientele.

<div align="center">Perspective by Incongruity: The Nonprofit as Profit-Protection</div>

Some go as far as to present the paradox that the nonprofit is not, non-profit at all. At the center of de-nonprofitization politics is the argument that foundations and nonprofits promote the movement of white capital and the control of "stolen" money by managing tax-exempt money. As Jones de Almeida (2008, p. 186) explains,

> We depend on and report to foundations whose monies are a direct product of the massive profit of global corporations. They give us an insignificant percentage of the profits they make at the expense of millions of people struggling against the same oppression we claim to fight against in our statements of purpose. (Jones de Almeida, 2007, p. 186)

Gilmore offers a similar concern, calling foundations "repositories of twice-stolen wealth." She describes, "a profit sheltered from taxes – that can be retrieved by those who stole it at the opera or the museum, at Harvard or a fine medical facility" (p. 46). The ability for the wealthy to "hide" money in pockets of tax exemption is also a theme in these conversations. Ahn (2008), in particular, points to a series of studies that display some of the incongruities of charity:

A 1999 study commissioned by the Council on Foundations found that from 1950

to 1998, foundations could have paid 6.5 percent annually and still would have

grown their assets by 24 percent. A 2001 Harvard University study showed that

from 1972 to 1996, the 200 largest foundations yielded an average return of 7.62

percent annually on their investment returns while paying out an average of 4.97

percent. At a 2003 meeting of the Northern California Grantmakers, US

Bancorp's Piper Jaffrey presented findings which showed that an investment

portfolio comprising 70 percent equity stocks and 30 percent government bonds

earned an inflation-adjusted return of nearly 8 percent from January 1980 through

December 2002. In other words, foundations are making money. (Ahn, 2007, p.

67)

On the other side of this coin, of course, Ahn noticed the opposite patterns crystalizing in

the reception of grants. "In 2002, less than 2% of foundation grant money was designated

for Black and African American applicants and programs, 1% was designated for

Latina/os, less than 3% for disabled people, 1% for homeless people, 0.1% for single

parents, and 0.1% for gay and lesbian people" (Ahn, 2007, p. 68).   For these activist

writers, blame falls to the wealthy and their continued control over tax-exempt money

with limited oversight. As Gilmore (2007) explains, "The shadow state, then, is real but

without significant political clout, forbidden by law to advocate for systemic change, and

bound by public rules and non-profit charters to stick to its mission or get out of business

and suffer legal consequences if it strays along the way" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 46).

The epideictic is to some degree employed, in that praise and blame are assigned

(respectively) to grassroots activists and wealthy foundations, but it is not presented

alongside a particular set of values (as it was by Reagan and so many nonprofit watchdogging advocates).

The INCITE! contributors (Ahn especially) make use of what Burke called "perspective by incongruity." Burke attends specifically to, "the kinds of hermeticism, or stylistic mercureality, that are got by the merging of categories once felt to be mutually exclusive. This is the realm of 'gargoyles'" (Burke, 1984, p. 69). Gilmore (2007) and Ahn (2007) each enact perspective by incongruity by positioning nonprofits as a tool for profit production and profit protection, offering explicitly contradictory ideas as intrinsically connected. This powerful technique quickly and succinctly unveils the contradictions that Gilmore, Mananzala, and Joseph examine through extended argument. It is a further (faster) attempt at an appeal to logic, an attempt to unveil to the basic structural contradictions and structural constraints of existing infrastructure.

Ahn takes another important step, bridging perspective by incongruity with elements of the epideictic form. Ahn calls for the kind of oversight that keeps the wealthy accountable for their tax exemption. Tax exempt nonprofits, Ahn says, should be understood "as a target for accountability, just as we might organize to hold corporations or the state accountable to the public good" specifically because of this removal of funds from public reserves and the consequent misuse of "charity money" on the part of the wealthy (Smith, 2007, p. 9). For Ahn, tax-exempt money doesn't really belong to the wealthy at all. She refers to it as "exploited wealth" that ought to be "public money" (Ahn, 2007, p. 74). "Foundations are created not only from wealth that was made off the backs of hardworking people, but from a social compact they accepted as a result of major tax benefits their donors received. Individuals who have dedicated

their lives to working for social and economic justice need a major paradigm shift" (Ahn,

2007, p. 74). Allen (2007) made a similar argument in the 1980s about the dangers of

white money influencing the flow of the civil rights movement. Allen (whose work is

highlighted in INCITE!'s volume) believed that mechanisms of monetary control (at

best) condemned much of the civil rights movement to the reformist "desire to become

brokers between the white ruler and the black ruled" (Allen, 2007, p. 62). Allen explains,

"what [...] the cultural nationalists seek is not an end to oppression, but the transfer of the

oppressive apparatus into their own hands" (Allen, 2007, p. 62). King and Osayande go

even further to argue "for their brokering efforts, white-led organizations have been able

to materially benefit as they garner and maintain control of the social justice movements

that disproportionately impact and affect the lived reality of people of color" (King &

Osayande, 2007, p. 81). These accounts display the anxiety that grassroots organizers

have had to manage as a result of the investment mentality of the neoliberal donor. The

donor who is conditioned to control his/her wealth through his/her investment-donations

forecloses on the recipient's autonomy. And this argument, this counter-rhetoric, is

presented in terms of its incongruities: profit emerging from nonprofit "investment,"

maintaining and relinquishing control simultaneously in charity. Incongruity becomes a

powerful rhetorical tool, upon which much of the counter-rhetoric depends.

These activists also expressed tensions in the grassroots that are the result of the

blurred relationship between the independent sector and the State. Rojas (2007) shares,

"More than once, compass from Latin America have asked me: Why are you getting a

permit from the police to protest police brutality? Why are you being paid to do

organizing? Why are people' s movements based in non- profit offices?" (Rojas, 2007, p.

198). These tensions are more than palpable at the grassroots level. They are massively

paradoxical and at times, completely debilitating. Again, grassroots activists rely on

incongruity to present the illogicality of nonprofit politics. Asking the police to protest

police brutality offers a perfect example. Rojas even reiterates the sentiments of a Latin

American audience to make visible what might not be contradictory to an American

audience right away. Rojas is all but shouting, "This doesn't make any sense!"

In particular, the market mentality of the nonprofit sector is offered as an

overwhelming incongruity for grassroots activists. King and Osayande (2007) explain

that,

> The non-profit model makes it easier for young economically privileged people
>
> coming out of college to start a non-profit than to engage in long-term established
>
> movements; the model is obsessed with institution building rather than
>
> organizing; and it forces social justice activists to become more accountable to
>
> funders than to our communities. (King & Osayande, 2007, p. 83)

Perez echoes these concerns. "Foundations are ultimately interested in the packaging and

production of success stories, measurable outcomes, and the use of infrastructure and

capacity building systems" (Perez, 2007, p. 92). He explains also that the "grant market"

interrupts an organizations' ability to build coalitions because of the competitive climate

that pits them against one another (Perez, 2007, p. 93). The result of this marketization

for organizations with both social service and social change goals is grim.

"[O]rganizations, in order to protect their non-profit status and marketability to liberal

foundations, actively self-police against members' deviations from their essentially

reformist agendas while continuing to appropriate the language and imagery of historical

revolutionaries" (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 34). And what's more, they offer that grant writing and deliverable maintenance becomes time consuming, cutting into the work itself:

> Applying for grants from foundations resulted in our taking on additional work as required by guidelines that were not always reflective of our own internal priorities [...] it also required us to overextend ourselves to do both the work we had envisioned and the work we had assumed now as grantees. (Perez, 2007, p. 92)

Causation emerges again as a centerpiece of a logos appeal. Particular conditions induce particular outcomes, which cause the grassroots to suffocate. As Mananzala explains, there is particular concern within these grassroots organizations that these dynamics are destructive to anti-oppressive work. "For people who hold self-determination as a goal of liberation struggles or who believe that people struggling under oppression possess unique understandings of the operations of that oppression that are not shared by others, this concern is especially significant" (Mananzala et al, 2007, p. 57). The tension that Paul Durazo experiences in his anti-violence organization offers a perfect example of restricted self-determination.

> The criminalization of domestic violence created a dual advantage for the state: the perpetrator became the sole party responsible for violence against women while the state positioned itself against the perpetrator and thereby as an ally of battered women. Criminalization also buttressed the state' s claim that prisons were the solution to domestic violence, a framework that has been proven to the contrary while yielding disastrous results for women of color and their communities. (Durazo, 2007, p. 118)

A resistance to market-professionalism emerges frequently within this conversation. "It is very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain political integrity in circumstances that demand a professionalized, businesslike practice. And perhaps that is the point" (Perez, 2007, p. 95). This presents two concerns for the INCITE! contributors – first, it complicates the integrity of the work, as Perez explains, and second, it disables movement-building for organizations that are social-change oriented. Madonna Thunderhawk offers this perspective, "Maybe when we start paying $8 a gallon for gas, people can start being activists again because we won't have a choice. Activism is tough; it is not for people interested in building a career" (Madonna Thunderhawk, 2007, p. 106). Thunderhawk is able to use incongruity to reframe what an activist is, and she is one of few contributors who attempt to redefine grassroots work. Andrea Smith discusses the same tension, noting that "a mass movement requires the involvement of millions of people, most of whom cannot get paid" (Smith, 2008, p. 10). Other contributors to the volume articulate their anxieties surrounding the "schism" between social service and social change (Durazo, 2007). Ahn argues that the American public views volunteerism in two unproductive extremes, either as the culmination of random piecemeal efforts (that will never be as effective as a "systematic public approach to eliminating poverty") or as being dependent on the generosity of a wealthy philanthropic class (which assumes that "foundation grants, rather than organizing [...] will lead to social change" (Ahn, 64). Joseph argues that volunteerism discourses aid in the development of "liberal subjectivity at the site of the nonprofit" (p. 113).

These activist-scholars present a clear and united (though diverse) picture of the problems of the contemporary nonprofit. Their arguments are economic, psychological,

sociological, and discursive, but consistently driven by logos appeals and the unveiling of

incongruities. It was Dylan Rodriguez, the activist who named the nonprofit industrial

complex, who referred to a nonprofit "etymology" that makes it difficult to critique and

"rupture." While their concerns align in many ways with the tensions examined in this

project, their critique has gone largely overlooked outside of grassroots circles. These

thinkers make use of well developed arguments supported by sound research. They

adhere to logical appeals, and the power of perspective by incongruity. They even take

up the assignment of praise and blame, as so many other thinkers have in reference to

"the nonprofit." What separates this counter-rhetoric from both its mainstream

counterpart and other epideictic stories I've examined in this project, is that it is not allied

with any particular set of familiar values. Praise and blame are distributed, but not by

any particular standard (good citizenship or good business, for example). Perhaps there is

a powerful difference between the impact of the epidiectic and the neoliberal epideictic,

but in order to begin answering this question, we have to examine the contemporary

neoliberal epideictic associated with "the nonprofit."

<p align="center">Mainstream Rhetoric, The Other Epideictic</p>

Melinda Gates, one of the most powerful movers and shakers of contemporary

American philanthropy, announced to the Council on Foreign Relations in 2008 her

beliefs about the potential of nonprofits to align themselves with the State and the Market

in order to address social problems:

> Only the nonprofit sector has the primary mission of serving the people who've
>
> been left out… Today… we do have a chance to harness political and market
>
> forces in ways that allow all three sectors to serve the neediest—even as each still

fulfills its separate mission, whether that is serving constituents, making profits,

or meeting the needs of the poor. This kind of collaboration is difficult. It pushes

all three sectors beyond their familiar routines. But it can also direct a much

higher share of talent and energy to improving the lives of the world's poorest

people—and that's what I'd like to talk about today. (Melinda Gates, June 5, 2008)

The kind of solution offered here by Melinda Gates became a fixture of nonprofit

discourse between 2008 and 2012. Public figures, philanthropist writers, and news

outlets rallied around the idea that the sectors must somehow be politically re-united in

order to address contemporary problems effectively and efficiently. Chapter 3 and

Chapter 4 examined the rhetorical blurring of the lines between the public, private, and

independent sectors in the context of neoliberalism: the bureaucratic and marketized

language used to describe and evaluate the nonprofit sector and State-like surveillance

and proctorship language imposed on nonprofits, to name a couple. Mainstream,

contemporary conversations about the nonprofit would suggest that sector-blurring

rhetoric is materializing into sector-blurring *policy shifts* driven by the neoliberal

epideictic. I offer here that the nonprofit epideictic has been more than just "mere

rhetoric," in that it has enabled contemporary policy and political tensions (just as it has

been conditioned by policy all along). It shows further that the renegotiations of work

among the State, the Market and the nonprofit sector continue to be rendered apolitical,

or politicized in such a way that very particular apolitical behaviors are presented to be

patriotic.

The Post-Recession Nonprofit

The pre-Obama years and the first term of Obama's presidency saw dramatic changes in the post-recession economy, the responsibilities of the public sector, the structures of taxation and the government's relationship to the private sector. Americans saw and experienced the impact of the government's rollback of nonprofit and welfare funding, as well as the government's sponsorship of corporate bailouts and post-recession support. Among these changes, national attention was drawn to the importance of the nonprofit sector, partially because of the continued rollbacks of government support and partially because of Barak Obama's history as a community organizer and the nonprofit sector's high hopes for "one of their own" leading the nation. On the other hand, excitement about having a nonprofit oriented-president was still tethered to fears surrounding proctorship and nonprofit accountability.

> What is most extraordinary about the 2008 campaign for the White House is that both candidates bring experience with the nonprofit world to the table… but the imbalance in the candidates' campaign platforms suggests that that won't happen, leaving critical issues such as nonprofit accountability and the relationship between government and charity out of the campaign debates. (Cohen, 2008, Chronicle of Philanthropy)

Excitement is tempered by the lingering concern that nonprofits still require proctorship.

This sense of kairos for nonprofits in America came enmeshed in the energy of what was dubbed, "Generation O," a term that came to be used to refer both to children of the "00"s (millennials), and to young people who rallied around Barak Obama in '08 and '12. Their progressive excitement became a fixture of American potential, and a way

to highlight the "suffering" of the sector:

> As a dreary Thanksgiving comes and goes, one answer is to mobilize Generation
>
> O to help the nation's struggling nonprofit sector. Unlike the automobile
>
> industry, whose representatives were ferried to Washington on private jets, the
>
> nonprofit industry has yet to show up at all… There is already plenty of evidence
>
> that the sector is suffering because of recession. (Light, 2008, Washington Post)

During the millennial years, American media outlets presented a two-faced nonprofit

sector – One boiling over with potential, and one in post-recession struggle, and these

portraits were not presented as contradictory. As nonprofits and policy makers alike

attempted to navigate these tensions, mainstream media covered their discussion of how

the sector's "struggles" could be productively managed for the best.

The weaknesses of all three sectors were frequently presented as grounds for

productive growth and collaboration. And the most commonly offered solution to the

nation's post-recession problems was that the nonprofit, private and public sectors form a

coalition or otherwise rearrange their responsibilities. Melinda Gates offered in 2008, for

example:

> Once you analyze the strengths and constraints […] no sector, acting on its own,
>
> will likely be able to do very much for very long to change the lives of people …
>
> who cannot now express their needs in ways that matter to markets or that
>
> motivate governments. So—we face the obvious question: Can we encourage
>
> cooperation among the three sectors in a way that minimizes our weaknesses and
>
> maximizes our strengths? Can we combine the scale and resources of government
>
> with the self-funding qualities of business and the risk-taking approach of

> foundations that serve the poor? (Gates foundation, Melinda, Melinda French
>
> Gates - Council on Foreign Relations. June 5, 2008)

In comments like this, the rhetorical spillover between sectors materialized into an

attempt at actual collaboration. In the thick of the recession, advocates for a tighter

relationship between the government and the nonprofit sector were loud, and colored by

private sector language (maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses, for example).

The Chronicle of Philanthropy in 2008 wrote,

> [The nonprofit world's] leaders have been discussing ways to tighten the
>
> relationship between government and charities… some nonprofit officials are
>
> pressing the next president to seek to steer money to innovative programs that
>
> want to spread their approaches nationwide and to finance programs that train
>
> charities to do a better job of managing their operations. (Eisenberg, 2008,
>
> Chronicle of Philanthropy)

And this move, of course, is presented in market language. It is presented to be logical

that the government can aid the nonprofit in regaining control of their finance programs

and operation management.

The government becomes a locus of "help" for charities in these conversations,

and this shift is typically presented as the natural compliment of the government's

bailouts of for-profit companies. The idea behind this messaging strategy, of course, is

that if for-profit corporations are entitled to government help, so too (and perhaps more

so) are not-for-profit charities.

> Like many for-profit companies, charities are seeking help from the government,
>
> and they are upset that policy makers do not understand how much the recession

has hurt them. Last week, nonprofit leaders representing thousands of

organizations across the county signed on to a manifesto that calls on political

leaders to support the work of nonprofits. (Strom, 2009, New York Times)

These conversations mark an incredible transition. Thirty years before, the President of

the United States presented the government's "help" as a nightmare scenario. This, of

course, is not necessarily indicative of the opinions of a divided public. However, as I

discussed in Chapter 4, the 1990s saw a national shift towards the idea that the nonprofit

sector was something that needed to be surveyed and policed by the government (and the

public), rather than something entitled to government patronage. The failures of

Reagan's plan for America's churches and volunteers to bear the weight of national

service provision are crystalized in these tensions, as the post-recession nonprofit falls to

crisis and calls back on the government for bailouts of their own.

What is particularly striking, is that the kinds of "bailouts" discussed at this time

are not financial at their core. Rather than forgiving loans or offering monetary aids to

struggling nonprofits, Barak Obama's 2008 campaign promised the development of a

government agency that would help nonprofits manage themselves more effectively and

more efficiently.

[Barak Obama will] create an agency within the Corporation for National and

Community Service dedicated to building the capacity and effectiveness of the

nonprofit sector. The agency will be charged with: improving coordination of

programs that support nonprofits across the federal government; fostering

nonprofit accountability; streamlining processes for obtaining federal grants and

contracts, and eliminating unnecessary requirements; and removing barriers for

smaller nonprofits to participate in government programs. (Jacobson, 2012,

Tampa Bay Times)

Again, the government steps out of laissez-faire, into a management position, to proctor,

police, consult and manage NGOs, and above all to evaluate their work with a private

sector metric of effectiveness, capacity, and "streamlining."

<p align="center">Apolitical Politics & Selfish "Special Interests"</p>

A second discourse coming from many pockets of nonprofit leadership

accompanied these conversations about the government's benevolent management of the

nonprofit sector. Nonprofit leaders, newspapers, and most consistently the Chronicle of

Philanthropy, published articles that called for nonprofits to advocate for more than their

own "special interests," and for the sector itself. In addition to the Gates' Foundation's

call, 2008 saw the emergence of the V3 Primary Project for "Voice, Value and Votes."

This project (based out of New Hampshire) offered that "charities could cooperate to

advocate for more than just their own causes. 'The real strategy was, Would nonprofits in

New Hampshire lower their kind of individual flags and stand together?' he says. 'That

was the real test'" (Perry, 2008, Chronicle of Philanthropy). Nonprofits, in addition to

being responsible for service provision and volunteer coordination, were now assigned a

second set of responsibilities in the name of self-advocacy.

> Nonprofit groups must work together to get on politicians' radar screen as
>
> organizations that play a major role in the national economy and help the country
>
> tackle its social problems… you have in every community a really robust, vibrant
>
> economic stimulator in the nonprofits. How would you partner with us? (Perry,
>
> 2008, Chronicle of Philanthropy)

Nonprofits are explicitly positioned in this passage as a mechanism for economic growth. The economic crash damaged people's bank accounts, damaging donations, and weakening the nonprofit sector, And somehow, nonprofits are centered as an "economic stimulator" ripe for partnership. "We not only have a right to be involved in these processes, but in some ways an obligation to speak for the sector and to raise the sector's issues with candidates" Perry, 2008, Chronicle of Philanthropy).

The sector, rather than the interests of the organizations become the centerpiece of advocacy. Perry (2011), wrote in the Chronicle of Philanthropy about the policy proposals coming from the Republican party in 2011, and specifically about those budget cuts that would damage charitable giving to the nonprofit sector. "For example, most want to end the estate tax, and remove the capital-gains tax. Both of those taxes provide incentives for people to give to charities as a way to lower their tax liabilities" (Perry, 2011, Chronicle of Philanthropy). Fears surrounding post-recession damage to the nonprofit sector enabled the circulation of this idea, that charities needed to advocate not only for their specific charities, but for the idea of charity altogether – they had to ask the public to give to them, but first, to give at all. Leaders in the nonprofit sector expressed concern for a lack of this sector-advocacy.

> [Few nonprofits] have been advocating for tax increased that could avert cuts to federal funds, the second largest revenue source for nonprofits (after tuition, fees, and other charges charities impose. Some nonprofit leaders say that's a big mistake. 'Every nonprofit should be speaking out on the need for new revenue, and we should be opposing massive spending cuts. We haven't rallied around that one-two message,' says Gary Bass, executive director of the Bauman

> Foundation… 'If you're a local or state nonprofit, the number-one issue is
>
> increasing tax revenues.' (Donovan, 2012, Chronicle of Philanthropy)

The number one goal of nonprofits is presented in this conversation as advocacy for

nonprofits themselves, not the specific goals of individual organizations. And what's

more is that nonprofits advocating for their issue focuses rather than the nonprofit sector

is presented as selfish.

> Nonprofit coalitions have been fighting hard to protect the charitable deduction
>
> despite little evidence that more than a billion dollars might be lost by the changes
>
> President Obama has proposed. By contrast, leading nonprofit groups have done
>
> little or nothing to protect vital social and economic programs that have been put
>
> at great risk as Congress grapples with ways to rein in the deficit.   Many
>
> nonprofit coalitions seemed more concerned with their narrow self-interest and
>
> greed than in the national interest. (Eisenberg, 2012)

A few really interesting anxieties are expressed in this passage. First, there is the

expectation that nonprofits have a responsibility to one another, and that the nonprofit

sector has "interests" that are morally or patriotically superior to the interests of any

individual charity. Second, there is the assumption that national interests are hinged on

the performance and self-advocacy of the nonprofit sector. We can understand in a

passage like this one the fear and tension associated with a service provision sector that is

not tangibly accountable to itself or to the public in times of national crisis, and we might

imagine the stress of these vague, public-drive accountability measures on the nonprofit

world.

Conclusion

This examination of the contemporary juncture unearths some troubling findings for those advocating for any degree of de-nonprofitzation, or criticism of a neoliberal nonprofit structure. The mainstream conversation continues to effectively perpetuate epideictic language associated with neoliberal values. In doing so, these nonprofit promoters draw on the rhetorical strength of history, and effectively negotiate contemporary tensions. The voices in the margins on the other hand, which contribute rhetoric of resistance to the contemporary discourse, have not drawn on neoliberal values when assigning praise and blame. They also rely heavily on appeals to logic, to the development of argument, and to the presentation of incongruity. All of these conversations, dominant and resistant alike, appeal in some way to the epideictic, creating small battles of praise and blame assignment, where competing epideictics compete. In many ways, the contemporary juncture hinges on a battle between the neoliberal epideictic and a resistant grassroots epideictic.

Conclusion

A Genealogy of "The Nonprofit"

In this genealogy, I have examined three junctures. In the first, Reagan's discourse of the new American hero was powerful. Coming from a powerful platform it conditioned a way of understanding American volunteerism as individuated, non-governmental and heroic. At the second juncture, the emergence of nonprofit watchdogging agencies conditioned a way of understanding American nonprofits as something that needed to be surveyed and policed by the public and the government, and measured on a marketized scale of efficiency and investment. Contemporarily, we see a mainstream conversation that is clearly conditioned by the mainstream discourses of the 1980s and 90s. The nonprofit is rendered apolitical, with the exception of sector-wide advocacy, which is seen as heroic compared to lobbying for "special interests." Additionally, we see the continued desire for nonprofits to be better proctored and better managed by the government. The nonprofit, once again, becomes a fixture of blame, and a fixture of responsibility. Specifically, nonprofits that advocate only for their issues and not for the sector more broadly become a national problem, and an economic drag. Further, the assignment of responsibilities shifts in the contemporary conversation in an important way. The 1980s and 90s housed discourses promoting the nonprofit's responsibility of previously State-facilitated services (welfare, care for the poor, care for the disabled, etc.). In the contemporary conversation, the nonprofit is given the responsibility of recharging the economy as well. The independent sector is handed responsibilities of the State and the market, and then proctored by the State on a market metric.

Combatting the Epideictic

The nonprofit-critical discourses that are taking place outside of the mainstream

conversation are at times academic in style, and offer a complicated discussion of a

matrix of power relationships. Their accounts of tension in the grassroots show that the

pressure of surveillance, the contradictions of charity and professionalism, and the push

for individualism are complicating and disabling the work there. Both the mainstream

and marginalized discourses of "the nonprofit" point to the intensification of rhetorical

trends tracing back to the 1980s (namely the use of the epideictic and neoliberal

conceptions of American service). These discourses also show that these discursive

trends have done more than intensify; they have materialized into complicated and

paradoxical political realities.

A comparison of today's mainstream and resistant rhetorics surrounding "the

nonprofit" unveils the nuances of the epideictic form. It also highlights the limitations of

"logic" for subjugated voices contesting the epideictic. Many of the INCITE!

contributors are the founders and leaders of powerful anti-racist and anti-violence

organizations. Many more hold their PhDs in the social sciences and teach at prominent

universities. These activist-scholars construct arguments beautifully. Their presentation

of logic, argument, and incongruity, however, has done little to combat an epideictic

mainstream with historical momentum and (as Vivian suggests) neoliberal underpinnings.

The epideictic is not mere rhetoric, and the neoliberal epideictic's relationship to the

nonprofit sector has been particularly powerful in subduing even the best-constructed

appeals to logic and perspective. I contend that the de-nonprofitization movement would

benefit enormously from rhetorical self-examination, and that they might more

effectively resist their epideictic counterpart with appeals to something other than logic,

perhaps a rhetorical form with stronger historical ties. In this way, rhetorical history

might be a method of inquiry *and* an activist toolbox.

<center>Arguing from the Rhetorical Past</center>

Foucault and Condit have invited genealogists and rhetorical historians to argue

"from history" in order to de-naturalize trends that have been rendered apolitical. Condit

offers further that rhetoric, as the "materialization" of ideas, can serve as a focal point for

this kind of analysis. This project is an attempt to better understand the tensions and

contradictions of contemporary nonprofit rhetoric from a historical position. It attended

to how contemporary problems have their root in history, and how their solutions might

be embedded in history as well. This passage from Koopman, which I cited in Chapter 2,

becomes incredibly relevant to the conclusion of this project:

> This crucial point of Foucault's philisophico-historical work has been so widely
>
> misunderstood that it is today commonplace that the central message of Foucault
>
> is *that* things could be otherwise than they are when indeed the real force of his
>
> thought is to show us *how* things might be transformed on the basis of the
>
> materials furnished by our contingently constructed persons (Koopman, 2013, p.
>
> 44).

In that vein, this project attended to three junctures. At each juncture, it examines what

was and what *almost* was.   The project engages the breadth, the size, and the scope of a

contemporary nonprofit, which is increasingly proctored and market-managed by the

State, private investors, and the American public. More importantly, though, this project

engages the idea that there are alternatives to the contemporary model and highlights

moments in history at which glimpses of these alternatives have cropped up.

Chapter 3 offered an examination of the Reagan presidency. It argued that the

American public was conditioned to an understanding of the American volunteer as a

private individual, a solitary actor, and a hero. They were specifically conditioned to a

vocabulary of American volunteerism that echoed the neoliberal epideictic. Praise was

assigned to those who gave the "right" kind of help to the poor, blame was assigned to

those who required government assistance, and the roots of poverty are rendered

invisible. This rhetoric accompanied Reagan's political agenda, as he dramatically rolled

back the government's facilitation of welfare and outsourced responsibilities for the poor

to churches and volunteer organizations. What is important about this chapter from the

genealogist's position, is not only that Reagan's way of talking about volunteerism

conditioned and enabled his own political agenda. It also becomes important that Reagan

conditioned the American public, on a powerful national platform, to a very deliberate

vocabulary of volunteerism that enabled a particular way of understanding what the

nonprofit sector was in the context of American nationhood.   He offered the public a

way of understanding charity and volunteerism as patriotic, and a way to be a neoliberal

hero, and his vocabulary catches fire again twenty years later after the 9/11 attacks.

Chapter 4 examined the emergence of nonprofit watchdogging agencies in the

1990s, and the rhetorics of surveillance, deliverability, and investment that emerged with

them. By exploring hundreds of newspaper articles from that decade, I analyzed a

discourse in American media that valued the surveillance of nonprofits by the public.

Further, I offered that this public surveillance of the nonprofit sector was made possible

and facilitated by government metrics like the 990 form and market measurements like

deliverables, financial reports, unpaid board members and other measurements of

financial stability. This resulted in discourses of nonprofit surveillance in which rhetorics

of the public and private sector bled over into the independent sector. Most importantly,

this chapter examined the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the resulting changes to

nonprofit charity and service provision work. At this time, the sector-blurring rhetoric

collided with a heightened sense of nationalism, and an increased anxiety surrounding a

loss of control. This collision resulted in a sector-blurring discourse of nonprofits that

involved the hyper-surveillance of nonprofits by a public making use of market and State

metrics *and* the idea that this hyper-surveillance is the patriotic responsibility of

American "donation-investors."

Chapter 5 offered an examination of contemporary discourses of the nonprofit,

informed by the previous three decades. The genealogical assumption made here is that

these previous discourses did not *cause* the contemporary conversation, but that they

conditioned the contemporary conversation with a particular vocabulary of volunteerism,

heroism, and nationhood. The government rollbacks in the 80s, the rise of nonprofit

watchdogging, and the mainstream discourses that accompanied these shifts enabled a

neoliberal understanding what the nonprofit sector is and is capable of. In 40 years, the

nonprofit sector became the subject of public, private, market and State scrutiny. In the

same time period, the nonprofit sector became a scapegoat for the assignment of

responsibility for all of these groups – the provision of services to the poor, the

absorption of previously State-facilitated services, the recharging of a post-recession

economy, and the in-depth explication of their worth to their donors and the public at large.

<div align="center">Directions for Further Research</div>

Genealogies and rhetorical histories offer incredible strides in our analysis of discourses across time. They help to unveil apparently apolitical shifts as politically relevant. They unveil the power dynamics beneath what appears to be happenstance. And being centered on discursive junctures rather than discursive lineages, they show that things may have been otherwise, and *how* things may have been otherwise. This project unveiled that discursive work went into the making of the contemporary nonprofit sector. The nonprofit sector's responsibilities, reputation, and tensions have been informed and conditioned by a vocabulary of neoliberalism tracing back into the 1980s. The most important discovery is that the American nonprofit's position as an object of public surveillance, as a participant in economic revitalization, and as a lobbyist for its own survival and influence, is in no way arbitrary or the result of happenstance. Despite their marginalization, there have been voices throughout these decades concerned about these tensions and this dynamic.

What is left to examine, is the question of *why*: Why has the nonprofit continued to be fixated in positions of extraordinary tension, despite the widespread understanding that its role is strained and at times paradoxical? Finally, and above all, we ought to consider that radical, grassroots activist leaders are expressing particular stress under the existing structure, and that the nonprofit watchdogging movement that contributed to the marketization of American charity was funded by some of the wealthiest and powerful foundations in the world, namely Ford, Kellogg, and Mellon (as I discussed in Chapter

4). The question left unanswered, and which I leave to another project is this: Who

stands to benefit from a neoliberal nonprofit sector?

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