

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
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To: **Reviewing Professor**

From: **Marketing Department**

Subject: **Review Package for *Power Persuasion: Moving an Ancient Art into the Media Age—third edition* by Mary Rose Williams and Martha D. Cooper**

Policy/Procedure

If you select this book as the primary required text for your class please complete the ADOPTION CONFIRMATION FORM located at the back of this packet and return it to us by fax or mail. We will send your DESK COPY immediately upon receipt of an order from your bookstore of five or more books. Make sure your bookstore orders new books from us. If they purchase all used books from another company please obtain your desk copy from them.

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This unique textbook is now available on CD-ROM and is sleekly packaged with the “Student DVD” that contains all the video examples referred to in the textbook. We believe this modern entertaining approach to teaching the student will emphasize the importance and relevance to today’s world. We have included a sample chapter for your consideration.

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Power Persuasion 3rd Edition Instructor's DVD Contents

3 Harold & Louise Health Care Ads (1994) (Anti-Clinton Health Care Program)
Australian AIDS PSA
George Bush Willie Horton Campaign Spot (1988)
2 Michael Dukakis Campaign Spots (1988) (Bush Strategists & Anti-Quayle)
Don's Guns Commercial
QVC Promotional Video
Bill Clinton Convention Film (1992)
2 Lyndon Johnson Campaign Spots (1964) (Sawing off East Coast & Girl with Ice Cream)
Real Food Commercials
December 7th (1942) (War Department Documentary)
Hubert Humphrey Campaign Spot (1968) (Laughing at Agnew)
Richard Nixon Campaign Spot (1964) (Humphrey & Student Unrest)
Gerald Ford Campaign Spot (1976) (Carter & Taxes)
George Bush Campaign Spot (1988) (Boston Harbor)
Bill Clinton Campaign Spot (1992) (Bus Tour)

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2

THE CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVE

IN THIS CHAPTER:

Focus on:

National Rifle Association Documentary

1. Theoretical Focus: Persuasive Strategies Adapted to the Audience
2. Classical Theory
3. Contemporary Developments
 - Philosophy and the Emphasis on Formal Logic
 - Psychology and Emphasis on Motivational Factors
 - Social Research and Credibility Factors
4. Ethics in the Classical Perspective
5. Critical Focus: National Rifle Association Documentary

FOCUS ON: NRA DEFENSE OF SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

For many years concerned citizens in the United States have argued about the appropriate interpretation of the Second Amendment to the constitution that guarantees a citizen's right to keep and bear arms. For some, the part of the amendment referring to the necessity of a "well regulated Militia" leads them to conclude that this right is significantly restricted and not a blank check for just anyone to own and use any sort of weapon. Others have interpreted the amendment broadly to protect nearly anyone's right to own and use practically any weapon. The pervasiveness of gun related crimes in our society, reflected by the fact that we lead the world in violent crime statistics, has led to numerous debates concerning gun control.

An incident which fueled this debate occurred in 1989. On January 17 of that year, Patrick Purdy opened fire on a schoolyard of children in Stockton, California. He was armed with an AK-47 rifle. Beyond the children that he killed and wounded, Purdy psychologically wounded many terrified witnesses to this crime as the tragic event was relayed through the media to a general public shocked by the senseless and brutal violence of his act.

Purdy's assault provided impetus for those who had long advocated stricter regulations concerning the sale and ownership of guns. Shortly after the incident, more than 30 state legislatures considered resolutions or bills to prohibit the manufacture, sale or possession of semiautomatic weapons like the one used by Purdy in his deadly attack on the school playground. On March 13, 1989, the California legislature became the first to pass such a bill. Similar measures were introduced at the national level; the most prominent of these was Senator Metzenbaum's proposal to prohibit the manufacture and importation of assault firearms and to strengthen gun registration laws. President George Bush, who less than a month before had stated his support for a less restricted right to bear arms, including semiautomatic weapons, reversed his decision and banned all imports of semiautomatic assault rifles.¹

In the midst of the movement to prohibit or severely restrict the availability of weapons like those used by Purdy, the National Rifle Association reacted by producing a multiplicity of persuasive messages designed to halt quick passage of more restrictive gun control laws. With approximately 2.8 million members and a \$70 million annual budget, the National Rifle Association has been a vocal and often effective opponent of any attempt to strengthen gun control in the United States.² The Association's \$12 million annual budget for lobbying has allowed it to influence national and state policies concerning gun control for many years.³ During the controversy in 1989, the association placed full-page advertisements in numerous magazines and newspapers, deluged their membership with pamphlets and materials to aid them in contacting their political representatives about the issue, contracted and ran several television spots concerning the issue, arranged for lobbyists to speak directly to legislative and Congressional committees who were attempting to fashion restrictive legislative proposals, and produced a short documentary entitled "The Truth About Semi-Automatic Weapons." The documentary was sent to members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives as well as to various state legislative representatives and was made available to numerous members of the National Rifle Association and the general public. We examine this documentary later in this chapter to illustrate how the Classical Perspective toward persuasion can be used to understand explicit attempts to persuade an audience. However, before we move to an analysis of this instance of persuasion, a review of the Classical Perspective is in order.

THEORETICAL FOCUS: PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES ADAPTED TO THE AUDIENCE

For most people, persuasion is a method of influence. In Chapter 1, we define persuasion as a process by which people influence the choice-making of others. The earliest treatments of persuasion as a field of study began with a similar assumption. These early treatments emerged during the ancient world of the Greek and Roman democracies. Consequently, some features of the theory of persuasion developed by classical thinkers were influenced by ideas common to public citizenship of that time and the instances of persuasion they commonly observed in their culture. In this chapter, we introduce the theoretical perspective toward persuasion initiated by the classical theorists and preview contemporary investigations of persuasion that follow the Classical Perspective.

During the classical period, most persuasion involved a single speaker who presented his case to an audience of fellow citizens. Such persuasion tended to be explicit—the audience was aware that they were being asked by the speaker to make a choice. The classical theories of persuasion provided advice to persuasive speakers about what to say and how to say it such that these ancient orators could influence their audience by taking into account their predispositions. In addition, these early theorists of persuasion were concerned that their advice be used for good rather than evil objectives and, as a consequence, considered the ethical boundaries that should govern a speaker's use of persuasive strategies.

The contemporary developments that we preview in this chapter exhibit similar concerns. While the types of messages concerned have shifted from just public addresses to include contemporary commercial advertisements or other modern forms

of persuasive action, many theorists continue to study the strategies available to persuaders and the ethical implications of those strategies. Thus, even though some of the theoretical concepts to be discussed in this and the following three chapters do not draw on classical theory explicitly, they can be characterized as “classical” because they approach persuasion from the same general perspective as initiated by classical thinkers. Fundamental to this perspective is the notion that *persuasion involves strategies that take into account audience predispositions*. The Classical Perspective orients us toward an instrumental view of persuasion in which persuaders are seen as strategists who choose among the persuasive tactics available in order to most effectively persuade their audiences. This perspective orients us toward intentional persuasion, toward instances in which both audience and source are aware that persuasion is the goal, and it directs our attention to the tactics that either assist or inhibit the realization of that goal.

CLASSICAL THEORY

In the oldest systematic textbook on persuasion, *Rhetoric*, Aristotle began by saying that persuasion is an art because it has principles that make it work. Three of the most important principles are the modes of proof: the means by which a message can influence its audience in intended ways. Aristotle sharply criticized earlier teachers of rhetoric for only teaching how to incite an audience’s emotions. He said that is artistically wrong because there is more to the art of rhetoric than pandering to the audience’s emotions. He also said that it is ethically wrong because to ignore our capacity to reason is to treat us as if we were animals unworthy of human respect. People are better than that, thought Aristotle, and as persuaders we owe it to them and to ourselves to appeal to what is best (reason and rationality) rather than what is less than the best (emotional responses).

The proper way to influence one another (this was the central value of Athenian culture, a value we still share today in Western culture) was by formulating and delivering arguments. For the Athenians, the public forum provided a place where those arguments could be presented. Today a variety of public forums serve a similar function. According to the Athenians, the best decisions are those in which we reason together to arrive at our conclusions.

Following his mentor Plato, Aristotle called the art of reasoning together to reach conclusions *dialectic*. Dialectic is a kind of scientific or philosophical way of communicating. Within a dialectical conversation people assume an attitude of inquiry, formulate precise definitions through a process of examining like instances and reason carefully and rigorously. Dialectic demands that the people taking part remain open-minded in their search for the truth. Today we don’t use the term “dialectic” much, but the idea that people can reason together to arrive at conclusions has remained. Trial by jury, in which a just decision is expected to emerge from a clash between prosecution and defense, illustrates this kind of communication in modern culture. Scientists talking to other scientists about hypotheses is another, perhaps the best, example from our culture.

Aristotle said the goal of rhetoric wasn’t so much finding the truth of a matter as convincing an audience to make the best decision about that matter. Rhetoric *assumes* a process of inquiry—you need to have engaged in inquiry about a subject

to be an effective and ethical persuader—but it can't help you find the truth if you don't already know it. What rhetoric does, according to Aristotle, is to make the truth or the results of your inquiry effective in the everyday world, the world outside of professional or scientific communication. Rhetoric deals with opinions, with our best educated guesses about what is true, not with absolute certainty. In other words, in the realm of persuasion lies everything in our world where we make decisions about what to feel, think or do *without* the kind of absolute certainty that many suppose science can give us. While dialectic may approach the true and the necessary, rhetoric deals with the probable and the contingent. After all, asked Aristotle, who bothers to argue about things that are already scientifically true? We only argue about those things that might go one way or the other.

Because rhetoric, or persuasion, operates in the realm of the probable and the contingent, ethical questions moved to the forefront of concern for classical rhetoricians. For Aristotle, the problem centered around whether the same persuasive techniques could be used for either good or ill. Simply put, how could one avoid the use of persuasion in the service of falsity? It is unsettling to wonder if all the communicators around us “have an angle,” “are conning us” or are to be distrusted. It's disturbing to think that “truth” and “necessity” get to play only small roles in the choices we make while “opinion,” or “good reasons” play a very large part. Various answers to the ethical question were offered by ancient thinkers. While Aristotle claimed that “good” positions were easier to defend than “bad” ones, other thinkers such as Cicero and Quintilian maintained that a complete theory of rhetoric or persuasion must include the concept of the “good man.”⁷⁴ In other words, the ethical question could be settled if orators were trained to be virtuous so that they would strive to argue for morally right positions rather than morally bankrupt ones.

Keeping in mind that the classical rhetoricians viewed oratory, or public address, as the prime example of persuasion in action, we can turn to Aristotle's treatment of rhetoric, or the art of oratory, in order to uncover the major tenets of the Classical Perspective toward persuasion. Aristotle defined rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”⁷⁵ Three elements in this definition are important. First, by noting that rhetoric is a “faculty of observing,” Aristotle emphasized that rhetoric is an art—a method that can be approached systematically. Put another way, persuasion is the product of that art. This position implies that persuasion is not merely the result of chance or luck, but can be the product of a systematic process or method initiated by a would-be advocate or persuader. Second, by noting that this art or method applies “in the given case,” Aristotle's definition implies that persuasion may vary from circumstance to circumstance. In other words, what is persuasive in one situation may differ from what is persuasive in another situation. Finally, Aristotle's definition makes clear that the emphasis of his theory of rhetoric concerns “the available means of persuasion” or the techniques by which persuasion may be accomplished.

Given Aristotle's suggestion that persuasion may vary from case to case, it is not surprising that in the *Rhetoric* he distinguished among the various cases of the practice of persuasion dominant in Athenian culture. He observed that “there are three divisions of oratory—(1) political, (2) forensic, and (3) the ceremonial oratory of display.”⁷⁶ But more important than the categories of persuasive speaking themselves

was Aristotle's basis for distinguishing among them. He explained that the "three divisions [were] determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object."⁷ Aristotle argued that the three types of oratory could be divided according to the type judgment that the audience made as a result of a public address. In political oratory, hearers make judgments about future actions by considering the advantages and disadvantages of particular policies. In forensic oratory, hearers make judgments about past actions by considering the justice or injustice of those actions. In ceremonial oratory, hearers make judgments about present events and people by considering the value and importance of those events and people. By casting the judgment of the audience as the definitive factor for the types of persuasive speaking, Aristotle emphasized the importance of the audience to the process of persuasion.

The audience also emerges as important in Aristotle's discussion of the means of persuasion. Aristotle identified three means of persuasion—*ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.⁸ *Ethos* referred to the personal character of the speaker. Aristotle's notion was that audiences could be persuaded if they perceived a speaker as credible because "we believe good men more fully and more readily than others." *Pathos*, on the other hand, referred to the psychological state of the audience. He argued that the emotional state of a hearer could affect persuasion because "our judgments when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile." *Logos* referred to the substance of a message, to the arguments presented that provided appropriate proof in the given case.

With *ethos* and *pathos*, we can readily understand why the audience is important. *Pathos*, after all, is the audience's emotional mind set. *Ethos* depends on the audience's perception of who is credible and what constitutes a "good man." However, the link between the audience and *logos* is not so apparent. For it is tempting to think of *logos* in terms of the subject matter rather than the audience. If a speaker wanted to prove through argument that waging war against another city-state would be advantageous, it would seem reasonable for that speaker to assemble evidence that would suggest the possible benefits of such an action. The need for arguments and supporting evidence to prove the case appear to lead the speaker toward investigation of the subject matter of war rather than toward an investigation of the audience. However, Aristotle noted that along with understanding human character and the emotions as a way of effecting persuasion, an orator must also be able to reason logically. Once again Aristotle argued that our ability to reason logically rests on our acceptance that the audience is the focus of all persuasion. Aristotle believed that humans were fundamentally reasonable people who made decisions on the basis of what made sense. Thus, even *logos* as a means of persuasion rested upon one's concept of the audience; in the case of *logos*, the audience was conceived as reasonable people. This assumption becomes more apparent if we examine Aristotle's discussion of the primary form of argument that he advised using to effect persuasion.

Aristotle argued that *enthymemes* were "the substance of rhetorical persuasion."⁹ The enthymeme was the preferred form of argument for Aristotle. Exactly what an enthymeme is has been the subject of much discussion by philosophers and rhetoricians. Aristotle referred to the enthymeme as a "rhetorical syllogism."¹⁰ He

had developed the notion of a syllogism in his work concerning dialectic where he described the process of logical reasoning. *A syllogism is a deductive form of argument that consists of a major premise, a minor premise and a conclusion.* Probably the most familiar example of a syllogism is the following: All men are mortal (major premise). Socrates is a man (minor premise). Therefore, Socrates is mortal (conclusion). Within this configuration, three terms (men, mortal and Socrates) are related to one another in order to draw a conclusion about Socrates. Rhetoricians who have studied Aristotle's work point out that a rhetorical syllogism is one in which the audience helps to construct the syllogism by supplying some part of the argument.¹¹ The rhetorical syllogism, or enthymeme, may be incomplete. For example, in everyday talk a speaker might simply say, "Socrates is mortal." The major and minor premises can be omitted because the audience will likely supply those missing parts. By supplying the common sense idea that men are mortal and the social knowledge that Socrates is a man, the audience participates in the construction of the argument. Put another way, when *logos* takes the form of an enthymeme, the audience provides the materials of the proof as easily as the speaker can.

Furthermore, as an audience participates in the construction of such arguments, those arguments tend to be based on probabilities rather than necessities. Because most common sense ideas and even everyday examples are based on observation and beliefs, they are *usually* true rather than *necessarily* true. The conclusions drawn from such materials are, therefore, only *probably* true rather than *always, necessarily* true. Aristotle and his commentators have pointed out that by encouraging the audience to participate in the construction of an argument, enthymemes depend on beliefs and values already held by hearers. By omitting those premises likely to be supplied by an audience, persuaders reduce the risk of either boring their audiences by explicitly recounting each step of an argument or alienating their audiences by including some premise with which they might disagree. For some conclusions there may exist a variety of premises that could lead the audience to agreement. Allowing the audience to fill in the needed premise increases the likelihood that each hearer will supply the appropriate premise. Such audience participation, in addition, provides the audience a sense of satisfaction with their own ability to reason appropriately. This characteristic of enthymemes is probably most apparent when the enthymeme supplies one or more of the premises but lets the audience draw the conclusion. An audience's adherence to the conclusion can be stronger if they drew that conclusion themselves as a result of the "facts" presented by a speaker. For example, the Clinton campaign film described in the previous chapter provides viewers with a variety of facts about Bill Clinton's life, but leaves the conclusion that Clinton would make a good president to the viewer. The makers of the film counted on the American public to supply their own common sense to reason that the man from Hope was Presidential material. Viewers very likely supplied differing premises about what makes for a good president, but the film provided enough variety about Clinton's background to allow audience members a variety of ways for completing the argument.

Although Aristotle clearly identified the enthymeme as the preferred form of argument within a persuasive message, he also noted a second form of proof—the example. By explaining that the example was the counterpart to induction and could be thought of as "a rhetorical induction," Aristotle underscored his concern for the

reasoning powers of an audience in his discussion of *logos*.¹² Logical induction requires a series of instances that are shown to be comparable, from which the advocate may draw a conclusion regarding the class of instances. However, when the induction becomes “rhetorical,” the conclusion may not apply to an entire class so much as to another comparable instance.¹³ That reasoning process entails only probabilities rather than certainties; examples may reason from one case to another without necessarily implying that the conclusion will hold in every similar instance. Like enthymemes, in which parts of the argument may be omitted for convenience, rhetorical inductions may not include an exhaustive series of examples but may focus on a single instance, relying on the audience to supply other instances from their own experience. Again the audience is expected to help construct the proof furnished by examples during the production of *logos*. Many contemporary television commercials operate with this sort of reasoning. Whether they are advertising pain killers or laxatives, commercials often dramatically portray the ability of their over-the-counter medications to relieve a suffering person’s ailments. Most viewers can recall similar instances from their own experience to add to the induction. Yet, most viewers are also aware that the power of these drugs is only usually, not always, effective. Sore throats and headaches sometimes require a visit to the doctor and a prescription drug.

Much of Aristotle’s treatise concerning rhetoric is devoted to an exploration of the ideas just discussed. His work considers each type of oratory in turn, revealing the types of enthymemes, the various emotions and the aspects of personal character most relevant to each type. He catalogued an array of arguments typical to Greek oratory during his time and included brief explanations of the subject matter of these arguments (e.g., war and peace, ways and means, etc.). Similarly, he reviewed the nature and causes of various human emotions, from anger to happiness, and suggested the states of mind an orator must understand in order to affect *pathos* in an audience. He provided a discussion of virtue, especially those qualities perceived as virtuous by the ancient Greeks, and other components of personal character of which a speaker who depended on *ethos* would need to be aware. Toward the end of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle discussed other aspects of public address, such as organization, choice of language, and delivery, that could bear on the persuasiveness of the message. However, his emphasis remained with the three modes of persuasion and how each applied to the ancient Greek audience as he understood that group and how each varied given the type of decision the audience was asked to render.

Later classical writers canonized the various components of the art of oratory into five categories: invention, arrangement, style, delivery and memory. Like Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian and others emphasized *invention* (*the discovery and selection of the means of persuasion*). In doing so, they added details concerning how an orator might find suitable arguments, furnished additional examples of arguments that were deemed reasonable by their respective Greek and Roman audiences, elaborated on the virtues and habits of personal character relevant to their contemporary audiences, and generally tried to provide helpful advice to aspiring persuaders during their times. Hence, their body of work provides the basis for what may be termed a Classical Perspective toward persuasion.

Using Aristotle’s work as a guide, then, we can characterize the Classical Perspective. Five characteristics emerge as fundamental to this perspective. First,

persuasion is assumed to be episodic, consisting of single events in which a single message is presented by a speaker to an audience. As mentioned earlier, the activity that gave rise to the study of persuasion in the ancient world was public address, the primary means of influence and decision-making in everyday public life. The orations studied were assumed to be presented orally; but often, particularly during the later Greek and Roman times, were written as well. Advice concerning these orations was advice assumed to apply in the given case—advice subject to modification when circumstances change. A second characteristic of this perspective also arises from the nature of the persuasive phenomena they observed. Persuasion is assumed to be overt and intentional. In other words, Aristotle and others assumed that those orators who stood in the public forum did so purposively, with an intent to persuade their audiences regarding public matters. Moreover, the advice provided by works like the *Rhetoric* addressed how to construct persuasive messages in situations that called for persuasion explicitly. The classical emphasis on the method, or art, of rhetoric reveals a third characteristic of persuasion from this perspective—strategic tactics. In other words, the Classical Perspective embodies a concern for instruments, for the tools by which persuasion is accomplished. Fundamental to the effectiveness of any of those tools is the nature of the audience. Consequently, a fourth characteristic of the Classical Perspective is a concern for the nature of the audience. Without a thorough understanding of the audience, the likelihood of successful persuasion was deemed very small. Finally, because of the recognition that these tools could be used for good or ill, the Classical Perspective entails a concern for ethics. Aristotle and others worried about the boundaries that should govern the strategic choices and instrumental uses of persuasion.

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

The approaches toward and concerns about persuasion manifested by the Classical Perspective find allies in much contemporary thought regarding persuasion. Many scholars and researchers still examine single messages and how those single messages may be crafted to elicit the desired response from an audience.¹⁴ Similarly, there still exists much explicit, intentional effort at persuasion. In arguments between husbands and wives and in contemporary marketing efforts alike, persuaders purposely attempt to influence their audiences to behave or believe in particular ways. Frequently such attempts are approached episodically. What can a wife say right now in this situation to persuade her husband to help with the housecleaning? What can a corporation say to consumers today to get them to switch from MCI to AT&T for their long-distance service? As these questions suggest, persuaders are still concerned with the means of persuasion, with the tools or instruments by which such influence is accomplished. These practical concerns have been accompanied by considerable contemporary research on the nature of today's audience and means of persuasion as well as philosophical and legal concern for the ethics of contemporary persuasion.

All three of the means of persuasion first identified by Aristotle serve as the foundation for similar lines of inquiry by contemporary thinkers concerned with persuasion. Concepts similar to *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* provide the theoretical constructs for a variety of research and theory from diverse academic disciplines. For convenience, we can review some of these contemporary developments according

to the divisions first recognized by Aristotle.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE EMPHASIS ON FORMAL LOGIC

The study of arguments as forms of logical reasoning has been investigated at length by analytic philosophers. Often beginning with Aristotle's original formulations concerning the syllogism, these philosophers have developed theory and methods for ascertaining the *validity* of arguments. *Validity refers to the soundness of arguments or the confidence with which one may accept the conclusion of an argument as true.* In general, analytical philosophers have suggested that arguments must meet two criteria in order to be deemed valid. First, the premises for the argument must be true. Second, the argument must use correct reasoning to reach its conclusion. Often the first requirement, that the premises be true, is referred to as *material validity*. Similarly, the second requirement, that the reasoning be correct, is termed *formal validity*. An example may assist in illustrating the concept of validity. Consider the argument that "The window is broken because I threw a rock through it." For this argument to be valid, the premise, "I threw a rock through it," would need to be true and the reasoning, that if I throw a rock through the window it will break, would need to be correct. The reasoning pattern just described would be correct if throwing a rock through a window was a sufficient condition for the window to break. If we change our example slightly, we can see how an argument might be deemed invalid. Suppose I said instead: "The window is broken. Someone must have thrown a rock through it." In this case the premise that must be true is that "the window is broken." The reasoning that must be correct is "if a window is broken it must be because a rock was thrown through it." We can see the problem immediately. A thrown rock may be a sufficient cause for a broken window but it is not a necessary cause for a broken window. Throwing a chair could also break a window. Sometimes windows simply crack and break as the result of airplanes breaking the sound barrier overhead or as a consequence of violent weather. In this case, then, the reasoning is faulty, and the argument is invalid.

With the example just described, ascertaining the truth of the premises is relatively simple. We can verify the premises empirically, through observation, by simply looking to see if the window is broken or asking if I really did throw a rock through the window. However, with many arguments the truth of the premises is more difficult to determine. If an advocate argues that abortion should be illegal because such an act is murder, how can we tell if an abortion is "murder?" Such a premise depends for its "truth" on whether or not removal of the fetus is the same as criminally taking a life. Is the fetus a living human? As you know there are various opinions regarding the answer to this question. The controversy concerning the "true" answer to this question presents a thorny problem for evaluating the validity of the argument above. Consequently, the first criterion for validity provided by formal logicians, observation, is difficult to apply to everyday argument.

Similar difficulties arise when people attempt to apply the second criterion of valid argument. Although there are various rules of formal logic other than that of necessary and sufficient cause, that rule provides a convenient basis for illustrating the difficulty of applying the rules of formal logic. For years, the lobby for tobacco companies in the United States claimed that the causal link between smoking tobacco and problems such as lung cancer and heart disease was tenuous. Lobbyists admitted

that there might be a high correlation between smoking and contracting lung disease but that smoking had not been shown to be a necessary and sufficient cause of the lung disease. At the time that argument was accepted as true since scientific evidence to dispute it did not exist. Despite the lack of contradictory evidence, however, popular opinion and common sense alike suggested that smoking did cause lung disease. The argument may have been invalid, but it was nonetheless persuasive and convincing. To complicate matters even further, sometimes valid arguments are not apparently persuasive. To return to the subject of smoking, tobacco companies now admit there has been long-time evidence establishing the causal link between tobacco and cancer. Many people believe that they would decrease their chances of developing cancer, yet, they continue to smoke. Likewise, many smokers admit that they would save money if they quit smoking (i.e., they would no longer spend hundreds of dollars each year buying tobacco products) and agree that they want to save money, but still they smoke. The premises are true. The reasoning looks good, but nothing changes—persuasion doesn't take place.

Problems such as those just described have led a number of analytic philosophers to question the wisdom of emphasizing formal logic as a way of investigating how people reason and explaining what persuades people. Consequently, many have turned to the development of “informal logic,” a study that applies the formal rules of logic loosely in order to account for real arguments and their real consequences. Notable among such attempts are the works of Stephen Toulmin, Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca. These philosophers have returned to the concept suggested by Aristotle, that humans may be reasonable but may not necessarily follow the rules of formal logic when they exercise their power of reasoning. In place of the rules of formal logic, these theorists describe the ways that people appear to reason in real circumstances (particularly in the legal field) in order to describe how *logos* operates in contemporary societies. Other informal logicians have developed less formal rules by which to identify fallacious or weak arguments, rules that can be applied to everyday arguments rather than to the symbolic configurations more familiar to formal logicians. These ideas provide the basis for Chapter 3 of this book.

PSYCHOLOGY AND EMPHASIS ON MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Just as logicians have explored the implications of *logos* and attempted to add insight to what Aristotle said about reasoning, so others have approached persuasion by investigating concepts akin to *pathos*. Contemporary psychological and sociological research, particularly after World War II, has investigated motivational factors related to persuasion.

During the first half of the twentieth century in the United States, many psychologists followed a line of inquiry initiated by John Watson, termed *behaviorism*. Among various assumptions of behaviorism, one of particular note to those interested in persuasion is the notion that people behave in ways that maximize their rewards and minimize their punishments. Psychologists, concerned with how people learn, developed behavioral learning theory based on the same assumption. They termed the process that used the assumption *operant conditioning*. Operant conditioning occurs when a response is deemed more or less likely because of its positive or negative consequences.

A host of experimental studies were conducted to assess the promise of behav-

ioral learning theory. For example, in one study students were asked to write essays that defended a position contradictory to their own attitudes. The researchers then randomly awarded the essays grades of “A” or “D.” In later surveys, the researchers found that students who received an “A” for their essays tended to change their attitudes toward the position they had advocated while students who received a “D” did not.¹⁵ Hence the idea that positive reinforcement could cause people to change their minds, could persuade people, seemed to be validated.

Confident in their belief that rewards and punishments could be powerful motivators, various psychologists and sociologists explored just what factors could serve as rewards or punishments. Carl Hovland and his colleagues at Yale University, for example, investigated the impact of source credibility, message comprehensibility, order of arguments, style, fear appeals, repetition and the intelligence and personalities of audience members on an audience’s perception of rewards or punishments which are likely to result from a particular persuasive appeal.¹⁶

Others followed the path marked out in the Yale studies. As a consequence, there exists a huge number of sometimes contradictory studies of the effects of particular source, message, receiver and channel factors on persuasion. For example, early research indicated that understanding a message increases the likelihood that an individual will be persuaded by that message. Subsequently, investigators inquired as to whether increasing the number of understandable arguments in a message would or would not enhance persuasiveness. In one study, subjects serving as “jurors” were presented with either one or seven arguments favoring either the defense or the prosecution in a simulated bigamy trial. Results of the study indicated that messages containing more arguments were more effective.¹⁷ However, in other studies the results indicated that more arguments could result in boredom and irritation by an audience member rather than in persuasion.¹⁸

The problem of what is rewarding and what is not becomes clearer if we consider the development of a particular theory of attitude change proposed by Leon Festinger. Based on the assumption that people respond positively to reward, one could expect that the greater the reward the greater the persuasive effect of a particular interaction. In a series of studies, Festinger tested this hypothesis.¹⁹ He arranged for students to participate in a boring and tedious task—turning pegs in holes over and over again. Then, a collaborator asked those students to convince other students to participate in the same task. Some of the subjects were offered a small amount of money for their persuasive efforts; others were offered a substantial monetary reward. To the surprise of many, when students were interviewed later, those who had received substantial reward for convincing another student to engage in the boring task reported that the task was tedious, while those who had received minimal compensation tended to report that the task was really “quite fun and interesting.” The results led Festinger to speculate that students who had received minimal monetary reward were uncomfortable trying to persuade another student to participate in a miserable task for only a small reward. To rationalize their behavior, they convinced themselves that the task really wasn’t that bad after all. Meanwhile, those students who had been paid well could reason that the task was boring, but the generous payment legitimized convincing someone else to participate. This explanation led to Festinger’s development of the theory of cognitive dissonance. This theory holds that inconsistency is uncomfortable

for people, and when confronted with such inconsistency in attitude and/or behavior, people will adjust their attitudes in order to regain consistency. One implication of this theory is that the internal reward of cognitive consistency may be far stronger than external rewards such as monetary gain.

In general, researchers have found rewards to be more powerful motivators than punishments (although just what constitutes a “reward” has been studied widely), but Aristotle’s suggestion that persuasion occurs “in the given case” appears to hold. In other words, a reward in one situation may act as a punishment in another situation. Throughout this text, we introduce the results of various studies that assist in explaining the persuasive power of a particular interaction. Still, some general ideas regarding what constitutes a reward and, therefore, what motivates potential “persuadees” is worthy of investigation.

Social scientists such as Abraham Maslow have investigated what motivates people. Maslow developed a theory of human motivation based on his clinical observations that identified the needs of successful, happy people. In addition to these works, other authors have revitalized the study of *pathos* without recourse to behavioral learning theory. These works are discussed in Chapter 4.

SOCIAL RESEARCH AND CREDIBILITY FACTORS

Aristotle argued that among the means of persuasion, *ethos* was the most powerful. As mentioned in the prior section, Hovland and his colleagues at Yale included among the motivational factors studied the credibility of the source of a persuasive message. Numerous contemporary scholars have been similarly intrigued by the seeming power of individuals, especially “authorities,” to affect persuasion. Much of the study of this subject grows out of the same social science perspective reviewed earlier.

For instance, in 1951 Hovland and Weiss found that when students were exposed to identical messages attributed to either high or low credibility sources, opinion change in the direction advocated by the source was much greater when the source had high credibility than when the source had low credibility.²⁰ Two years later, Hovland and Kelman conducted a follow-up study which asked students to evaluate a radio program. The program included a speech advocating lenient treatment of juvenile delinquents. Some students listened to the speech where the speaker was introduced as a judge in juvenile court. Others heard the same speech with an introduction that identified the speaker as a member of the studio audience. Still others were presented with an introduction that included an interview with the speaker that revealed his criminal record including his juvenile delinquency. When asked to rate the speaker on fairness and impartiality, those who heard the “judge” rated him as “fair” twice as often as those who heard the “criminal” rated him as “fair.” In addition, those students who heard the “judge” testified to more opinion change than those who heard the “criminal.”²¹

That the *ethos* of a source is related to the persuasive impact of a message is generally accepted.²² However, just what constitutes *ethos*, or credibility, has been the subject of much inquiry. Aristotle argued that a man would be perceived as having high *ethos* if he displayed good sense, good character and good will.²³ Numerous contemporary scholars have similarly attempted to identify the constituents of *ethos*. Recent reviews of the plethora of studies concerning source credibility suggest that nearly all studies “agree on the existence of both a safety or trustworthiness factor

and a competence or expertise factor."²⁴ In addition, many researchers argue that dynamism, a dynamic or charismatic personality, is a third dimension of *ethos*.²⁵

The constituents of *ethos* identified by scholars all depend on perceptions by an audience. In other words, if an audience does not perceive a source as trustworthy or an expert, then it matters little if the source is in fact trustworthy or an expert. The importance of audience perceptions led Aristotle to suggest that speakers might demonstrate their *ethos* by displaying habits of excellence in their life and communicative actions. Contemporary students of leadership follow a similar path. Hence, those studies that examine how particular people emerge as leaders, especially opinion leaders, provide helpful, additional information regarding *ethos*.²⁶ Similarly, contemporary concerns regarding charisma and credibility have led many to speculate about how leaders can enhance their charisma or repair damaged credibility. These subjects hold particular importance for students of political science who have attempted to explain the rise and fall of particular elected officials. Among public relations experts are those who concentrate solely on "image building." One of the earliest and most penetrating studies of this contemporary concern with image was provided by Daniel Boorstin who investigated the creation of images by the mass media and postulated that a person might obtain celebrity status just by obtaining media coverage. Much like the old parable about the emperor's new clothes, a person could become famous simply because people said he or she was famous. The work of those concerned with leadership and image management is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 of this text.

ETHICS IN THE CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVE

As mentioned earlier, classical thinkers like Aristotle were concerned with the problem that persuasion could be used for either good or evil ends. In a classic statement on the subject, Cicero, a Roman rhetorician, noted that while "no little part of disasters was brought about by men of eloquence, . . . I find that many cities have been founded, that the flames of a multitude of wars have been extinguished, and that the strongest alliances and most sacred friendships have been formed not only by the use of the reason but also more easily by the help of eloquence."²⁷ Cicero, thus, was optimistic about the use of persuasion for good ends. Aristotle put his faith in the general ability of good to triumph over evil. He argued that "rhetoric is useful because things that are true and things that are just have a natural tendency to prevail over their opposites" and explained that if falsity or injustice prevailed the fault lay with ineffective persuaders.²⁸ However, ample instances of persuasive power gone awry exist in the form of tyrannies, exploitations and simple con-jobs. For thinkers like Aristotle and Cicero, one way of avoiding the evil uses of persuasion was to train potential persuaders in philosophy and ethics. If only "good" men engaged in persuasion, then the results of persuasion were also likely to be good.

Contemporary thinkers also wrestle with this problem. Like their classical counterparts, however, contemporary persuasion theorists and practitioners often separate their concerns with effectiveness from their concerns with ethics. When ethics are considered alongside effectiveness, questions are raised concerning various means of persuasion and whether those means are or are not ethical. Some argue that only *logos* is ethical, while *pathos* and *ethos* are inherently unethical means of persuasion.²⁹ The position of these thinkers seems to be that the power of reason is a

uniquely human characteristic. As a consequence, to employ persuasive tactics that subvert or bypass that power of reason is to treat an audience as less than human, to engage in unethical persuasion. Others suggest that there are standards for judging the ethical use of all three means of persuasion.³⁰

More often, contemporary communication scholars suggest a variety of perspectives to judge the ethics of communication generally, including the ethics of both persuaders and “persuadees.”³¹ In addition to scholarly treatments of ethics, both professional organizations and governmental bodies have attempted to deal with ethical questions by providing rules and guidelines for those engaged in persuasion. For example, both the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have issued rules concerning what types of messages are legally acceptable in advertising. Similarly, professional organizations such as the American Bar Association have designed ethical codes for those who practice persuasion within their fields. We draw on sources such as these throughout this book as questions of ethics arise.

CRITICAL FOCUS: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION DOCUMENTARY

From the Classical Perspective, then, we are concerned with explicit persuasion in which a source purposefully attempts to influence an audience to make particular choices or take particular actions. The strategies of a persuader concerning what is included in the message as well as how the message is constructed are of particular interest. Those strategies should be examined to determine how effectively they take the particular audience into account as well as for their ethical implications. The accompanying questions should be used to guide your general analysis of persuasion from a Classical Perspective.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

1. In what direct and/or indirect ways does the sender acknowledge an intention to persuade the audience?
2. What specific choices is the audience asked to make?
3. What persuasive tactics does the persuader use in the message?
4. What characteristics of the audience seem to be assumed by the persuader?
5. What ethical parameters seem to bound the persuasive message?

The documentary produced by the National Rifle Association during the controversy about restrictions on semiautomatic weapons provides fertile ground for exploring the Classical Perspective toward studying persuasion. First, we can examine the ways in which the message illustrates an intention to persuade. Identifying both the persuader and the audience to whom the persuasive message is directed is a good starting point for such analysis. The documentary was produced by the National Rifle Association, a known lobbying group whose mission is to advocate less restrictive policies governing the manufacture, sale and ownership of firearms. As mentioned earlier, the audience for this film ranged from Congressional and state legislative representatives to members of the Association and the general public. Moreover, the

situation in which the message appears—a time when various restrictive policies were being debated and many were concerned with the disastrous consequences of such weapons falling into the hands of the wrong people—makes clear that the documentary was probably produced and received by people who were aware that decisions needed to be made.

Further investigation of the message itself clarifies the NRA's intention to persuade. The documentary begins with scenes from a Senate hearing in which Senator Metzenbaum asks why something like a machine gun should not be prohibited, and NRA spokesman, James Jay Baker, argues that the real question should be how to keep such weapons out of the hands of criminals. Such a vivid portrayal of the legislative process in action alerts the viewer to a situation of public controversy, a situation that calls for persuasion. The film returns to similar scenes from the hearings throughout, reinforcing a viewer's perception that they are dealing with a situation in which people will purposefully attempt to influence one another. Near the end of the film, the primary narrator, policeman Leroy Pyle, intones that "it would be a shame to vote a particular way just because of a misunderstanding." That statement indicates his, and the NRA's, desire to influence how the legislative audience will vote on the proposals concerning semiautomatics. The film ends with a plea for viewers to write their elected representatives, again underscoring the intention for persuasion of the producers of the film.

In situations where persuasion is explicit, it is usually easier to identify particular persuasive strategies and to determine the ethical stance a persuader is taking toward an audience. Knowing the particular choices an audience is being asked to make is equally important. Is the audience asked to think differently, or are they asked to actually change their behavior in some way? The NRA documentary explicitly asks viewers to think differently. Early in the film, NRA lobbyist Baker says we should think about how to keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of criminals. He even corrected Senator Metzenbaum about what the purpose of the hearing was supposed to be, suggesting to the viewer that he or she not be sidetracked from the fundamental question of how to keep guns from criminals by focusing on how to get rid of the guns entirely. Later, Leroy Pyle tells viewers he wants to give them some facts to help them use their power of reason rather than being carried away by their emotions. He is asking the audience to think in a particular way. As he talks, Pyle explains that the media has confused many viewers, indicating that he wants them to understand the truth about semiautomatic weapons, to think about these weapons in a different way. As just mentioned, the film is also explicit about the behavior that is desired from the viewer. The call to write one's elected representatives is exemplary. But even Pyle's lamentation about voting the wrong way because of a basic misunderstanding implies an action desired of the legislative audience. He wants members of Congress and state legislatures to vote the "right" way.

Investigating the choices asked of an audience clarifies the intentions of a persuader and provides a basis for comparing one persuasive message to another. Such comparisons may eventually result in generalizations about the strategies that are used most often or most effectively when particular types of choices are asked of the audience. Furthermore, knowing the type of persuasion with which you are dealing by determining the type of choice the audience is asked to make helps an analyst

determine which ethical standard or standards should be applied. In the case of the NRA documentary, because we know that the audience is asked to think about a public controversy in new terms and to act on that thinking by voting or otherwise influencing the democratic process, we may decide that standards for ethical persuasion common to democratic politics are most appropriate. Because we know the audience is being asked to make a choice about a public policy, we can expect the persuasive strategies to be those common to deliberative debate and political communication.

We can use Aristotle's three means of persuasion as an initial basis for characterizing persuasive strategies in a message. Does the message include arguments, appeals to the passions or reliance on the *ethos* of the source? Are all three means of persuasion used, or does the message seem to rely more heavily on one means as opposed to the others? We explore what makes each of these tactics effective in subsequent chapters; for now it is enough to just describe the tactics that seem to be used. In the case of the NRA documentary, all three means of persuasion are in evidence, but reasonable arguments seem to be emphasized. For example, early in the film Pyle explains that he is a police officer with considerable experience with firearms. His experience as a training and safety instructor enhances the *ethos* of the message by letting us know he is trustworthy; he is not a criminal or a fanatic gun collector. The film reveals that his job requires him to work with firearms and that he knows about such weapons. Furthermore, the film reveals that he is in a position to sympathize with the audience's emotional state of mind. He explains that he understands how viewers may feel about the recent event in Stockton because he lives nearby, and he has had friends on the force who have fallen victim to the misuse of semiautomatic weapons. Could such a person mislead the audience? The film hopes viewers will answer in the negative by focusing on the professional and personal integrity of the narrator.

Not only do Pyle's statements about where he lives and his friends who have died enhance his *ethos*, but such statements also engage the emotions of viewers. By explicitly recognizing the distraught frame of mind with which many may come to the controversy, Pyle is in a position to try to calm such viewers. He asks us to "cut through those emotions" in order to make a rational decision based on the facts. His personal manner of presentation and the accompanying visuals that show firearms in a pastoral setting of a rifle range rather than on a city street seem designed to calm the audience. His references to the mistakes made by the media in discussing the issue similarly assist in defusing an audience's fearful reaction to an image of machine guns in the street and schoolyard. His comparisons of guns with wooden stocks to those with plastic stocks and his appearance in a sportsman's vest present a calming scene in which to view the issue. Defusing fear and replacing it with calm seems a wise strategic choice by the NRA in their effort to have their arguments heard. So, even though Pyle suggests that he wants viewers to decide based on the facts rather than on their emotions, he probably really wants viewers to decide based on the facts combined with a calm emotional state rather than based on the facts combined with a fearful emotional state.

While both *ethos* and *pathos* are evident in the film, there can be little doubt that the emphasis in this persuasive message is on *logos*, the arguments themselves. The central argument seems to be that semiautomatic weapons are not the same as

fully automatic weapons and therefore should not be subject to the same restrictive gun regulations as fully automatic weapons. Pyle demonstrates the difference by firing the weapons and dismantling them to show their working parts. After demonstrating this point, Pyle turns to the question of whether or not semiautomatic weapons are the same as assault rifles. He argues they are not because they work differently, but says it's confusing because semiautomatic weapons can be made to look like their fully automatic assault counterparts. The film reinforces this point by showing us testimony from an official of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms that indicates the difficulty of determining what is an assault weapon. Pyle then explains that semiautomatic weapons cannot be easily converted into fully automatic weapons, a point reinforced by other testimony at the Senate hearing. By explaining and demonstrating that semiautomatic weapons work differently from fully automatic weapons, Pyle and the NRA hope that viewers will decide that semiautomatics should not be prohibited as fully automatic weapons are. If, as Pyle asserts, semiautomatics are popular among hunters and sportsmen, then why should they be banned? Thus goes the logic of the NRA's argument, an argument whose elaboration comprises most of the film. The argument is an enthymeme in that it calls on viewers to supply the general principle that if a gun is dissimilar to those guns now banned, it should not be banned. If a gun is not fully automatic and not an assault rifle, it must be less dangerous and, therefore, less in need of restrictive policies. If a gun is popular with sportsmen and hunters it is not often the source of criminal behavior. The logic is not unassailable as we will explain in the following chapter, but it is fairly clear as we examine the message for the persuasive strategies employed.

Given the persuasive strategies we have identified, we can now explore what the persuader seems to be assuming about the audience? Does the persuasive message presume a receptive or hostile or neutral audience? Does the message suggest an audience composed of people who share particular demographic features (e.g., particular age group, educational level, socioeconomic status)? How does this picture of the audience compare with the actual audience that we identified earlier?

The NRA documentary seems to assume that much of its audience is hostile toward their point of view initially. The beginning scenes show Baker recasting the controversy from Metzenbaum's definition of "why *not* ban semiautomatic weapons" to the NRA's concern for how to keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of criminals. Given the legislative initiatives and public attitudes following the Stockton schoolyard massacre, the mood of many audience members conformed to that of Metzenbaum: why *not* ban these dangerous weapons? Instead of addressing that question head on, the NRA documentary poses a different question: how to keep dangerous criminals from obtaining these weapons. Then the film tries to defuse the fear and anger of viewers about the tragic episode in Stockton, again suggesting that the NRA viewed much of its audience as hostile.

This hostile audience was probably also viewed as relatively ignorant of firearms. The lengthy demonstrations of various firearms during the film's presentation seems well designed for an audience unfamiliar with the internal workings of such weapons. The emphasis on *logos*, however, also suggests an audience viewed as essentially fair and reasonable. In other words, freed of unpleasant emotions and confusing terminology, the audience is assumed capable of making a rational deci-

sion. Pyle's statement that it would be a "shame" to vote the wrong way because of a misunderstanding is illustrative. A persuader making such a statement assumes his audience is reasonable and that they value their reasoning over the passions they may associate with gun control.

In addition to these assumptions, the film also addresses a somewhat receptive audience. Pyle speaks of the popularity of semiautomatics, "as many of you know," and the film makes a direct plea for viewers to contact their representatives. Furthermore, some elements of the film actually suggest it is also directed toward those sympathetic to the NRA's position. The lack of elaboration by Baker about his recasting of the issue at least suggests that the film is aimed toward those already familiar with the general position of the NRA concerning gun control, but perhaps undecided about just where semiautomatic weapons fit into that general position. News reports at the time suggest that many members of the NRA did experience ambivalent feelings following the Stockton incident.³²

Finally, the Classical Perspective orients us toward asking about the ethical boundaries of the message under consideration. Generally, we may ask if the purpose of the persuasive message seems to fall into the category of "good" or "evil." In other words, if the persuader is successful would we classify the resultant effects as good or bad for society? More specifically, we can ask if the persuader employs "anything goes" tactics, or if the persuader limits his or her strategies to content that is based on truth or the best opinions available? Are there some tactics that just seem "wrong?" Given the type of decision being asked of the audience, are there likely to be specific ethical codes that would govern this message?

When we consider the NRA documentary, several conclusions emerge. If the NRA is successful, then semiautomatic weapons will not be further prohibited. Is that good or bad for society? The film provides us little reason for deciding that such a policy would be good; however, other messages from the NRA point out that such a policy does uphold the right to bear arms. Opposing advocates seem to make a relevant claim when they explain that if semiautomatic weapons remain legal, they will at least eventually and occasionally fall into the wrong hands and result in tragedy. A representative argument of this type appeared in *The New Republic*:

...all assault rifles are semiautomatic weapons. But not all semiautomatic weapons are assault rifles. Only those semi-autos that can shoot large numbers of bullets without reloading—and are therefore ideal for playground massacres—are the objects of concern.³³

What the writer of this editorial seems to be saying is that following the NRA's advice will only lead to other tragedies.

Clearly, there are well meaning advocates on either side. Perhaps a better test of ethical boundaries lies in an examination of the tactics used in the message. Generally the documentary seems to argue for a reasonable approach to the issue and collects testimony and demonstrations from knowledgeable sources. However, by focusing on reasoning to the exclusion of emotion, the documentary probably presents the illusion of being devoid of emotional appeals while our investigation suggests that it is

really subtly manipulating the emotions of the audience. This may be an area in which ethical questions arise. By focusing so explicitly on the “facts” and even by using the documentary form for their message, a form that many associate with factual and educational information, the NRA may be masking the reality that there are informed experts on either side of this issue. By showing us the similarities and differences among weapons, the documentary may confuse more than it clarifies, leading to further ethical considerations. However, none of the information presented is blatantly false or fabricated, and generally the message seems within the bounds of what is considered ethical regarding persuasion devoid of influence from the passions.

By identifying the message as a part of a controversy about an issue of public importance, we may be able to better evaluate the ethical boundaries of the message by consulting general ethical standards for democratic discussion and debate. Such standards would include concern for the truth of the message and the ability of opponents and audience members alike to challenge the arguments presented in a spirit of fair play and with a commitment to the public good.³⁴ While we do not really doubt the truth of the message, we must wonder if the documentary form of the message is sufficiently open to allow the arguments to be challenged. Direct communication in face-to-face situations is generally more conducive to actualizing the spirit of fair play. Few opponents of the NRA have sufficient funds to make similar documentary films that tell the other side of the story. Regarding the public good, we once again find ourselves with conflicting interpretations regarding what is more important—an unrestrained right to bear arms or a restrictive policy that might prevent some criminal behavior.

The critical questions presented here are typical of the initial analysis of persuasive messages that is fostered by the Classical Perspective. To more fully analyze any persuasive message requires application of questions from subsequent chapters. However, these questions can be used to begin the critical process.

NOTES

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 33. "Lies, Damn Lies, and NRA Ads," *The New Republic* 200 (8 May 1989): 6.
 34. For a summary of ethical perspectives based on democratic debate, see Martha Cooper *Analyzing Public Discourse* (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1989), 135-152.

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