

The Jonestown Appeal: A Rhetorical Analysis of Jim Jones' "The Death Tapes"

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Abstract

Through the view of the Aristotelian analysis, this research identified how Jim Jones utilized rhetoric to persuade a large group of people. Pre-existing literature in the fields of psychology and communication have closely studied Jones' manipulation tactics in both his speeches and interactions with his audiences. In addition to his persuasive tone, this study explored and evaluated the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos tailored in Jim Jones' final speech, Q042, now commonly coined, "The Death Tapes." The methodology employed in this study meticulously examined the artifact by listening exclusively through the tapes for each appeal and the impacts of his tone. In their results, researchers found that Jones primarily leaned on emotional and authoritative arguments. Additionally, researchers exposed patterns of emotional appeals that were weaponized to strengthen community loyalty within Jones' cult. The research team suggests that future research ought to examine others cult speech structures for similar appeals. In order to better understand cult mentality and unconscious human reasoning, it is imperative that persuasive communication be evaluated for its manipulative potential. Through the application of the Aristotelian analysis, this research suggests that Jones' rhetoric was not strong solely because of its controlling techniques but because of its logical, emotional, and authoritative persuasive appeal.

Keywords: Jonestown Massacre, The Death Tapes, Aristotelian Analysis, cult rhetoric

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The Jonestown Appeal: A Rhetorical Analysis of Jim Jones' "The Death Tapes"

In 1978, 918 individuals were found dead in Jonestown, Guyana, after being persuaded to drink cyanide poisoning. On November 18th, Jim Jones, leader of the People's Temple, convinced his congregation through his final speech entitled, "The Death Tapes" to commit mass suicide as their final revolutionary act ("How many people died...", 2013). Jones had convinced his cult that the American government was coming to kill them, and this was their only opportunity to escape with a peaceful death. Jones' lethal persuasion prompted mothers to herd together their children and mercilessly slit their throats. Over 300 children died that day ("How many people died...", 2013). Those who attempted to escape with visiting news-reporters were shot down and killed. The bodies of nearly a thousand people were found piled atop one another in a settlement in the middle of the jungle. The members of the People's Temple voluntarily committed suicide because they fell victim to weaponized rhetoric.

According to the Library of CQ Research (1993), the International Cult Education Program states that there are more people in cults than ever before. Since that time, the president of the International Cult Studies Association Steve Eichel reveals that there are over 10,000 cults that exist today in the United States ("The Family: A Cult Revealed", 2018). Since the turn of the century, cults have fallen under the radar of society's gaze, so much so that their existence often goes unacknowledged. However, cults will continue to isolate and abuse their members in silence until another unfathomable tragedy breaks forth. This study seeks to examine the rhetorical strategies utilized by cult leader, Jim Jones, to expose and bring awareness to weaponized persuasion and demonstrate how to properly evaluate and analyze rhetorical arguments.

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In 1955, Jim Jones informally started the People's Temple in Indianapolis, Indiana. However, after prophesying to his congregants of a nuclear holocaust, Jones relocated his cult to California, where it grew massively in the early 1970s. Inspired by Marxist ideals, Jones coined himself an apocalyptic socialist, which drew the attention of the US government. When press started circulating about the abuse and fraudulence of the People's Temple, Jones ordered that the cult relocate to the Jonestown settlement in Guyana where, a year later, the Jonestown Massacre occurred.

This research study seeks to investigate rhetorical strategies that can be weaponized against mass audiences. Through the view of the Aristotelian analysis, how did Jim Jones use rhetoric to persuade a large group of people to commit mass suicide? By evaluating how Jones specifically used logos, pathos, and ethos in his final speech, "The Death Tapes," this study will examine the way these methods appeal to the human thought process. Through research of these Aristotelean strategies, this study will then apply and analyze the impact these techniques had on Jones' audience. This study will then be completed by drawing implications and conclusions about manipulative rhetoric through the lens of the Aristotelian analysis.

Literature Review

This study seeks to contribute to existing research concerning "The Death Tapes" and the rhetorical strategies utilized by Jim Jones to manipulate the Jonestown cult. Through examination of preexisting journal articles regarding the key terminology of this study, a firm foundation can be laid upon which to conduct this research.

Aristotelian Analysis

Kristjanasson's (2016) journal article provides insight into how the Aristotelian analysis can be applied to emotions of awe and reverence. Kristjanasson's research is relevant to this

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study because it demonstrates a proper and practical application of the Aristotelian analysis. Additionally, it draws the connection between how rhetorical weaponization psychologically impacts an individual's perception of leaders through awe and admiration. Christopher Carey's chapter "Rhetorical Means of Persuasion" in the *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (1994), explains in detail Aristotle's theory of the rhetorical art of persuasion. By fully describing the historical context, meaning, and implications of these techniques, this source explains why these rhetorical techniques are found to be persuasive. Further, it clarifies why these individuals fell victim to Jones' manipulative rhetoric. First, his emotional appeals conveyed to the audience a seeming interpersonal care for others. Second, by establishing trust with his congregation as the authority, they were trained to take Jones at his word. As the sole authority of the People's Temple, Jones had the power to redefine facts and craft his own narrative of reality that his congregants readily accepted.

Psychological Rhetoric

Miller's article (2007) evaluates the rhetorical breakdowns of other communication assessors who have examined the persuasion of Jim Jones. By supporting Jonestown witness Tim Cahill's first-hand account of the monstrous destruction left behind after the Jonestown Massacre, Miller explains the vitality of ethos and logos. Through credibility and logical consistency, Miller then builds and elaborates upon Cahill's findings by adding a theoretical explanation for Jones' rhetorical success. With incorporation of Aristotelian analysis and other classical Greek applications, Miller evaluates Jones' nature and style of speaking to explain why he was able to persuade others so easily. Collins (2018) supports these findings with psychological research. In her article, Wiles (2018) researches Jim Jones' psychological techniques used to manipulate members of the People's Temple. Wiles discovers that Jones

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utilized a variety of brainwashing and mind control tactics. Additionally, there are connections drawn between how Jones communicated empathetically with his people and their eagerness to connect with him. Collins and Hassan (2016) explore specific psychological components that Jones employed to dictate Jonestown. Steven Hassan, expert on Undue Influence, brainwashing, and unethical hypnosis, is a professional in understanding the rhetoric and manipulation of the cult mentality. Hassan's analysis of Jones' oration exposes the cult leader's control over his people through an appeal to ethos and utilization of fear tactics.

Katherine Camille's (2021) Honors Thesis, *"But you have to have been there been there to know what we are talking e talking about": An Examination of the Rhetorical Environments of Cults and Other Extremist Groups and How They Lead to Violence*, argues that the tone Jones used to condition his audience towards trust and obedience is linked to Aristotle's persuasive appeal to ethos. Camille's (2021) analysis indicated that the use of Jones' voice was the most effective component of his persuasion:

Jones had spent months conditioning, abusing, drugging, and sleep depriving his followers, getting them comfortable not only with the constant sound of his voice, but also with the idea of drinking poison. These behaviors became such norms within his compound that by the end, when the members heard his voice telling them to commit suicide, most were not just ready to do so, but they were incapable of doing anything else. (p. 14)

In her examination, Katherine Camille applied Kenneth Burke's Psychology of Form and how it intertwines with manipulatively persuasive rhetoric. Through this application, Camille found that when manipulative rhetoric was paired with Psychology of Form, the audience's mind is primed to be easily persuaded by this promise of powerful deliverance from their leader. Burke's

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Psychology of Form theoretically suggests that the Jonestown deaths are connected to the anticipated, inevitable end Jones groomed his congregation for:

He says that ‘Form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite’ (Deepak, 2011, p. 31). By this, Burke means that in writing, speaking or acting, you build an expectancy in your audience, so that when they receive what they have been waiting for, they will be thrilled. (Camille, 2021, p. 22)

Camille’s research offered further explanation for the “why” behind what happened at Jonestown and how persuasive cult rhetoric psychologically impacts audiences.

“The Death Tapes”

In “Revolutionary Suicide: A Rhetorical Examination of Jim Jones’ ‘Death Tapes,’” Maggie Pehanick (2013) examines Jim Jones’ final speech given before the Jonestown Massacre. Pehanick provides a context, method, and analysis breakdown of the “The Death Tapes” to explore the rhetorical techniques Jones used to convince hundreds of his followers to commit suicide. While acknowledging the validity of Marcia Stratton’s narrative analysis of the tapes in 1991, Pehanick examines the artifact through the generative method. Generative criticism identifies patterns in speech behavior through frequency and intensity. One of the primary themes of frequency Pehanick identifies is Jones’ use of ethos, referring to himself as the prophet, while also utilizing a variety of other rhetorical techniques to manipulate his audience. Bellefontaine’s article centers around Christine Miller, who was one of the few individuals to question Jones in the People’s Temple. Additionally, Bellefontaine discloses many of the horrors and abuses that Christine and countless other members of Jones’ cult faced under his power.

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McGehee's (2013) article examines the authenticity of the Jonestown tape. Through thorough scrutiny of the artifact and the context of the tragedy, McGehee confirms the validity of the recording. This article also studies Jones' speaking style in a collection of his sermons, finding the tapes to be thoroughly consistent with Jones' rhetoric. In his article, Dieckman (2013) addresses a common misconception of the music in the background of the Death Tapes. Dieckman presents his findings that there was no actual music playing in the final hours before the Jonestown Massacre. Instead, the occasional interruptions on Q42 are old musical recordings that lapsed over during the recording of the Death tapes.

Historical Cult Rhetoric

Carl Michael Cates' (1994) *Cult rhetoric: A genre of manipulative speech* highlights how cult groups grow in isolation which builds up same-minded rhetorical thinking: "By definition, cults are socially deviant and thereby place themselves in a situation which separates them from most of society" (p. 64). The research suggests there is a genre of cult rhetoric set apart by its "similar circumstances, style, and structure in discourses" (p. 64). Cates identified that cults commonly weaponize language by threatening groups with ultimatums. Specifically, cult leaders will usher a double bind, or "two irreconcilable demands or a choice between two undesirable courses of action" (Oxford Languages, n.d., para.1). This insight directly applies to the circumstances of Jonestown in which Jim Jones proposed a double-bind to his congregation: that they could take their lives themselves in a "revolutionary suicide" or die a miserably painful death at the merciless hands of their imminent "enemies" that were coming to slaughter them (YouTube, 2018, 0:31:39). Cates' study went on to note the significant similarities in structure of descriptive content throughout the sermons and discourses of various

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cult leaders, and how they use these double-bind manipulation techniques to manipulate their congregants towards their desired course of action.

Erickson (2019) published her study on the ethics of cult rhetoric through the Burkean analysis. Her research found three major implications: the question of indisputable fact, the power of groupthink, and the fundamental underlying need for ethical persuasion. First, Erickson noted that in order to present with ethical persuasion, the speaker must define their terms unbiasedly. If a rhetorician intentionally chooses to define their terms by what they find virtuous or commendable, this inevitably shapes the argument in their favor. According to Erickson (2019), “opinion leads to action and argument, not just basic fact. Essentially, there can be a deficit of knowledge presented because of an individual or group’s worldview” (p. 61). Cult leaders can get so consumed with speaking and convincing others of their truth that they often do not present all the available information, especially if some facts may prove counter to their argument:

This polarizes them from other groups of society and drives their need to further present their claims as true. Understanding that the truth of one group is not synonymous with objective fact provides a resolution for why they continue to oppose one another and are unable to share common ground. (Erickson, 2019, p. 61)

Because these leaders often define their terms according to their own opinions, groups oppose each other on what is exactly “objective fact.” Gary Remer’s (2013) article “Rhetoric, Emotional Manipulation, and Political Morality: The Modern Relevance of Cicero vis-à-vis Aristotle,” evaluates and compares Aristotle and Cicero’s approach to persuasion in regards to political rhetoric and its effects on mass audiences. Remer’s comparative study found that Cicero’s view

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of emotional rhetoric appealed more to modern audiences than Aristotle's due to its heavy foundation in communicative ethics and relevant connection to political realities.

Second, Erickson's research confirmed the power of groupthink in cult communities. According to Janis in 1971, "at its core, groupthink signifies the desire for unity and harmony outweighing the pursuit of realism and truth" (Erickson, 2019, p. 61). This communication theory values group thought over individual thought to reinforce a community of harmony, unity, and coherence. Groupthink is founded upon the belief that there is power in the unification of greater numbers. When opposed, these cult groups that have succumbed to groupthink grow even stronger in their resistance to outside thought because they have been preconditioned to only accept what is the pre-agreed mentality.

Last, Erickson's (2019) study highlighted the importance of ethical persuasion. The research evidenced that cults generally employ the practice of coercion to demonstrate their power and dominance over the human mind. However, this goes against Aristotle's principles of ethical rhetoric. Erickson also brings into consideration that the typical environmental factors of cults inhibit proper, logical decision-making. This study provides examples of various cults that limit food and sleep, as well as other essential human survival needs that tamper with human decision-making. This thesis concludes by encouraging readers to remain cognizant when interacting with persuasive material and to retain individual, critical thinking skills whenever groupthink mentality is at play.

Leese (2013) examines the language of the Mao Cult and its potent uses of manipulation to isolate and build community among its members. This study identified terminology that strengthens loyalty among congregants. Leese reasoned that the antonym of loyalty was not disloyalty. Rather, the greatest threat to the Mao cult was the impending ideation of individual

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selfishness. Anything that threatened the public or common good, was considered treason: “If one embodies the character ‘selfishness’ and does not fight it, that means being disloyal to Chairman Mao. The determination to fight selfishness is the watershed between the real and the bogus revolutionaries” (Leese, 2013, p. 187). This foundational cult ideology is inspired from the fallacy of division which believes that what endangers the safety of the whole community will therefore endanger the safety of each individual member (Howe, 2017). Therefore, by convincing the individual members that their safety and identity is only found in the preservation of their cult community, each person is enticed to then sacrifice their individual interests and needs for the betterment and goals of the group.

Previous research has confirmed that Jones utilized a variety of manipulative communicative and psychological tactics to persuade his audience. Aristotle’s pillars of rhetoric state what the human mind rationalizes as persuasive. However, further research needs to be conducted as to why the human mind finds these appeals to be persuasive. Further, it is important that researchers seek to investigate ways in which audiences can protect their minds from manipulative rhetoric. Regardless of the fact that Jones’ rhetoric was weaponized and manipulative, this research study hypothesizes that he also had valid persuasion utilized in his speeches. This study will explore how Jones implemented logos, pathos, and ethos in his final speech, “The Death Tapes,” which was able to effectively persuade his followers towards his terrible means.

Methodology

The question that will be discussed in this study is: through the view of the Aristotelian analysis, how did Jim Jones use rhetoric to persuade a large group of people? This study will contribute to pre-existing research on manipulative rhetoric by evaluating Jones’ Death Tapes

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through the Aristotelian analysis. The research in this study will specifically focus on how Jones was able to persuade audiences with a variety of rhetorical tactics.

Jim Jones' rhetoric has been thoroughly studied within the communication field. There has been extensive research conducted within the field of psychology to examine his manipulative tactics. Research surrounding "The Death Tapes" has mainly encompassed manipulative rhetoric, psychological implications of mind-control and brainwashing, and proving the validity of the tapes themselves. However, past research has failed to evaluate the most basic aspect of the artifact: the appeal of Jones' arguments, while under a pretense of manipulation, had valid persuasive structure. This composition of logos, pathos, and ethos is taught in classrooms all across the world. Aristotelian rhetoric has been widely revered for over a thousand years. These arguments of logic, emotion, and credibility have proven to be timeless pillars of persuasion that appeal to human rationale.

While there were a variety of factors that contributed to Jones' ability to rhetorically persuade his audience, this study furthers existing research by evaluating Jones' speaking style through the Aristotelian analysis. This study will examine Jones' final speech, "The Death Tapes." Recorded on November 18, 1978, in the settlement of Jonestown, Guyana, "The Death Tapes" document Jim Jones' final speech to his congregation in which he responds to the crisis of killing the US congressman and insists the People's Temple commit "revolutionary suicide" (YouTube, 2018, 0:31:39). Totalling approximately forty-five minutes in length, this artifact is freely accessible to the public through both audiobook and YouTube. Through application of the Aristotelian appeals of persuasion, this research will explore how Jones utilizes appeals of logic, emotion, and credibility in his speeches. This study will analyze Jones' persuasion not only in his words but also in his tone.

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First, this study will be framed by the context leading to the Jonestown Massacre from pre-existing research studies and journal articles concerning the People's Temple. Then, "The Death Tapes" will be evaluated based upon its logical, emotional, and credible content that Jones used to persuade his audience towards mass suicide. In this study, research will be conducted by listening through "The Death Tapes" and applying one appeal at a time. After listening for logos, the study will further by then listening to the tapes again separately, this next time listening exclusively for pathos. Third, the researcher will listen through the artifact exclusively for ethos content. After collecting data for verbal content, "The Death Tapes" will again be explored by listening specifically to the tone which Jones used to persuade. Finally, these two factors will be analyzed to examine the implications Jones' persuasive rhetoric may have had on his audience.

This methodology is the most scrutinous and accurate means of interpreting speeches through the Aristotelian appeals. Rather than listening for all three strategies at the same time, carefully listening through the tapes several separate times for different appeals will aid in selective, meticulous research for each appeal.

Results

The results of this study were derived from an Aristotelian analysis of the Jonestown death tapes. The question that has been discussed in this study is: through the view of the Aristotelian analysis, how did Jim Jones use rhetoric to persuade a large group of people? Before first listening to the tapes, the researcher reviewed previous studies of the Jonestown Massacre and "The Death Tapes" to fully comprehend the context going into the analysis.

Logos

The first rhetorical appeal evaluated in this study was logos. Logos is the rhetorical appeal to the audience's reason using evidence, facts, and logic. In Guyana, Jones was the head

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leader and keeper of information. Any information that was shared with members of the People's Temple had to be first approved by Jones, and these messages were often manipulated in his favor. Jim Jones weaponized his followers' ignorance against them and constructed his own narrative of the situation with the US government by forcing his assumptions upon them as inevitable consequences of the events that had taken place. However, because his followers were still human beings with the ability to think critically, Jones had to craft his arguments to be found sound when assessed through logical human reasoning.

The leader began his speech by explaining to his congregation that righteously enraged members of their community had set out to shoot down the congressman's plane that had just departed from Jonestown. Jones declared that, once the United States government discovered that the People's Temple killed their congressmen, the government was going to send out agents for retribution. Jim Jones exaggerated this reasoning by claiming that "when these people land out here, they'll torture our children... our people... our seniors. We cannot have this!" (YouTube, 2018, 0:23:11). Many members pleaded with their leader to beg Russia to send a rescue team to Guyana so that they may be saved by their Communist comrades. Jones quickly refuted this suggestion by explaining that "they gave us a code to let us know of an issue, not us creating an issue for them" (YouTube, 2018, 0:07:07). According to Jones' arguments, the relationship Jonestown had with the Russian Communist party was heavily one-sided, pitting the People's Temple as mainstream supporters of the Soviets. Although Jonestown was willing to aid the Communist party in Russia, Jones made it clear that it was not the place of the People's Temple to beg for help from the Russian Soviets. The leader further reasoned that, even if the People's Temple could get in contact with Russia, "you think Russia's gonna want us with all this stigma?" (YouTube, 2018, 0:09:15). Jones implied that inevitably, the United States would

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make it to Jonestown far before any Soviet help could intervene. Jim Jones had a rationalization for every rebuttal the audience presented. Through his narration of the situation, Jones logically explained to the people that they did not have the time to flee and why revolutionary suicide was their only choice to escape torture.

Pathos

Through meticulous evaluation of the tapes, the research offered a rhetorical pattern of an appeal to emotion which Jones used to repeatedly win over his congregation. Jones would first use an appeal to loyalty, expressing how much he has suffered for his people, singing, “how very much I have loved you” (YouTube, 2018, 0:00:13). Then, he would weaponize appeals to fear by constructing a reality of imminent doom for the People’s Temple, often describing the brutal death their children would have to endure should the United States government arrive to Guyana and find them alive. “We are sitting here on a powder keg. I don’t think this is what we want to do with our babies” (YouTube, 2018, 0:01:06). Finally, Jones would present the solution to this fear by appealing to a sense of victory and inspiring his followers to make a revolutionary decision in one last act of freedom. “No man takes my life from me,” Jones asserted, “I lay my life down” (YouTube, 2018, 0:01:20). This pattern is reflected consistently throughout Jones’ speech in his emotional appeals.

Appeal to Loyalty

Throughout the recording, Jones portrayed himself as a leader who had suffered endlessly for the good of his people: “To you I’ve laid down my life practically. I’ve practically died every day to give you peace, but it’s still not the kind of peace I wanted to give you” (YouTube, 2018, 0:11:20). Jim Jones presented himself as a father who wanted to give his children so much better, as someone who would lay his life down for his followers rather than see them hurt. “They can

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take me and do whatever they want to do, I don't want to see you go through this hell anymore" (YouTube, 2018, 0:31:59). By promising his people that he would willingly sacrifice himself for their well-being, their belief that he holds the People's Temple's best interests at heart is reinforced.

This leader's ultimate goal was to create familial unity and unconditional loyalty within Jonestown. One of the key pillars towards strengthening a cult is creating a strong sense of unity amongst its members and beliefs of animosity towards the outside world. Although Donald Edward "Ujara" Sly attacked the congressman on the airstrip, Jones defended Ujara as a loyal member of the Temple who was seeing retribution for the government breaking up the family of Jonestown by sheltering and deporting the cult defectors:

You think I'm going to deliver them Ujara? A man whose mother had been working with the government to break up this family...I'm standing with people. I'm standing with Ujara. They are part of me. I've never detached myself from any of your troubles, I have taken your troubles right on my shoulders and I'm not gonna change that now...

(YouTube, 2018, 0:05:54; 0:10:10)

Jones made it clear that the antagonists of the People's Temple were the Jonestown defectors. Throughout the whole speech, Jones routinely blamed the disloyal members of the congregation for betraying their family by leaving with the congressman and accusing Jonestown of abusive practices. Jim Jones blamed the defectors as the reason all of Jonestown had to die. This created the mentality that disloyalty to the People's Temple was the ultimate sin, by partnering with the enemy and betraying "their family," thus sentencing them all to death.

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Appeal to Fear

Jones deliberately followed this appeal to loyalty with a grim appeal to fear: “They’ll parachute in on us...There’s no way we can survive” (YouTube, 2018, 0:03:00-0:03:59).

Constantly, Jones threatened that the American government would come to steal, torture, and kill their children. As time went on, Jones audibly was more urgently insistent that the people hasten to drink the poison because the American government was imminently coming to kill them all brutally: “Death is a million times more preferable than ten days ahead of you...if you knew what was ahead of you” (YouTube, 2018, 0:38:13). By insisting that the future was hopelessly bleak for the settlement, Jones argued that taking their own lives was the only righteous course of action in alignment with their ideals.

Appeal to Victory

However hopeless Jones insisted their future was, Jones contended that there would be victory in the death of his people by declaring it a revolutionary act of suicide. This appeal was significant because it offered sensations of triumph to an otherwise hopeless community. By convincing his congregation that they would forever be immortalized to tower over their enemies through the taking of their own lives, Jones presented a solution of supremacy in their final moments of life. Throughout his speech, Jones reiterated the tagline: “This is a revolutionary suicide, not a self-destructive suicide!” (YouTube, 2018, 0:31:39). By taking their own lives instead of allowing their enemies to take it, Jones contended that this was the final act of freedom for these people. Through triumphant tone and champion words, Jones empowered his followers to take control over their deaths: “We’re laying down our lives, we’re not letting them take our lives” (YouTube, 2018, 40:00). Jones conveyed that losing their lives at the hands of the enemy was the way they would truly be defeated.

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Jones insisted that their revolutionary suicide was an act of protest against the conditions of an inhumane world. Over and over, as the people started shoving poison down their children's throats, as he witnessed children coughing their last breaths of life, Jones is heard muttering, "Free at last. Peace" (YouTube, 2018, 0:37:10). Over the choking and cries of dying children and members alike, Jones is chanting "what a legacy" the People's Temple is creating for generations to come (YouTube, 2018, 0:22:31). Jim Jones insisted that Jonestown would leave behind an indelible legacy, that the world would marvel at the devotion and bravery of their socialistic communist community for all of eternity.

Tone

Throughout Jones' "The Death Tapes" speech, his tone was generally very calm and soothing. Researchers found that his voice was almost charming to listen to, and that his audience was largely entranced by his tranquil reaction amidst times of crisis. Jim Jones tended to draw out his words, so it sounded as if he had a peaceful, smooth cadence about him. In multiple instances, Jones referred to his congregation through terms of endearment such as "honey" and "my love" (YouTube, 2018, 0:21:29). The researchers noted that the assuredness of his tone was quick to deescalate shouts of panic and fear from the congregants. Further, the calmness with which he presented his plan encouraged these followers to believe that taking their lives was not only the best option, but morally, the right thing to do.

When expressing his enthusiasm about their "revolutionary suicide," Jones' voice would elevate in passion and strength (YouTube, 2018, 0:31:39). Along with his pitch, shouts of inspiration would rise from the congregants in support of his revolution. However, when members of the People's Temple would openly oppose Jones' direction, his demeanor changed. Though Jones explicitly insisted, "I'm not taking it [the right to their own opinions] from you"

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(YouTube, 2018, 0:15:02), his demeaning tone towards these members indicated otherwise. This reintroduced the ideology that Jones was a merciful leader to not punish members for openly opposing him. From his tone and the audible reaction of the audience, it was certainly not a correct or wise decision for followers to speak out against their prophet. For example, when Jones chastised the adults for making the children nervous over the situation, his tone grew sharper and sterner. Consequently, the audience reacted like children receiving a scolding from a parent. Nevertheless, the variance in his tone was always followed by cheers, applause, or concurrence from his audience.

Ethos

One of the primary and most potent appeals the researchers found Jones utilizing was the appeal to authority. In Guyana, that supreme authority was, obviously, Jim Jones himself. To reassure the People's Temple of his trustworthiness and candor, Jones reminds them, "I've never lied to you..." (YouTube, 2018, 0:02:59). He claimed that he knew the torture and bloodshed the United States government would bring because he could see visions of the future: "I can tell you the answer now, because I'm a prophet" (YouTube, 2018, 0:10:52). Because Jones had established credibility within the People's Temple as their holy prophet and suffering leader, the audience had no reservations about trusting him completely. Additionally, he opened the floor for any "agitators" with "dissenting opinions" to come forward and speak their concerns (YouTube, 2018, 0:06:23). This affirmed his image as a credible source because he seemed to be an unintimidated expert, welcoming questions of opposition and prepared to refute any doubts his people might publicly bring before him. When members offered up solutions to avoid mass suicide, Jones discarded their arguments by appealing to his "prophetic" authority: "I wish I could tell you were right, but I'm right" (YouTube, 2018, 0:08:39). However invalidly supported

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his claims may have been in logical fact, his appeal to authority was instrumental in convincing his cult to commit mass suicide. After years of experientially grooming his congregation to believe he was a divine prophet, it was almost second nature for his followers to invalidate their gut hesitations and obey their sovereign leader.

Overall, this research found that Jones had no quality logical arguments but preyed intentionally upon human reasoning and ignorance. The primary persuasive strategy Jones utilized was an appeal to emotion—specifically loyalty, fear, and victory. Jones abused his position as cult administrator to declare himself a prophet to gain the appeal to authority. Last, the leader manipulated his tone to create underlying impressions and messages in order to persuade his congregation in their final moments.

Discussion of Results

In light of this tragedy, it is vital that these findings be thoroughly evaluated for the implications of manipulative content. Amidst these findings, analysis indicates that the appeal to emotion has significant potential to override human logic and self-preservative nature. Additionally, this study suggests that when a community has been groomed over time by their leader to recognize only his logic and authority to be truth, followers will distrust their own judgments. By elaborating upon these findings and dissecting their impact, this study may provide significant insights into rhetorically abusive strategies and identify tactics to combat rhetorical weaponization in the future.

Logos

Listening through Jones' final speech, researchers identified that none of his claims are backed by any factual or presentable evidence. Jones offers no statistics or citations in his speech. The only logos arguments Jones makes are founded upon logical human reasoning

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according to Jones' own narrative of events. He explains the situation in consistency with the basic human understanding of concepts such as costs, rewards, and revenge to persuade them towards his ideals. Based upon their limited knowledge of the situation and the outside world, the congregants of the People's Temple utilize their individual critical thinking skills to ask probing questions and offer solutions. However, by preying upon their ignorance, Jones convinces his congregation that his arguments are logically sound through his constructed narrative of the dilemma.

Pathos

In "The Death Tapes," Jim Jones' primary utilizes the rhetorical strategy of pathos—the appeal to emotion. The Aristotelian analysis shows that the three primary emotional ideologies Jones appeals to are a pattern of loyalty, fear, and victory. These three emotional appeals are sufficient to persuade all opposition Jones originally received, as heard on the tapes.

Significance of the Pattern

The pattern of emotional appeals Jones utilizes is significant because it reveals a pathway of human understanding. By first expressing how he has always personally and deeply sacrificed himself for his people, Jones' congregants subconsciously pity and feel indebted to their leader. Jones secures his appeal to loyalty by consistently reiterating how the People's Temple is a unified family. After first reminding his people that they were bound to be united together, Jones then implied that they were then doomed to communally join in the same fate as one family. He commits the fallacy of composition by insisting that the actions of one are the actions of the whole. When the congregants call for the few individuals who shot down the congressman's plane to be offered up to the vengeance-seeking United States government, Jones opposed immediately. He insists that members of the People's Temple family do not betray, sacrifice, or

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offer up one another to the enemy. That kind of crime is reflected in the behavior of the traitorous Jonestown defectors. Instead, the People's Temple was to stand together and defend the actions of their members. Jones is quoted saying, "I don't know who killed the congressman but as far as I'm concerned, I killed him" (YouTube, 2018, 0:34:40). By developing this groupthink mentality that betrayal of their socialistic community the worst kind of evil, Jones paints the People's Temple as a family that does everything together— even dies together.

Once Jones unifies his people with an appeal to loyalty, he instills fear into them that destruction is imminently and urgently coming to destroy them. By creating an "us versus them" mentality, Jones villainizes the People's Temple traitors and American government, declaring that they will return to torture and kill all of them. Jim Jones' untrumpable solution is that Jonestown must commit a "revolutionary suicide," so that they can reclaim victory over their enemies by taking their lives before they were taken from them (YouTube, 2018, 0:31:39).

This analysis reveals that when humans feel secure in the loyal unity of a group, they are willing to make urgent and frightening decisions together. Further, this research implies that when involved in a committed group, humans are easily persuaded by the ideals of community victory. Once rallied to this ideal, members of this community are more willing to sacrifice for the glory and legacy of the collective whole. These are foundational implications of the socialist mentality, communicatively exposed through the application of the Aristotelian analysis.

Ethos

Jones' appeal to authority is necessary for him to have any foundational claim at all. By establishing his credibility as a prophet, the congregation learns to fear, respect, and trust their leader. Additionally, because the people cognitively revere him as "father," they, as his "children", learn to doubt their personal reasoning and trust in the one who knows better

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(YouTube, 2018, 0:37:18). Cult specialists John Collins and Steven Hassan (2016) from San Diego University wrote in their investigative article regarding Jones' spiritual authority over his congregation:

Using claims of divine gifts of 'prophecy' and 'faith healing,' Jones gradually convinced his fear-gripped members that he was different from the common rank-and-file member.

Though his followers considered him to be a fellow human being, they were slowly convinced that he had 'paranormal' abilities given him by a divine being. (para. 10)

Last, by openly inviting his others to publicly express doubts and ask questions, Jones discreetly promotes his own credibility by openly inviting cross-examination of his claims. The key implications of this are that when a group of people train themselves to believe that one person is the supreme authority, they inevitably learn to distrust their own judgment. This results in a decline of critical thinking and a fear to publicly doubt the leader, which snowballs into the creation of a brainwashed society.

Tone

Implications of Jones' tone reveal that when there is an emotional appeal tied to a trusted authority, the audience is more likely to personally side with the speaker. As Jones describes events and the details of his plan, his voice is consistently calm and self-assured, which reinforces his ethos by encouraging the audience to believe he knows what he is doing. The soothing tone and endearing terms he uses in addressing his "children" seemingly comforts the congregants (YouTube, 2018, 0:37:18). Even when chastising his audience, the people do not get defensive, but submit themselves to the correction of their direct authority. Jim Jones' tone carries his arguments with passion, derived from a desire to inflict care but also fear into the minds of his people.

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This study advances understanding of this issue because it answers the research question: through the view of the Aristotelian analysis, how did Jim Jones use rhetoric to persuade a large group of people? The research from this study suggests a pattern of rhetorical appeals—specifically emotional—that has a significant impact on group mentality. By first appealing to community loyalty to the leader and then the group as a whole, the People’s Temple finds no other life or identity outside of Jonestown. Second, by appealing to the fear that this community is under threat, the group mentality shifts into fight or flight mode and decisions are made for the collective whole. Last, the appeal to victory rallies the whole group to submit and advance towards whatever collective decision the community comes to. Through his smooth tone and fatherly relationship with the audience, his arguments were readily accepted without solid logical evidence. This study answers the research question by finding the solution as to how Jim Jones was able to effectively persuade the People’s Temple using the Aristotelian appeals. Additionally, this study contributes to literature by suggesting a new pattern of persuasion that has significant impact on cult mentality. This pattern exposes the persuasive appeal of the communist mindset. By appealing to loyalty, fear, and then victory, this pattern poses insight into how groupthink persuades audiences towards socialistic and group-centered ideologies.

Conclusion

This study scrutinizes persuasive appeals of the human thought process through evaluation of how Jones used logos, pathos, and ethos to persuade his congregation in his final speech, “The Death Tapes.” Over the years, the extensive research on this artifact has included examination of the practices of Jonestown, the psychological breakout of Jones’ manipulative rhetoric, a generative criticism of “The Death Tapes,” and much more. However, this study was important to conduct because it investigated specifically the persuasive elements of Jones’

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rhetorical strategies. The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature because it provides evidence that supports the impact that authority and ethos play into manipulative rhetoric. Additionally, this study offers relevant elements that back the findings in the field of psychology through Jones' verbal self-supporting narrative and nonverbal communication through his tone.

It is evident that rhetorical persuasion holds immense power; however, rhetoric can be meticulously weaponized to manipulate and bring harm to others. This research will evidence the inherent appeals to logic, emotion, and credibility that Jones used to ultimately convince nearly a thousand people to commit mass suicide. Jim Jones incorporated logos, pathos, and ethos into his speeches to monopolize his audience's decisions. However, from examination of the tapes, it is implied that Jones also utilized these tactics in his interpersonal interactions within the People's Temple community. The appeal to logic satisfied any conjectures about possibly escaping Jonestown. Jim Jones' appeal to emotion was instrumental in his speech, as he claimed that his love for his people motivated everything he did. The emotional connection between Jones and his congregation, however, was undeniable. His authority was evidenced in not only his words, but the tone of voice with which he dominated these people. Jim Jones was able to persuade others due to his widespread credibility with the congregation as their leader and anointed prophet. The People's Temple was endlessly devoted to Jones and put their faith in him to the point of death.

This study reveals a rhetorical pattern that Jones utilized specifically in the appeal to emotion that influenced the groupthink mentality of his community. Opportunities for further research would explore looking into other cult mentalities as well as speeches given by socialist leaders to their communities. Limitations of this research study include that this pattern has not

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been compared to any other of Jones' or other communist leader's speeches. Of course, not all socialist groups may share utilize an appeal to loyalty, fear, and victory mentality when attempting to effectively persuade. However, research on such a subject still has yet to be conducted but would contribute to a more cohesive understanding of communication strategies utilized to persuade cult groups.

Classified as the one of the deadliest mass-suicides of the modern age, it is owed to the 918 victims of the Jonestown Massacre to investigate the "The Death Tapes." It is imperative that researchers seek to understand the patterns and impact that manipulative rhetoric poses to human reasoning. Through the tragedy of the Jonestown Massacre, it is undisputable that weaponized rhetoric has been proven to pose a threat not only to mental wellbeing but also physical and emotional health. Through application of the Aristotelian analysis, this study has shown that patterns of emotional and authoritative appeal are sufficient to persuade mass audiences to invalidate logic and to accept unthinkable concepts.

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