Hierarchical Approach to Corporate Advocacy: Corporate Advocacy as a Way of Guilt Redemption

Katerina Tsetsura

Building on Burke's and Gramsci's hierarchical perspectives, this essay examines the hierarchical nature of corporate advocacy and presents corporate advocacy as an inevitable outgrowth of the power relationship between corporations and publics. Using Burke's guilt-*purification-redemption cycle, the author argues that corporate advocacy can be seen as a way of guilt redemption within the corporate hierarchy. The study provides implications for studying the nature of corporate advocacy and illustrates how a hierarchical approach to corporate advocacy can help to further examine corporate social responsibility campaigns.*

Among the rhetorical strategies companies utilize for establishing and maintaining relationships with publics, corporate advocacy occupies a central place. An object of scholars' attention for a long time, corporate advocacy is a fairly well-defined concept (Boyd, 2004; Heath, 1980; Hoover, 1997; Jacoby, 1974; Sethi, 1977). Corporate rhetoric existed as long as corporations themselves: examples of use and misuse of this rhetoric can be found as early as the 19th century (Boyd, 2001). Since the examination of origins of any phenomenon is often a key to successful understanding and usage of that phenomenon, studying the nature and origins of corporate advocacy is essential (Sethi, 1977; Schuetz, 1990; Hoover, 1997). It seems, however, that many scholars, although exploring the nature and origins of corporate advocacy in the past, have placed emphasis on exploring functions, purposes, and processes of corporate advocacy (Boyd, 2001, 2004). Researchers who examined corporate advocacy often tend to explain its

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nature through practical applications, such as advocacy advertising (Sethi, 1977; Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Starr & Waller, 1995).

Other scholars (Ragsdale, 1997; Schuetz, 1997) have offered an interpretive perspective on corporate advocacy. Schuetz pointed out that usage of the dramatism of Burke helped to demonstrate a connection between argumentation and corporate advocacy. The Burkean perspective provided some potential for further exploration of corporate advocacy. This study builds on the Burke's conceptualization of guilt and argues that the Burkean analysis of origins of societal interactions can help to explain not only a process of corporate advocacy (Schuetz), but also the very nature of it. Thus, the study continues a research tradition of incorporating Burke's guilt-purification-redemption cycle into studies of rhetoric in multiple contexts (Scheibel, 1995, 1999, 2002).

This essay argues that corporate advocacy is a result of an inevitable outgrowth of the power relationship between corporations and publics. The study contributes to the discussion on the nature and origins of corporate advocacy. This study adopts the Burkean perspective to the hierarchy and Burke's ideas of the guilt-purification-redemption cycle. It builds on the assumption that the corporate hierarchy is present in America and analyzes the essence of contemporary guilt created within that hierarchy. Furthermore, it demonstrates how corporations use corporate advocacy to free themselves from this guilt. The author argues that such guilt, eternally present in the hierarchy, is experienced by a dominating level of the hierarchy (i.e. corporations) and as such generates a continuous practice of corporate advocacy, which is a way of corporate guilt redemption.

Another assumption is that a corporation can be viewed as a participant in public discourse. Although some may disagree with such place and role of a corporation in the public sphere (Fraser, 1992), many others (Boyd, 2001, 2004**;** Cheney, 1992; Cheney & McMillan, 1990; Crable, 1990; Cyphert & Saiia, 2004; Deetz, 1995; Schiller, 1989; Ulrich, 1995) support the idea that, although inequitable with a person, corporations actively participate in public discourse. For instance, in 1979, Chrysler under Lee Iacocca went to Washington as part of an elaborate "Buy American" campaign featuring Neil Armstrong, Joe Garagiola, Ricardo Montalban, Frank Sinatra, and other American icons telling Americans why they should "buy American"(Frank, 1999; Samtra, 1994). Chrysler entered the public sphere and actively promoted its point of view thus openly participating in public discourse persuading people why

they have not done their patriotic consumer duty (1979 Chrysler bailout holds lessons, 2008). Thus, a corporation should and can be examined as an entity that can contribute to rhetoric of the public sphere and its discourse can be analyzed from such perspective.

The essay first introduces a Burkean and Gramsci's perspectives on corporate hierarchy and then uses the guilt-purification-redemption cycle to explain corporate advocacy as a way to redeem the guilt formed within the corporate hierarchy. Finally, the essay presents a number of examples how corporations redeem the contemporary guilt and argues that continuous corporate advocacy is a result of the eternal corporate guilt.

Understanding a Burkean Perspective on Hierarchy

To discuss the origins of corporate advocacy one first needs to explore the process of corporation's formation within the industrial development in America. Historically, American corporations played an essential role in the development of the American community and in the formation of the American mentality (Whitman, 1999). Back in 1937, Burke pointed out that it is only natural for Americans to identify themselves with the corporations they work for. One of the ways an American individual has developed is by analyzing and often criticizing corporate dominance (Bullis & Betsy, 1989; Cardador & Pratt, 2006; Pratt, 1998). It also seems that American society learned to criticize itself through criticizing corporate dominance.

The enduring association of the American lifestyle and habitat with business shaped two categories of people. These two categories of individuals were identified in the Burke's model of hierarchy as superiors and inferiors (Burke, 1984). For the purpose of this discussion on the corporate nature of hierarchy (which later will be explained as one of the variants on Burke's concept of hierarchy), this study uses these terms in reference to the following definitions. "Superiors" are managers of corporations who produce and/or distribute goods and services as well as those who own such organizations. From a marketing standpoint, they can also be referred to as sellers. In contrast, "inferiors" are buyers, or users, of products and services. In a broad sense, superiors can refer to corporations' representatives whereas inferiors can refer to individuals who deal with these corporations. Although more than two parties can be present in any hierarchy, these two hierarchical groups are often most prominent (Burke, 1937/1961), and their examination can help to understand how the hierarchy really works.

A Burkean perspective on hierarchy can reveal the nature of the relationship between two hierarchical groups through understanding of the historical development of the relationship between the two categories of superiors and inferiors.

Through ongoing symbol-using action, humans produce hierarchies and strive for perfection in the hierarchical order. Superiors and inferiors are two categories of people who represent differences in authority in that order (Burke, 1966). Inferiors always want to move up within the hierarchy, but superiors resist this move. Hierarchy exists because of the constant opposition; such continuous force creates a phenomenon which Burke (1984) called "eternal guilt" (p. 284). Eternal guilt is a hierarchical phenomenon that is continuously experienced by superiors due to their dominant position within the hierarchy.

Guilt should be understood here in a broad philosophical sense. Experiencing guilt in hierarchy does not mean being guilty. It is a state of being for superiors that forms during the continuous opposition between superiors and inferiors. This state, however, is not stable. Because of the constantly changing conditions within the hierarchy, such as an ongoing opposition and flux, this state can be seen as amplitude of pendulum. When the pendulum is at the maximum displacement from equilibrium, it accelerates to return to its original stable state under power of gravity. Just like a pendulum that gravitates toward its central position, hierarchy constantly aspires to move to its least resisting state. To use this metaphor, by protesting the authority order of the hierarchy inferiors steadily distort the balance, the natural state of the hierarchy. The continuous force of constant opposition, the guilt, grows stronger to create amplitude and generate gravitation toward the original stable stage of hierarchy. In hierarchy, it takes form of protecting the authority order when superiors create conditions for a guilt-purification-redemption cycle (Burke, 1984) to free them from the guilt. A period, the time required to complete a full cycle by a pendulum, is a time to complete a full guilt-purification-redemption cycle.

"Inevitable in social relations" guilt requires symbolic purification and redemption (Burke, 1984, p. 279). The guilt-purification-redemption cycle in societal hierarchy can be performed through discourse: "Because blame occurs throughout human society and because face is important for virtually everyone, this phenomenon, a felt need to cleanse one's reputation with discourse, occurs throughout our lives, public and private" (Benoit, 1995, p. 5). In what follows, I argue that the eternal guilt, originally held by individual superiors, was transformed

over time from superiors to their units, or corporations, and now corporations experience the eternal guilt that is "inherent in the hierarchy" (Burke, 1984, p. 284).

Corporate Hierarchy in the United States

One can examine the evolution of corporate dominance in the United States using the Burkean principle of hierarchy to claim the existence of corporate hierarchy in today's America. How can the existence of corporate hierarchy in the United States be explained?

Roots of corporate dominance can be found in the early development of a civil American society as examined by Gramsci (1929-1935/1971). The scrutiny of the relationships between two major classes in the United States was problematic in comparison with European observations and predictions of relationships of the same nature.

Describing the uniqueness of the United States development in the lack of traditions in the European sense, Gramsci (1929-1935/1971) explained, "America does not have 'great historical and cultural traditions'; but neither does it have this leaden burden to support" (p. 285). Such "non-existence of viscous parasitic sedimentations" (p. 285) helped the United States to reach a level of genuine productive activity. Gramsci argued that American rationalism led to the elaboration of a new type of work and productive process. Gramsci noticed, "American workers unions are, more than anything else, the corporate expression of the rights of qualified crafts and therefore the industrialists' attempts to curb them have a certain 'progressive' aspect" (p. 286). He also witnessed the existence of the corporative movement, which drove judicial changes to create formal conditions for a major economic change since American workers were not in a position either to struggle or to oppose it. Gramsci saw that as evidence that the United States is in its "economic-corporate phase" (p. 272).

As one can see, the opposition between superiors and inferiors within the corporate hierarchy in the United States presents the opposition between corporate owners, or corporations, and workers, or internal (workers of those corporations) and external (workers of other corporations) publics.

To keep the hierarchical order, which, according to Burke (1966), is a natural desire of humans, superiors need to create a particular ideology for inferiors and for themselves. Corporate hierarchy offered a money-driven ideology: to be happy is to have the ability to buy goods and services in large quantities. The invention of this ideology helped corporations to enter the golden age. Corporations started to work day and night employing workers and paying them in

two ways: with money and with ideas how to spend money. The latter "payment" needed for the sake of hierarchy because money should come back to superiors to keep the dominant position.

The ideology, which praised the materialistic approach of superiors, worked perfectly within the corporate hierarchy. Inferiors did not even want to change their place within the hierarchy, i.e. to move up. Instead they started to fight for making more money (higher wages and benefits) and for spending money in better ways (better quality of products, more choices). "The economic-corporate phase" in America was so strong that it praised a materialistic approach of inferiors (publics) even more than one of superiors (corporations). So, in corporate hierarchy inferiors became much more materialistic in their aims and pleasures (Burke, 1984).

In a sense, inferiors, i.e. publics, are self-manipulated with help of corporations by keeping the process of buying alive and supporting corporations through this process. This action can be seen as a hierarchical role of inferiors. Imagine for a moment, what would happen if everyone stops buying products of a certain company not for a day or a month, but forever? Inferiors cannot and do not wish to do that. They enjoy their position in the hierarchy which allows them to enjoy the process of spending money, embraced by corporations. For instance, the Honda Corporation encourages individuals to enjoy the variety of experiences available within the hierarchy:

> Honda also believes that every person involved in the process of buying, selling or producing our products should receive a sense of joy from the experience. Together, these *Three Joys* result in an overall joy of affiliation—a positive feeling resulting from a relationship with Honda. (Honda Web site, 2007)

So by supporting the ideology of making and spending money, both superiors and inferiors keep the presence of corporate hierarchy in American society. But inferiors also have a need to play their disruptive role in corporate hierarchy by, so to speak, constantly forcing a pendulum to deviate from its original state.

The Guilt-Purification-Redemption Cycle in Corporate Hierarchy

The Contemporary Guilt of Corporate Hierarchy

Guilt, one of the fundamental concepts of any hierarchy, is generated in corporate hierarchy as well. The ideology of corporate hierarchy creates the guilt of making and spending money. The nature of this guilt itself has changed over time. Earlier, the primary guilt was the guilt for not making money, as some suggested after examining the "Gospel of Wealth" ideology

that was prominent in the 19th and early 20th Century (Levinson, 2007). "The Social Gospel," which was developed later in response, introduced the guilt of having money (Chandler, 1986). Today a desire to have money reigns despite of "the Social Gospel." But the contemporary guilt is not as much about making money as about spending money in inappropriate ways. Inappropriate ways include spending money on any products and services for individual "aims and pleasures." The inappropriate ways of spending money are in the mainstream of public and corporate debates in modern America.

It is very interesting that the contemporary guilt can potentially be felt by both, superiors and inferiors, within the hierarchy. Yet, in consistence with the hierarchy tradition, this guilt is associated with superiors, not inferiors, and superiors recognize the guilt and address it in its discourse. Stressing the guilt, inferiors use public discourse to attract attention to the state of the guilt. Superiors experiencing the guilt look for ways of atoning from it. Thus, corporations turn to corporate advocacy, as a tool to enter the public debate arena with corporate discourse, to redeem the guilt.

Corporate Advocacy as a Way of Guilt Redemption

Through corporate advocacy, corporations engage in the guilt-purification-redemption cycle symbolically trying to free themselves from the guilt. Publics, inferiors in corporate hierarchy, have a right to accept or reject corporate advocacy. In other words, inferiors are in power to allow or to forbid the corporations' purification that leads to the redemption of the guilt and fulfills the cycle. In a way, inferiors are not only in charge of that distorting force, but also the gravitational force which brings the pendulum back to its original state. This two-way directional power of inferiors is critical for understanding the nature of corporate advocacy.

The Role of Dual Power Relationships in the Cycle

The power relationships between superiors and inferiors in corporate hierarchy can be defined as dual power relationships. On one hand, corporations have power within the hierarchy because of their superior positions. They can control hierarchical ideology and generate interest of inferiors in certain ways (achieving ideological goals rather than moving up within the hierarchy) in order to keep superior priority. On another hand, corporations are dependent on inferiors to free them from the experienced guilt, generated as a result of continuous opposition. Inferiors, or publics, realize that and often use this knowledge to their benefit. They emphasize the importance of the guilt-purification-redemption cycle in the corporate hierarchy. Placing this

cycle in a central position gives publics a power over corporations within the hierarchy, which has not understood before.

Thus, the corporate hierarchy approach allows one to examine a corporation-public relationship from a new angle, as a dual power relationship. Corporations lose their power over the publics (most often thought as monetary power) specifically in situations when publics are the ones who decide whether they want to grant redemption. The newest economic crisis, for example, showed that the U.S. automotive industry depends on the public to grant such redemption. The latest bailout battle was particularly illustrative as six in ten Americans opposed using taxpayer money to help the ailing major U.S. auto companies (Steinhauser, 2008); it took almost two months for Congress to approve the release of initial funds to the industry, and many senators and members of the public now oppose the release of the second $350 billion tranche (Solomon & Paletta, 2008; US Fed News, 2009). Publics also have a non-monetary rhetorical, discursive power to allow corporations to complete the guilt-purification-redemption cycle. And sometimes publics can have a monetary power, too as it is the case with the recent bailouts for the Corporations can and often do use their financial strength to communicate certain messages to publics by the means of, for example, buying advocacy advertisements or employing public relations practitioners who communicate corporate interests to publics and the media.

However, corporations become almost powerless in situations when they simply ask for redemption as the nature of the cycle does not permit indulgences. The pendulum instability of hierarchy generates a corporations' desire for completion of the guilt-purification-redemption cycle, and corporations often make completion of the cycle their highest priority, as a means of existence within the modern corporate hierarchy.

Therefore, this essay argues that corporations, consciously or unconsciously recognizing the principles of hierarchy, are forced by the hierarchical order to engage in acts of corporate advocacy as a way of atoning for their guilt. Because of the importance of completing the cycle, which is initiated and actively promoted by publics, corporate advocacy becomes extremely important for successful social interaction within the modern corporate hierarchy. Simply put, corporations may have a hard time surviving in the modern world if they do not constantly redeem the generated guilt.

Here the pendulum metaphor is once again useful. The laws of physics state that it is relatively easy to calculate and predict the period, the length of time required for a pendulum to

complete a cycle, of small amplitudes for a simple pendulum: two elements should be known, a pendulum length and acceleration of gravity, which is a constant ~9.87m/s². However, the calculation of the period for large amplitude pendulum is much more complex. Here, accurate calculations can lead to an elliptic integral in which the mass of a pendulum, the angle of swings, and the number of periods, in addition to length, should all be considered.

To explore this metaphor further, one can envision corporate hierarchy distortions as pendulum swings. Even a small distortion within the hierarchy can deviate from a simple, calculated return to its most stable, or neutral, state since its gravitation-like force is controlled by the inferiors and is not a constant. In other words, inferiors may accept the arguments from superiors and decide to accelerate the return to the neutral state, with no distortion within the hierarchy, slow the return down when they do not accept superiors' arguments, or even use the force in a different direction, so to speak, to generate even higher amplitude for distortion. For example, inferiors, or publics, can choose to organize and develop activist groups that will protest against the superior, or the corporation or call for boycott of the corporations or its products. In addition, a small amplitude, a deviation from a neutral state (such a certain issue that is being discussed by a small group of people), if gone unnoticed, can lead to larger amplitudes (the issue can become "hot" and discussed in the media) so that the return to the neutral, original state would be much more complex and may generate multiple, unpredictable periods. In other words, inferiors, or publics, are in control over the stability in a hierarchy, the neutral state of the pendulum, to follow the metaphor, just as much as superiors, or corporations, are in control over the hierarchy itself.

That is why corporations are genuinely interested in creating a strong bond with their publics, and, ultimately, in protecting their hierarchical superior position. In a recent video message posted on the issue-driven website Willyoujoinus.com, Vice Chairman of Chevron Corporation Peter Robertson, for example, said that he believes Chevron goes a long way to protect the planet and address environmental concerns. He continued, "Chevron is not just a company; we're people" (Robertson, 2005-2008). And s the Honda Corporation puts it, "it is our desire that in every community in which we do business, society will want Honda to exist" (Honda Web site, 2007).

Creating Corporate Discourse

Since ultimate decision of guilt redemption is based entirely on the publics' perception of corporate advocacy, corporations seek the best ways to present their case through discourse. Today, to make corporate discourse successful corporations provide some evidence of appropriate ways of spending money, or evidence of corporate social responsibility. That is why corporations get involved in projects, which are aimed to resolve social, environmental, educational, and other problems and demonstrate the results of their efforts through corporate advocacy. In other words, they tell stories about their socially responsible actions. Represented through corporate advocacy, such acts answer critics of corporations who appeal to the contemporary guilt of corporations. Philanthropic efforts of the world's leading automakers, Toyota and Honda corporations are good illustrations of how corporate discourse gets created to satisfy the guilt-purification-redemption cycle.

For example, Honda Corporation claims, "Honda has always made it a priority to be a contributing member of society and to give back to the community" (Honda Web site, 2007). Toyota Corporation emphasizes that its primary commitment is education and provides details how much money was donated to specific educational programs, "One of our largest philanthropic partnerships, the Los Angeles Urban League Automotive Training Center, represents more than a $10 million investment" (Toyota Web site, 2007).

How Does Corporate Advocacy Redeem the Contemporary Guilt?

Today clear representation of such acts through corporate advocacy is one of the main criteria that define the corporation as a good and socially responsible citizen. Personification of the corporation is metaphorically appropriate as it helps all sides of corporate hierarchy to better understand the terms of the guilt-purification-redemption cycle. For instance, Honda Corporations personifies itself addressing the inferiors in the following statement:

> We consider our responsibility to help make society a better place just as important as the goal of offering our customers products and services that result in the highest level of satisfaction. (Honda Web site, 2007)

The proposed quite personal relationship with Honda is transferred to the corporation from its individuals, "This viewpoint governs how we act as a company—and as individuals" (Honda Web site). The same strategy is used in the current advocacy advertising campaign "Tylenol promise" by makers of Tylenol. The campaign is a series of personalized statements from Tylenol employees in which they promise to make a quality product and then share intimate

family stories about their work and how they became a part of the company (Tylenol Web site, 2007).

The recognition of the guilt becomes a result of accepting superiors' repentance and allows superiors to redeem the cycle. For instance, Chevron argues:

> We are proud of Chevron's more than 125-year legacy of corporate responsibility, but we recognize that this is not a static concept. We are committed to continuing to expand our knowledge and understanding of social and environmental issues that affect and are affected by our operations, to integrating that knowledge into how we do business, and to continually improving our performance in this important area. (Chevron Web site, 2007)

Many examples of social responsibility acts can be found in corporate discourse. Guilt experienced by corporations plays a major role in the process of choosing a theme for corporate advocacy. Often, guilt experienced by corporations comes from the essence of their businesses. It might be a very specific guilt that is obvious to publics. For instance, the environment is one of the most popular themes used in corporate advocacy by corporations that experience or might experience guilt for harming the environment or having a potential to do so. Honda Corporation periodically discloses information on its efforts to create environmentally friendly automobiles. Announcing a new partnership with the University of California, Riverside, and special interest organizations, a company press release (June, 9, 2000) quoted Ben Knight, a vice president of Honda Research & Development, as saying, "We believe this open, cooperative research coupled with the advancement of this emissions measuring technology will benefit society" (p. 1). Another statement under the heading "Environment and technology" on the company's official website said, "Green grass. Blue skies. Clean water. That's why. It's not hard to figure out why over two decades Honda has led the way in developing environmentally friendly technology. We want a cleaner and better tomorrow, just like you" (Honda Web site, 2007). In addition to a strong appeal, the quotation perfectly reflects the guilt-atoning goal that Honda Corporate tries to reach through this discourse.

Honda demonstrates that it not only experiences guilt (by simply addressing the issue), but also purifies ("Honda has led the way in developing environmentally friendly technology"), and asks for redemption ("We want a cleaner and better tomorrow, just like you") (Honda Web site, 2007).

The sole purpose of "environmentology," the latest green-themed advertising campaign by Honda, has been to emphasize Honda's "environmentally responsible" technology " (Honda environmentology Web site, 2007). Honda produced a number of TV spots and print ads and launched the Environmentology website.

Ford Motor Company also engages in corporate advocacy and, by doing so, aims to complete the guilt-purification-redemption cycle. Its official website has a special page, "Environment," that covers different environmental programs the company conducts and supports. Among programs voiced through corporate discourse on that web page are cleaner manufacturing ("Ford's proactive approach to reducing or eliminating hazardous materials from its products and facilities"); global initiatives ("Ford Motor Company's mission to use recycled materials in new vehicles is a part of the company culture," said Strout, a director of European Recycling Action Team); and community involvement (Ford's intensive support of a St. Jude's Ranch for Children program for collecting and recycling cards) (Ford Web site, 2007).

Through these and similar acts corporations demonstrate their commitment to society and therefore confirm their eligibility to be in that society. At the same time, corporations want to stress a point that many positive changes in the society occur only because of their superior power, which should be perceived as legitimate and even necessary in corporate hierarchy. Chevron, for instance, claims its pivotal role in developing the fastest-growing economy in Africa:

> Among foreign oil firms operating in Angola, we are the largest employer, with approximately 3,000 employees and an additional 12,000 contracted workers. We have more than a dozen major projects in design or execution stages. With partners, our capital investment in Angola is expected to exceed $10 billion through 2010. (Chevron Corporate Responsibility Report, 2006)

The positive side of this hierarchical corporate power is that it is not only unites publics, but also, what is most important, helps to set bigger goals and reach them faster. One can find support for these ideas in examples of corporate advocacy presented on the "Environment" page of the Ford Motor Company website:

> "People everywhere are recognizing the many benefits of this idea," Acho [Ford's director of Environmental Outreach and Strategy] said. "We receive calls frequently to

> find out if we are going to continue this program at this year's auto show. Other people are sending cards from all across the nation."
>
> Over the past seven years, Ford contributed more than two million cards for the charity – the largest collection of any company or organization in the 29-year history of the program. (Ford Web site, 2007)

Satisfaction comes when the guilt-purification-redemption cycle is completed. Ford's corporate discourse, presented on the company's website, is a good example of described satisfaction:

> "Recycled greeting cards are just another example of our broad commitment to protecting the environment through recycling efforts," said Andy Acho, Ford's director of Environmental Outreach and Strategy. "This program is not only helping Mother Nature, but the children from St. Jude's as well." (Ford Web site)

Redemption becomes important and desirable in relations between corporations and publics. Corporations value publics' recognition and thank publics for allowing them to complete the cycle, as it is demonstrated in a press release from Target Corporation (2000):

> Target Corporation announced it has received an Environmental Initiative Award for environmental management from the Minnesota Environmental Initiative (MEI), a nonprofit organization that works … to promote environmental excellence. The award recognizes Target's Environmental Services initiatives, including comprehensive waste-prevention, materials use-management, environmental education and recycling efforts. "We are delighted to receive this distinguished environmental award and the recognition it bestows on our commitment to the environment," said Jim Bosch, environmental services manager for Target Corporation. (p. 1)

Why is the Guilt Experienced by Corporations Eternal?

As one can clearly see, corporations use corporate advocacy to reach their ultimate hierarchical guilt-atoning goal. They do not stop, however, when and if the cycle is completed. A corporation might think it is completed the cycle, but ultimately this decision is not within a corporate realm. Members of the public are the ones who ultimately decide whether the cycle was successfully completed. Often, public is encouraged to critically evaluate and scrutinize corporate discourse, specifically by activist groups and by researchers and ethicists. As Pauly,

Burleigh, and Scripps (2007) wrote, "…we ought to hold powerful corporations more ethically responsible for the stories they tell" (Pauly, Burleigh, & Scripps, p.227).

But in corporate hierarchy, superiors continue to experience the guilt even after the guilt-purification-redemption cycle has been completed. Because corporations continue to profit from their businesses, they continue to have a superior position within the corporate hierarchy. The continuous process of making money calls for the continuous process of spending it: corporations cannot spend money in a better way one time and then stop doing so. Thus, as corporations constantly recognize the presence of guilt in corporate hierarchy, it should be characterized as eternal guilt. In order to be guilt-free in hierarchy, corporations, being superiors in corporate hierarchy, are obligated to continue to look for better ways of spending money. Publics actively support this search and often initiate it:

> After this lunch [of the "Hewlett Packard (HP) LaserJet Print Cartridge Recycling Program" for Indonesian government officials], HP should actively visit offices to keep on campaigning about this recycling program because the latter are the biggest users of toner cartridges. If the echo of this program is just limited to its launch, most users will not be aware of it and tend to go the easy way with the toner cartridges, by simply throwing them into the garbage can. (Tjung, 2000)

The example shows that publics are not always interested in taking actions to develop the corporations' initiative. Publics do not use their resources to encourage members within the hierarchical group to promote a socially beneficial program; rather, publics want corporations to spend more resources to support programs. Corporations, in turn, cannot stop participating in a project without involving themselves in a risky situation of losing the rights for redemption. Thus, eternal guilt in corporate hierarchy calls for continuous corporate advocacy.

Even after Honda decided to phase out its Environmentology campaign in April 2007, the Honda representative Sage Marie claimed the "the environmental message will continue to be part of Honda" (Miller, 2007). One member of a public agreed:

> "Honda's campaign wasn't very compelling," said Bill Moore, publisher of evworld.com, a site devoted to eco-friendly practices in the auto industry. "I'm surprised they would do away with it so soon, but I doubt they will ever abandon presenting their image as a green company," he said. (As cited in Miller, NPAG)

At the same time, it is not in the nature of hierarchy and not in the corporate interest to spend corporate money and agitate publics for spending publics' money outside of corporate markets. Thus, corporations constantly face a dilemma what decision is more beneficial at the moment: to free from the guilt or to empower a superior's position. Corporations periodically find ways to combine their goals of trying to appear socially friendly and pursue their profit at the same time. One of those might be adjusting the corporate message. As Rex Briggs, CEO of Marketing Evolution, a marketing research consultancy based in El Dorado Hills, California, reasoned responding to the Honda's decision to cut the Environmentology campaign, "There is more of a challenge now because consumers now what to know what's in it for them in addition to helping the world. Environmentology doesn't translate in that way" (as cited in Miller, 2007, NPAG).

Cause-related marketing also perfectly illustrates the duality of corporate goals. Cause-related marketing is a tactic that a corporation uses to generate money while supporting a project of a non-profit foundation or any socially important efforts. Cause-related marketing tries to draw publics' attention to corporations' efforts to spend money in better ways in order to get publics' approval for fulfilling the cycle.

For example, a Ralph Lauren fashion company sells special Christmas edition toy bears and claims on its web site that the company will give a portion of proceeds to the What to Expect Foundation's efforts, which provides educational materials and support to the disadvantaged "so what they can expect is a healthy pregnancy and happy baby" (Ralph Lauren official website, 2006). The maker of Yoplant yogurt organizes an annual campaign for fighting breast cancer, in which consumers can send yogurt lids to the company which, in turn, will donate 10c for every lid to American Breast Cancer Research Foundation. In fact, multiple corporations actively engage in pink campaigns to benefit from cause-related marketing.

However, members of public are quite skeptical about the true nature of such campaigns and often encourage others to check carefully the terms of cause-related marketing promises (see, for instance, Think Before You Pink Web site, which encourages consumers to ask several critical questions before engaging into any pink ribbon campaign).

Successful and timely use of corporate discourse becomes critical for corporations: through different means of corporate advocacy corporations tend to present any of their actions as socially beneficial so that publics can grant them redemption. Publics have power to choose

when and to what extent to grant such redemption. As members of corporate hierarchy, corporations continuously use corporate advocacy for their own good and, in many cases, for the good of others.

Conclusion

The argument introduced in this essay expands a new understanding of the nature and origins of corporate advocacy. A Burkean perspective on hierarchy is used as a framework for understanding the presence of corporate hierarchy in America. Individual relations between superiors and inferiors within the Burke's model of hierarchy (Burke, 1984) transformed to the groups' power relations between corporations and publics within the corporate hierarchy. The existence of corporate hierarchy is supported by Gramsci's (1929-1935/1971) arguments that power relations between corporations and workers were formed as a result of the "economic-corporate phase" (p. 272) in the American industrial development.

This essay argues that guilt, one of the fundamental concepts of Burkean hierarchy, refers to corporations as superiors and publics as inferiors in the corporate hierarchy. Traditionally experienced by superiors, the guilt in the corporate hierarchy is associated with corporations. Corporations, driven by a desire to complete the guilt-purification-redemption cycle, seek ways for completing this cycle. They use corporate advocacy as discourse for successful completion of the cycle. The importance of a constant process of corporate advocacy is emphasized through dual power relationships between two entities of the corporate hierarchy, corporations and publics. In addition, publics have two-directional power to grant redemption or escalate the guilt. Because corporations and publics together perceive the cycle as a necessary action to be performed in the hierarchy, corporations utilize corporate advocacy to achieve redemption and treat it as a highly important part of hierarchical interaction.

This study extends previous research (Scheibel, 1995, 1999, 2002) by using the Burke's guilt-purification-redemption cycle to explore the nature of corporate advocacy. The essay offers several directions in which further thinking on the nature of corporate advocacy might progress. First, a closer look at the Burkean hierarchical perspective can build understanding not only of the origins of corporate advocacy but also of the goals that corporations might pursue practicing corporate advocacy. Second, research of purposes and goals of corporate advocacy can benefit from this essay by taking into consideration a fundamental hierarchical approach to origins of corporate advocacy. An in-depth analysis of specific examples of corporate discourse from a

position that corporate advocacy is a way to fulfill the guilt-purification-redemption cycle can enrich one's understanding of corporate efforts to communicate with publics and to recognize and appreciate publics' evaluation of a corporation.

Most importantly, such hierarchical approach to corporate advocacy can help one to form a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the American corporate environment and the relationship between corporations and publics in the United States. Often when corporations in other countries borrow American strategies to establish and maintain relations with publics, they do not succeed in their efforts. It seems that the hierarchical perspective on the nature and origins of American corporate advocacy may provide a plausible explanation for these failures. The nature and origins of corporate advocacy from a hierarchical perspective therefore should be further explored.

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