

# Charismatic Leadership and Rhetorical Competence: An Analysis of Steve Jobs's Rhetoric

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Loizos Heracleous<sup>1</sup> and Laura Alexa Klaering<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

One of the primary ways leaders influence others is through their rhetoric. Despite the clear link between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence, empirical studies of this link in the management field remain sparse. We thus do not have a clear sense of the nature of the rhetoric of charismatic leaders and whether or how they alter their rhetoric in different situations. We conduct an in-depth case study of the rhetoric of the late Steve Jobs, an acknowledged charismatic leader, to expand our understanding of the fundamental link between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence. We found not only an integration of customization to different audiences and situations but also continuity in central themes in different rhetorical contexts, which may be a key attribute of the competence of charismatic leaders. We also find that customized rhetorical strategies are influenced by the leader's perceived *ethos* (credibility) in the respective situations, which in turn influences the extent of *logos* (appeal to logic) and *pathos* (appeal to emotions) employed.

## Keywords

charismatic leadership, rhetoric, situational context, *ethos*

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<sup>1</sup>University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

<sup>2</sup>Geometry Global, Hamburg, Germany

## Corresponding Author:

Loizos Heracleous, Professor of Strategy, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Scarman Road, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK.

Email: loizos.heracleous@wbs.ac.uk

Charismatic leaders are able to shape actors' social realities and construct meaning through how they communicate (Smircich & Morgan, 1982), in particular their rhetorical competence (Hartog & Verbarg, 1997; Shamir, Arthur, & House, 1994). Through the use of rhetorical features such as central themes, metaphor and framing, leaders shape followers' social realities (Conger, 1991) and enact the distinguishing features of charismatic leadership, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1996). However, despite some insightful conceptual and empirical studies on organizational leaders' rhetorical competence (Conger, 1991; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Hartog & Verbarg, 1997), research on charismatic leadership in the management field has largely overlooked the critical link to rhetoric (Conger, 1991, 1999). Indeed, the majority of studies that have empirically investigated the link between leadership and rhetoric focus on the speeches of political leaders (e.g., Beasley, 2004; Bligh & Hess, 2007; Bligh, Kohles, & Meindl, 2004; Shamir et al., 1994), leaving understanding of this link in management and organizational theory in rather shallow waters (Conger & Kanungo, 1987).

Organizational leaders engage in a variety of dialogical contexts with different types of audiences, in some cases hostile, in others as defenders of their company strategy, and in yet others as respected icons who share their wisdom. Understanding leaders' rhetoric in such diverse settings can thus help expand our understanding of the fundamental link between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence.

Rhetoric as a field of study has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in management and organization theory over the last few years (e.g., Green, Babb, & Alpaslan, 2008; Hartelius & Browning, 2008; Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007; Jarzabkowski, Sillince, & Shaw, 2010). Understanding rhetoric is important as rhetorical competence is not only a key attribute of leadership, as noted above, but is also intimately bound up with its context (Bitzer, 1968) and can have real effects on work arrangements such as how employees are managed (Abrahamson, 1997), how organizations respond to stakeholder concerns (Campbell, Follender, & Shane, 1998), or how organizations can emphasize different aspects of their identity to help accomplish their strategic objectives and achieve competitive advantage (Sillince, 2006).

As Hartelius and Browning (2008) observed, when *rhetoric* is not used as a term that denotes empty words as contrasted with the substance of situations (e.g., Cooney & Sewell, 2008), management scholars view rhetoric variously as control and manipulation aimed at controlling employees, as a resource for influencing institutional logics through various devices, as constructive of group and organizational identities, or as a set of techniques and approaches (such as the classical tropes of pathos, ethos, and logos) that can

be employed by managers to persuade stakeholders in the pragmatic pursuit of goals.

In this article, we analyze the rhetorical discourse of Apple Inc.'s former CEO, the late Steve Jobs, an acknowledged charismatic leader, in three different contexts, to empirically explore how he employed rhetoric as an "applied art of persuasion" (Heracleous, 2006a, p. 32). Our research aim is to expand our understanding of the fundamental link between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence. Our research question is as follows:

Do charismatic leaders change their rhetoric in different contexts and if yes, how do they do so?

In this way, we aim to contribute to both the understanding of the rhetorical nature of charismatic leadership as well as to the field of rhetoric itself. We identify the different rhetorical strategies (Hopkins & Reicher, 1997; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005) employed by Steve Jobs in different situations, including his use of metaphor, recognized since Aristotle's (1991) foundational treatise on rhetoric as an essential aspect of rhetorical competence.

We find that Jobs's rhetoric is characterized by an integration of customization as well as continuity. Whereas the rhetorical style changes, the central themes employed are similar across the three rhetorical situations studied, and the root metaphors employed are similar across two of the three situations studied (the third situation was characterized by an oppositional context not conducive to employment of these metaphors, where Jobs aimed to be as brief as possible, using mostly dead metaphors). We suggest that this ability to customize the message to distinct audiences while consistently emphasizing certain key messages through central themes and root metaphors may be a key attribute of the rhetorical competence of charismatic leaders. We also find that these rhetorical strategies are shaped by one of the principal dynamics of rhetoric; *ethos* (the perceived credibility or character of the speaker), which, in turn, influences the extent of *logos* (appeal to logic) and *pathos* (appeal to emotion) employed. Whereas the role of context in rhetoric is pivotal, the importance of *ethos* as an aspect of context that can shape rhetorical strategies has not been recognized. The appendix contains a brief explanation of the rhetorical terms employed in the analysis.

## **Charismatic Leadership as the Social Construction of Meaning**

Leadership is realized when an individual "succeeds in attempting to frame and define the reality to others" through the foundational process of language use (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p. 258). Leaders can influence others through processes such as the mobilization of meaning, articulation and

definition of what has previously remained implicit, and elaboration, confrontation or consolidation of existing wisdom (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Peters, 1978; Pondy, 1978). An important leadership role is to simplify ambiguous, complex messages into discrete, relevant meanings by employing utterances and actions in such a way that they provide a meaningful and memorable point of reference to the audience (Pfeffer, 1981; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Often, the framing of messages in a certain way is linked to political considerations and the effort to legitimate and maintain control (Cooney & Sewell, 2008).

The use of rhetorical strategies plays a crucial role as rhetorical devices are designed to shape meaning, engage emotions, and influence whether the message will be remembered and endorsed by the audience (Conger, 1991; Pondy, 1983). By the term *rhetorical strategies*, we refer to ways in which agents configure their language in an intentional manner, through the use of rhetorical devices which form patterns that persist over time and are consistently employed across different situations and texts (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

Given that an important aspect of charisma is the relationships among leader, audience, and context (Klein & House, 1995), it would be essential to gain a deeper understanding of leaders' ability to customize their rhetoric to audience and context. "New leadership" theories (Bryman, 1992) of charismatic leadership (Conger, 1989; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; House, 1977; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993) and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 1994) stress this interplay between leader and followers, substantiating the importance of the elements of audience and context. Despite the need to investigate further how these elements interrelate, this issue has scarcely been researched (Conger, 1999).

Building on the seminal formulation by Weber (1947), scholars have viewed charisma as an influential trait that denotes almost magical abilities, often involving revelations of heroism (Etzioni, 1961) through appealing to the emotions and enduring motives of the audience (Emrich, Brower, Feldman, & Garland, 2001). In this vein, Steve Jobs is often viewed in both the academic literature (Conger, 1991; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Emrich et al., 2001) as well as popular media as a charismatic leader with "effective rhetorical skills and powers of persuasion" (Harvey, 2001, p. 254), who can shape audiences' perceived meaning through framing and rhetorical crafting (Conger, 1991). Research indeed suggests that one of the primary ways through which charismatic leaders influence followers is through rhetoric. For example, Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, and Popper (1998) noted that charismatic leaders link required efforts to values and collective identities in followers' self concepts, through

interpreting the present and the past in terms of the group's values and identity, articulating an ideological mission, amplifying values and identities by using labels, slogans, and metaphors, linking the amplified values and identities to expected follower behaviors, and emphasizing the group's or organization's uniqueness and importance. (p. 388)

Johnson and Dipboye (2008) found that both content and delivery have effects on both the attributions of charismatic leadership by the audience, as well as employees' quality of performance on complex organizational tasks.

Use of metaphor is integral to the art of rhetoric. Aristotle (1991) provided extensive discussions of metaphor (Book 3, Chapters 2-11) as an element of rhetorical style, addressing the nature, aesthetics, and functions of metaphor. The concern with metaphor as an element of rhetoric has persisted with later rhetoricians who discussed issues such as how metaphorical effectiveness could be evaluated (e.g., Booth, 1978) and the prevalence and persistence of root metaphors drawn from human experience (e.g., Osborn, 1967).

In this context, a key aspect of the rhetoric of charismatic leaders is the use of metaphor. Mio, Riggio, Levin, and Reese (2005) found that presidents who were viewed as charismatic employed almost twice the number of metaphors as presidents who were not. Amernic, Craig, and Tourish (2007) showed how Jack Welch's letters to shareholders were imbued with five root metaphors aiming to frame social reality in support of his transformational views. Seyranian and Bligh (2008) found that charismatic leaders employed vivid metaphorical imagery to introduce social change in frame-breaking, frame-moving, and frame-realigning phases.

Powerful rhetoric, the ability to capture an audience through outstanding oratorical skills, is thus tightly intertwined with charismatic leadership (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Bryman, 1992; Conger, 1989; Hartog & Verburg, 1997; House & Shamir, 1993; Shamir et al., 1994; Sharma & Grant, 2011). In this manuscript, we seek to take this understanding further by examining, though an in-depth case analysis of Steve Jobs's rhetoric, how rhetorical crafting may change in different contexts, seeking to identify patterns of rhetorical strategies and the rhetorical features that comprise these strategies.

## **Research Methodology**

In the context of the rhetorical/metaphorical discourse analysis approach described below, we analyzed three texts as follows: (a) an Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) deposition of Steve Jobs concerning stock options backdating. This took place in March 2008 and is a 119-page document, with a length of 18,394 words; (b) a CNBC interview with Steve Jobs

regarding Apple Inc.'s supplier shift from IBM to Intel. This was conducted in June 2005 and is 521 words in length; and (c) a discussion with Steve Jobs at *Wall Street Journal's* "D8: All Things Digital Conference" regarding topical issues in media and technology. This took place in June 2010 and the transcript of Jobs's interview was 12,006-words long.

### *Text Selection and Analytical Approach*

We selected these texts because of their context and temporal diversity while featuring the same charismatic leader, which allowed us to study rhetorical patterns across these different situations. Specifically, the differences in the rhetorical situation (in the first text, oppositional with low-ethos attribution to the leader; in the second text fast-paced, tense, and inquisitive with medium ethos attribution; and in the third text co-operative and pleasant within a sense of community with high-ethos attribution, as outlined in Table 4), allowed us to observe and understand both aspects of customization and continuity in Jobs's rhetorical style, including his use of central themes and root metaphors.

Of these elements, attribution of ethos was a key factor in our selection, given our interest in the dynamics of rhetoric. We made our evaluation of this element as follows: The D conference is an annual, usually sold-out event organized by the Wall Street Journal in California, where global, C-level technology leaders are invited to speak about the impact of digital technologies on society. This context is one where high ethos is attributed to the speakers. With respect to the SEC deposition, this is a context where witnesses give sworn testimony that is transcribed for use in any later court proceedings that may take place. A deposition takes place when the SEC is investigating potential breaches of the law. In the SEC deposition where Jobs spoke, Apple was under investigation for stock options backdating. Backdating is an illegal practice, which allegedly occurred when Jobs was CEO of Apple and could therefore be assumed to be potentially responsible. The deposition is a situational context where low ethos was attributed to Jobs. With respect to the CNBC interview, Jobs appeared as a CEO of a listed company to explain a strategic decision of the company. This situation represents a context where he was neither worshipped (as in the D8 conference) or even admired, nor was he offering sworn testimony with respect to a potential breach of the law for which he might have been responsible (as in the SEC deposition). We therefore assumed that in this context medium ethos was attributed to Jobs.

We read the full transcripts of these texts to get a sense of context and rhetorical style, and selected three 500-word portions for detailed analysis for each of texts 1 (SEC deposition) and 3 (D8 conference); we analyzed the full

**Table 1.** Themes of Selected Text Extracts.

	SEC deposition	D8 conference
Extract 1	Positioning Jobs (educational and professional background, role in founding and leading Apple)	Positioning Apple (success due to committed people and strategic choices on technology)
Extract 2	Establishing rationale for stock option grant to Apple executives (retention)	Jobs replies to question about trajectory of computer industry (whether tablets would replace PCs)
Extract 3	Establishing rationale for stock option grant to Steve Jobs (peer recognition)	Jobs replies to question about his leadership role at Apple and about how Apple operates

transcript for text 2. These extracts related to important themes of the interview, as shown in Table 1.

We studied these texts systematically and, initially, individually, which then enabled the identification of emerging patterns across these three texts in terms, for example, of the central themes and root metaphors employed. We sought to understand the situational context and how Jobs himself was seen in that context, so that we could explore whether *ethos* was influential on the rhetorical styles employed. We sought to identify the various rhetorical devices used as key aspects of Steve Jobs’s rhetorical strategies, which we then investigated further to clarify the nature of the patterns observed. We were conscious of the need to understand how the principal dynamics of rhetoric (*ethos, pathos, logos*) operated and how these elements could potentially help us explain the patterns of rhetorical strategies we observed.

The analytical approach we employed draws from the field of rhetoric (Aristotle, 1991; Gill & Whedbee, 1997) as well as metaphorical analysis (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Morgan, 1986; Oswick, Keenoy, & Grant, 2002). We adopted a rhetorical orientation as rhetoric is the art of persuasion par excellence, highly suited to the nature and purposes of charismatic leadership. Within rhetorical analysis, we pay special attention to metaphor due to its centrality in how actors make sense of the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), as well as its status as a key element of rhetoric (Aristotle, 1991; Bryman, 1992). Below we expand further on our rhetorical and metaphorical discourse analysis.

### *Rhetorical Analysis: Dynamics of Rhetoric and Root Metaphors*

Our analysis was conducted within an interpretative approach to organizational discourse (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001), which recognizes the role of language in the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and accepts that

any phenomenon may be framed in multiple ways which indicate agents' assumptions, beliefs, and values. By *discourse*, we mean a body of texts that share key structural features such as central themes, root metaphors, or rhetorical strategies and are constructive of the subjects they address (Heracleous, 2006a). In our analysis, we treated the three texts produced by Jobs at different situations and points in time as a sample of his discourse and sought to identify the rhetorical patterns occurring in these texts, so that we could expand our understanding of the link between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence.

Within an interpretative stance, context is vital to both the effectiveness of rhetorical discourse (Bitzer, 1968) and its interpretative validity, given that rhetoric must be suited to the context (Aristotle, 1991) and that context provides resources for discursive interpretation (Giddens, 1979). In this study, we examine rhetoric in the context, bearing in mind that features of context include the situation and the audience, which, in turn, affect the rhetorical strategies employed (Gill & Whedbee, 1997). The sensitivity to context allowed us to examine the role of the principal dynamics of rhetoric, (*ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*), as key modes of persuasion (Aristotle, 1991; Haskins, 2004; Hyde, 2004). These elements, respectively, refer to the rhetor's credibility, use of logic in arguments, and ability to ignite the audience's emotions (Aristotle, 1991). In this sense, we examined whether the situations in which Jobs produced these texts were, for example, adversarial, where he was treated as a potential defendant, implying low *ethos* (credibility) attributed to him, as in the deposition. Or whether they were potentially tense and fast moving, where Jobs had to justify his company's strategic choices as a company leader (as in the CNBC interview), where a medium level of *ethos* was attributed to him. Or, finally, whether Jobs was seen as a charismatic leader and an icon of Silicon Valley (as in the D8 conference), where a high level of *ethos* was attributed.

Apart from the rhetorical elements discussed above, we also explore the use of more general rhetorical devices, including *alliteration*, *antithesis*, and *three-part-lists*. All of these are rhetorical tactics intended to create a lasting impression and a positive attitude in the minds of the audience with respect to what the leader is rhetorically arguing for (Brown, 1977; Conger, 1991; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986).

As noted above, metaphor is not only central to how we make sense of the world, as the seminal work by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) showed, but is also a key element of rhetoric, being endemic to argumentation and storytelling (Aristotle, 1991; Bryman, 1992). As Bryman (1992) suggested, the "deployment of metaphor seems to be a striking feature of the oratory of many charismatic leaders" (p. 61).

We adopt a constructionist view of metaphor (Black, 1979), within which metaphor is seen as fundamental to thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson,

1980). From this perspective, metaphors, due to their multi-faceted nature, can aid the understanding of complex and abstract organizational phenomena through semantic leaps (Cornelissen, Kafouros, & Lock, 2005) and can express and connect with an emotional dimension that lies beyond conscious awareness in a way that would be unlikely through the use of literal language (Srivastva & Barrett, 1988). Use of metaphors can lead to the creation of new meaning through the creative juxtaposition of previously unrelated concepts, as Morgan's (1986) work demonstrates.

From the perspective of the rhetor, metaphors can be impactful, as they appeal to various senses of the audience by challenging and engaging their imagination, intellect, emotions, and values (Hartog & Verburg, 1997). Metaphors can also appeal to people and groups with diverse interests, as they are inherently ambiguous, and they convey a multiplicity of connotations and meanings (Milne, Kearins, & Walton, 2006; Ortony, 1975). Because metaphors operate below the radar of conscious examination, they can evoke images and attitudes within subconscious experience, which can then be manifested in more conscious awareness through talk and action (Marshak, 1993; Oswick & Montgomery, 1999). Root metaphors (deep-seated metaphors that operate across texts to structure discourses) are often subconscious and deeply embedded because they represent the underlying worldview that shapes thinking and interpretations of the issues they refer to (Audebrand, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Smith & Eisenberg, 1987).

## **Analysis and Findings**

Based on the discussion in the previous section, Table 2 gives a brief outline of the assumptions underlying the analytical process and also examples of indicative research. The table clarifies the links between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence, and provides a context for the analysis and discussion that follows in this section.

Below we present the analysis and findings of the three texts, beginning with the SEC deposition, followed by the CNBC interview, and concluding with the D8 conference interview. We examine these texts as instances of rhetorical competence by an acknowledged charismatic leader, to gain insights into the exercise of charismatic leadership, and in particular the process of the social construction of meaning.

### *Analysis of SEC Deposition*

The first text, the SEC deposition, is essentially a pre-trial interrogation and thus presupposes two opposing objectives by the parties, whereby the

**Table 2.** Assumptions Underlying Analysis and Indicative Literature.

Assumptions underlying analysis	Indicative literature
A key attribute of charismatic leadership is the social construction of meaning through the employment of rhetoric	Emrich, Brower, Feldman, and Garland (2001); Hartog and Verburg (1997); Shamir, Arthur, and House (1994); Smircich and Morgan (1982)
Rhetorical devices that have been found to be effective in this process include the skillful use of framing, central themes, and root metaphors	Amernic, Craig, and Tourish (2007); Beasley (2004); Conger (1991); Fairhurst and Sarr (1996); Mio, Riggio, Levin, and Reese (2005)
The situational context influences the rhetorical style and devices employed, and is an important dimension of rhetorical analysis	Bitzer (1968); Gill and Whedbee (1997); Jarzabkowski and Sillince (2007)
Consistent employment of particular rhetorical devices over time and across situations constitutes rhetorical strategies	Campbell, Follender, and Shane (1998); Hopkins and Reicher (1997); Suddaby and Greenwood (2005)
Empirical studies of the employment of such rhetorical devices can enable us to gain insights into the exercise of charismatic leadership	Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl (2004); Seyranian and Bligh (2008); Shamir et al. (1994); Sharma and Grant (2011)

examiner seeks to uncover maximum information and the witness aims to reveal minimal information. Here, Jobs's rhetorical style is generally descriptive, formal, and restricted to the facts. Overall, his statements are kept brief and are characterized by sparse use of rhetorical techniques. An extract is given below:

Examiner: All right. Again, I know there is a lot here, so we'll just talk generally about your employment history then. Can we just sort of briefly go over your employment history, I guess after 1973.

Steve Jobs: I was employed by Atari, maker of video games.

Examiner: What timeframe?

Steve Jobs: I don't know. Early '70s.

Examiner: Okay.

Steve Jobs: And then my partner, Steve Wozniak, and I started Apple about 1975 or -6. And then I was basically fired from Apple about 10 years after that.

Examiner: Let me just stop you there then. In other words, it sounds like what you're saying is you started Apple in approximately 1975 or 1976. Is that correct?

Steve Jobs: Yeah.

Examiner: And for 10 years you were with Apple?

Steve Jobs: Yes.

Examiner: And although I assume your responsibilities evolved over time, could you generally describe what your duties or responsibilities were over that 10-year period?

Steve Jobs: Mostly the product side of things, worrying about the products. I was not the CEO during that time period.

Examiner: And when you say “worry about products,” would that be product development?

Steve Jobs: Yes.

Examiner: — creation?

Steve Jobs: Yes. And—yes.

This rhetorical style aligns with the adversarial and potentially hostile context of the deposition. Steve Jobs subsequently portrays himself as someone who did not receive due recognition from the Board and employs the rhetorical dynamic of *pathos* in an attempt to evoke sympathy from the audience, and to present himself as a human being rather than an all-powerful CEO of a multi-billion dollar company. The use of *pathos* is augmented here when compared with the other dynamics of rhetoric (*ethos* and *logos*) because the very nature of the deposition as an investigative procedure severely reduces Jobs’s perceived high-*ethos* character. As we see below, when Jobs sees an opportunity arising to elaborate on his core argument, he makes more extensive use of rhetorical techniques to strengthen his message; this elaboration is scant, however, in the deposition, which is overall characterized by brief, matter-of-fact statements.

Steve Jobs: Well, it was a tough situation, you know. It wasn’t so much about the money . . . But everybody likes to be recognized by their peers, and the closest that I’ve got, or any CEO has, is their Board of Directors. And as we’ve seen in the discussions of the past hour, I spent a lot of time trying to take care of people at Apple and to, you know, surprise and delight them with what a career at Apple could be—could mean to them and their families. And I felt that the board wasn’t really doing the same with me . . . So I was hurt, I suppose would be most accurate word, and, you know, the board had given me some options, but they were all underwater. They weren’t underwater necessarily because of our performance, but, you know, the bubble had burst in the dot-coms, and here I had been working, you know, I don’t know, 4 years, 5 years of my life and not seeing my family very much and stuff, and I just felt like there is nobody looking out for me here, you know.

Jobs reveals that he suffered mental and emotional distress as a result of what he saw as the Board of Directors' lack of care for him as their CEO. He also employs the *people* theme, a theme that is central to his whole discourse. He reacts similarly when asked about the impetus of a grant of 4.8 million shares that was awarded to selected members of the executive team:

Steve Jobs: Well, as you know, many companies have converted to using RSU grants, restricted stock unit grants, to their senior employees in the present day, but back then option grants were the norm. And Apple was in a precarious situation in that we'd, you know, had the Internet bubble bursting, and I thought that Apple's executive team and the stability of Apple's executive team was one of its core strengths. And I was very concerned because Michael Dell, one of our chief competitors, had flown Fred Anderson, our CFO, down to Austin, I guess, him and his, wife I think, to try to recruit him. And I was also concerned that [—] and [—] (names deleted in official deposition transcript) two very strong technical leaders, were also very vulnerable. So I was very concerned that Apple could really suffer some big losses on its executive team with the business environment we were in and the competitors coming after our people.

Within the above excerpt, Jobs utilizes a number of rhetorical strategies to augment his main argument, which is that Apple used the grant—the focus of the investigation—as a retention tool. First, he notes that option grants were “the norm” and hence a standard procedure in organizations, connoting that Apple (and himself as CEO) acted in accordance with what is considered to be socially accepted behavior. Next, Jobs refers to the external circumstances that jeopardized the success of Apple. In so doing, he describes the hostile situation that gave rise to his concerns about keeping key people, to make Apple's actions appear justifiable, reasonable, and normal to the audience. In this context, he emphasizes that the stability of Apple's executive team was at risk. Through elaborating on his concerns for the company, and noting that he worked for very little financial reward at Apple for years, Jobs portrays himself as a self-sacrificing businessman who places the company above his own interests.

The majority of the rhetorical techniques employed by Jobs in this text are various forms of repetition, which serve as a means for amplification and clarity and to create an emotional effect (Hartog & Verburg, 1997). Jobs, for example, employs *conduplicatio* by using the word *concerned* and simultaneously forms a three-part-list of issues he was concerned with for emphasis, to describe his concern about Apple's potential retention issues. He also employs

tautologia several times, repeating the difficult external circumstances and the competitive threats Apple was confronted with using different words (the appendix contains a brief explanation of the rhetorical terms employed here). He utilizes intensifying adverbs, such as *very*, *really*, and *big*, to augment his message.

The low-control and low-*ethos* position of Jobs in this context as well as the expedient need to share as little information as possible in the context of an investigation by the authorities grants him little leeway as a rhetorician. He therefore responds by clarifying his stance in response to pointed, specific, often repetitive questions, for which relatively literal language and the effective use of repetition are appropriate, as opposed to building up a more elaborate argument, where more complex rhetorical features would be appropriate. Jobs mostly employs dead metaphors, metaphors that have been used so often they have become taken for granted, and have lost their generative power (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). His use of dead metaphors is consistent with his attempt to use mostly literal language in his answers to avoid any ambiguity or room for interpretation, both of which may lead to additional questions with the possibility of ultimately undergoing a criminal prosecution.

In this context, Jobs makes an effort to employ the rhetorical dynamic of *pathos*, possibly aiming to invoke the audience's emotions by triggering feelings of sympathy. He does so through presenting himself in a vulnerable light (through noting, for example, that he was a financially disadvantaged student and that he got "fired" from Apple), by portraying himself as a victim (e.g., revealing his feelings of "hurt" and self-sacrifice, and his perception that nobody was looking out for him including the Board), and by reminding the audience of the adverse external circumstances (the difficult business environment, fierce competition, and the danger of key executives being poached) that made the extensive use of stock option grants a natural response.

### *Analysis of the CNBC Interview*

The second text, the CNBC interview, concerns Apple's strategic decision to gradually minimize its business relationship with IBM as a supplier of memory chips and instead enter into an extensive business relationship with Intel. The interviewer quizzing Jobs on this decision exhibits a fast-paced, provocative rhetorical style, while Steve Jobs adopts a composed, explicatory, and more neutral style. The context is one of a tense situation, characterized by the reciprocal efforts of interviewer and interviewee to frame the situation in a specific way through their distinct use of rhetorical style and language.

The analysis exposes the representations of two distinct social realities of the two parties, as shown by the different root metaphors they employed, which have very different connotations. The interviewer frames the Apple/IBM relationship as “tempestuous,” and the process of separation as “unplugging.” He subsequently suggests that Jobs had been “harshly critical” of IBM and asks what IBM had “failed to come up with.” The interviewer’s root metaphor, “business is war,” connotes conflict between Apple and IBM and Apple’s decision as a result of this conflict. In contrast, Jobs puts forth the idea that business success inevitably involves gradual change, where partners’ paths can gradually diverge, employing the root metaphor “business is a journey,” and portraying Apple’s decision as a natural decision in the course of doing business. The following extract illustrates the reciprocal framing efforts:

Interviewer: Apple Computer is a company that does things in rather unique and dramatic ways and it’s about to make a very dramatic move in the technology business. It’s unplugging IBM after its tempestuous 10-year relationship and instead will use chips made by Intel from now on.

Steve Jobs: Well, you know it’s not as dramatic as you’re characterizing it. You know, we’ve got some great power PC products today and we’ve even got some power PC machines in the pipeline which we haven’t introduced yet. And this is gonna be a more gradual transition, I think we’ll hopefully, when we meet with our developers a year from today, we’ll have some Intel-based Macs in the marketplace, but its gonna take maybe a 2-year transition.

In combination with *dramatic*, the word *unique* obtains a negative connotation here, so that Apple’s change from IBM to Intel appears to be out of the ordinary because it is framed as a drastic, forceful, and radical move. The interviewer enhances this framing through the use of *diacope*, a repetition of the word *dramatic* within the same sentence that he intensifies through the amplifier adverb *very*. The interviewer’s use of the term *unplugging* connotes a sudden termination of the relationship between Apple and IBM and his use of *tempestuous* gives an implicit rationale for this sudden termination.

There are two main factors that lead us to interpret the interviewer’s language as underlay by the root metaphor “business is war.” First, Apple’s decision to change its supplier of chips from IBM to Intel was a strategic decision, with very significant consequences for both IBM (negative) and Intel (positive). The field of strategy and practitioners’ interpretations of the field and their utterances have been shaped since the origins of the field by the root

metaphor “business is war” (Audebrand, 2010), which manifests particularly in the context of strategic decisions involving significant resources as well as winners and losers (Intel and IBM in this context, respectively). Second and related, the terms associated with this root metaphor are consistent with competition and aggression (Koller, 2004), and they manifest in language in different ways. The interviewer uses terms such as *tempestuous*, *unplugging*, *dramatic move*, *harshly critical*, and *fail to come up with*, which in this context connote both competition and aggression, indicating the links between the interviewer’s way of interpreting Apple’s decision and the “business is war” root metaphor.

Countering the interviewer’s fairly aggressive stance, Steve Jobs’s response is underlay by the “business is a journey” root metaphor as a vehicle to portray Apple’s decision as involving a more gradual transition, in essence a technical decision that is consistent with Apple’s and Intel’s product “roadmap,” in contrast to IBM’s own “roadmap.” The decision is presented as essential to Apple’s continuing development of “awesome products.” Jobs highlights the *future* theme by referring to the future in three instances, in this way not only emphasizing the incremental nature of the switch but also justifying the legitimacy of the decision as important for Apple’s future competitiveness.

Interviewer: People who were in the room suggested that you were somewhat harshly critical of IBM and its inability to deliver what you needed at this point in your product development cycle. What did IBM fail to come up with in your estimation?

Steve Jobs: You know we have a good relationship with IBM and they’ve got a product roadmap and today the products are really good. But as we look out into the future where we wanna go is maybe a little bit different. We can envision some awesome products we wanna build for our customers in the next few years and as we look out a year or two in the future, Intel’s processor roadmap really aligns with where we wanna go much more than any others. So that’s why I think why we’re gonna begin this transition now and its gonna take 2 years, but I think its gonna get us where we wanna be to build the kind of future products we wanna build. Our products today—our products today are fine, but it’s really you know a year or two down the future where we see some issues.

Throughout his rhetorical turns, Jobs concentrates on the core message he intends to bring across—that this change was not a sudden decision in the context of conflict between Apple and IBM, related to inadequate performance by IBM in their relationship, but rather a gradual shift, justified by product

**Table 3.** Framing and Re-Framing the Apple–IBM Relationship.

CNBC interviewer (root metaphor of “business is war”)	Steve Jobs (root metaphor of “business is a journey”)
“Apple Computer is a company that does things in rather unique and dramatic ways”	“It’s not as dramatic as you are characterizing it”
“It’s unplugging IBM”	“This is gonna be a more gradual transition” . . . “Its gonna take maybe a 2-year transition”
“Tempestuous 10-year relationship”	“We’ve got some great power PC products today”
“People who were in the room suggested that you were somewhat harshly critical of IBM and its inability to deliver”	“We have a good relationship with IBM and they’ve got a product roadmap and today the products are really good, but as we look out into the future where we wanna go is maybe a little bit different”
“What did IBM fail to come up with in your estimation?”	“We envision some awesome products we wanna build for our customers, and Intel’s roadmap aligns with where we wanna go much more than any other”
“Where is it that you want to go that Intel you know is willing to go along with?”	“We never talk about unannounced products, so I can’t say. There used to be a saying at Apple ‘isn’t it funny a ship that leaks from the top?’”

“roadmaps,” aimed to support future development of great products by Apple. His statement that Apple has “great power PC machines in the pipeline” simultaneously displays the *future* theme, the *product* theme, and the *journey* metaphor. Jobs supports the gradual nature of the shift through the *future* theme in relation to the *product* theme, exploiting the mutually reinforcing effect of the themes *products* and *future* within the underlying *journey* metaphor.

Table 3 juxtaposes Jobs’s responses to the interviewer’s questions to highlight the re-framing process that Jobs employs as well as to show illustrations of how the root metaphors of both interviewer and Jobs manifest in their language:

Due to the interdependent nature of dialog, which affects both parties to a conversation, it emerges that Steve Jobs’s construction of the situation in the end prevails and influences the interviewer’s construction away from the *war* metaphor and toward the *journey* metaphor, as the following extract shows:

Interviewer: I know you’re not gonna give away any trade secrets here but to the best that you can, describe where is it that you want to go

that Intel you know is willing to go along with, go along with you I should say?

In sum, Jobs's status here is as a company leader who is being quizzed on a key company strategic decision and has to defend that decision. His rhetorical style is composed, explicatory, and neutral; whereas the interviewer's style is pointed, fast-paced, and provocative. The interviewer's underlying root metaphor that frames his statements, as exhibited by the vocabulary he employs, is *business is war*, whereas Jobs's underlying root metaphor is *business is a journey*, which reframes the situation in his terms. Jobs employs the central themes of future, people, and product, themes that are endemic to his discourse across texts.

### *Analysis of D8 Conference Interview*

The third text, from the D8 conference, presents an instance in which the discursive aims of Steve Jobs and the interviewer's are akin, which results in a more co-operative, mutually reinforcing dialogical situation. In this sense, the D8 conference context is the opposite of the SEC deposition context. The purpose of the interview at the D8 conference is to encourage Steve Jobs to express his opinions and viewpoints freely, which results in Jobs, being the dominant speaker throughout the interaction process. His status here is as a respected expert sharing wisdom, an icon of Silicon Valley, within a situational context that affords him high levels of *ethos*. His rhetorical style here is courteous, entertaining, and informal, with substantial elaboration of themes and with a broad use of rhetorical devices.

Jobs employs the *journey* metaphor in terms of a life journey, to illustrate Apple's strategy of focusing on a limited number of prospective opportunities early in its life, and concentrating its resources on these prospects only. He highlights the scarcity of resources and the importance of making the right strategic choices and, in so doing, connects the *journey* metaphor to the *future* theme:

Steve Jobs: The way we've succeeded is by choosing what horses to ride really carefully, technically. We try to look for these technical vectors that have a future and that are headed up and you know. Technology, different pieces of technology kinda go in cycles, they have their springs and summers and autumns and then they, you know, go to the graveyard of technology. So we try to pick things that are in their springs.

Consistent with the *business is a journey* metaphor, in saying that Apple searches for “technical vectors” that have a future, Steve Jobs implies that Apple bases its investment decisions on the direction and the magnitude or significance of the available opportunities. A vector may also be defined as a compass direction in which an aircraft or a ship moves, again connoting the *journey* metaphor. The concept of “direction” is reinforced, as these vectors ought to “have a future” and be “headed up,” in this way also introducing the *future* theme.

Steve Jobs uses the four seasons as a metaphor for the product life cycle. By stating that Apple chooses technologies “that are in their springs,” he refers to the introduction phase of the product life cycle, a phase that is characterized by high failure rates. This reference reiterates Steve Jobs’s main point, which is to choose with great caution at the early stages of the product life cycle. To enhance the meaning of this point, he replaces “winters” with “graveyards of technology” and so creates a dark picture, which generates a sharp contrast to the colorful imagery of “springs.” The product life cycle originates from the biological life cycle, which, in turn, relates to the *circle-of-life* metaphor, where “spring” refers to birth and “graveyard of technology” equals death. Jobs extends the *circle-of-life* metaphor when he describes that Apple “was on its way to oblivion,” then struggled for “survival,” upon which the company experienced a rebirth, which is indicated through the expression “bring it back” as well as through a taken-for-granted understanding shared with the audience, as Apple has been an incredibly successful company after Jobs’s return.

Consistent with his other texts, Jobs elaborates on the *people* theme to stress the intense collaboration at Apple:

Steve Jobs: There is tremendous teamwork at the top of the company, which filters down to tremendous teamwork throughout the company. Teamwork is dependent on trusting the other folks to come through with their part without watching them all the time—but trusting that they’re gonna come through with their parts. That’s what we do really well. And we’re great at figuring out how to divide things up into these great teams that we have and all work on the same thing, touch base frequently and bring it all together into a product. We do that really well.

Jobs stresses collaboration at Apple by continuously using the inclusive pronoun “we” as well as referring to “teamwork” and “trust”; he also compliments his employees generously. In the above passage, Jobs also makes extensive use of the rhetorical device of repetition to facilitate recall; he

applies *conduplicatio*, the repetition of keywords as a means of emphasis throughout the entire passage (“teamwork,” “trusting,” “great,” and “really well”) and makes use of the effect of *alliteration* when mentioning “tremendous teamwork.”

Jobs adapts his rhetorical style to the courteous, pleasant atmosphere of the conference, in a context characterized by high levels of *ethos*. He exhibits an entertaining, open, and expansive rhetorical style through employing a wide range of rhetorical techniques, and relatively complex arguments whose interplay heightens the effectiveness of his rhetoric through mutual reinforcement. Jobs’s answers are expansive; he discusses what he deems to be relevant, sometimes not even in direct response to the original question. This license to be expansive is consistent with Jobs’s high-*ethos* status in the conference, as opposed to the deposition for example. Jobs employs the root metaphors of the *circle of life* and *business is a journey* and the central themes of people, products and future; these central themes and root metaphors are synergistic with each other and endemic. As structural elements of discourse, central themes and root metaphors can persist over time, can apply to a variety of situational contexts, and are constructive of their subjects (Heracleous, 2006b; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). The main findings of the empirical analyses are summarized in Table 4.

## Discussion and Contributions

Following earlier studies highlighting the links between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence (e.g., Conger, 1991; Mio et al., 2005; Shamir et al., 1994), our analysis of the rhetoric of an acknowledged charismatic leader from a rhetorical and metaphorical discourse analysis perspective has shed further light on this link. We provide further empirical evidence for this link as well as for the dynamics of its operation, which has been scarce in the management field. Specifically, by examining Jobs’s rhetoric in three different situations, we found that he did not exhibit a single rhetorical style, but rather altered it depending on the situation, particularly on the attributed *ethos* of the situation. Furthermore, we found that Jobs balanced customization with continuity, in effect employing similar central themes in different situational contexts.

## Limitations and Further Research

Despite the insights gained, our research has some limitations. The first one is the small sample size and the limited number of contexts in which we study rhetorical competence. This is a study of one charismatic leader, with a focus

**Table 4.** Patterns of Rhetorical Strategies in Three Different Situations.

	SEC deposition	CNBC interview	D8 conference
Situational context	Oppositional, seeking to extract maximum information on a sensitive topic	Fast-paced, potentially tense, inquisitive	Co-operative, pleasant, sense of community
Jobs's status and ethos, logos, and pathos	Possible defendant, under examination. Low ethos, low logos, high pathos	Company leader, being quizzed on company strategic decision. Medium ethos, medium logos, low pathos	Charismatic leader, respected expert sharing wisdom, icon of Silicon Valley. High ethos, high logos, low pathos
Rhetorical style	Descriptive, formal and restricted to the facts. Defensive, disengaged, and self-protective	Fast-paced and provocative by interviewer; composed, explicatory, and neutral by Jobs	Courteous, entertaining, and informal; open and expansive
Types of central themes employed	People theme Product theme	Future theme People theme Product theme	Future theme People theme Product theme
Root metaphors employed	No root metaphors evident. Mostly dead metaphors employed	"Business is war" metaphor (interviewer) "Business is a journey" metaphor (jobs)	"Business is a journey" metaphor "Circle of life" metaphor
Types of rhetorical devices employed	Alliteration, Antithesis, Conduplicatio, Metaphor, Polypoton, Synonymia, Tautologia, Three-part-list	Diacope, Commoratio, Humor, Hyperbole, Metaphor (use of various types of devices is limited due to short length of interview)	Alliteration, Analogy, Anaphora, Antithesis, Auxesis, Climax, Conduplicatio, Diacope, Dinumeratio, Epimone, Humor, Hyperbole, Hypophora, Metaphor, Position taking, Storytelling, Tautologia, Three-part-list

on three rhetorical contexts (as outlined in Table 4). Given that this is an exploratory, in-depth study, the limited sample size is appropriate and was determined based on theoretical rather than statistical sampling. Having said that, this sample size detracts from the generalizability of our findings. In order to address this limitation, the insights gained can be explored in future research, potentially in the context of multiple case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989), so as to strengthen generalizability.

The second limitation is that we do not have behavioral data on the effects of the employment of rhetoric by charismatic leaders. Given that this is a study of rhetoric based on textual data, we did not have access to such behavioral data as the effects of rhetoric on the audience, therefore we could not empirically identify the existence of charismatic leadership effects such as individualized consideration or idealized influence (Bass, 1996). This is a direction that could be employed in future research. In this case, we have clarified the assumptions of our analytical process, in particular the links between charismatic leadership and rhetorical competence. We focused on identifying empirical data relating to rhetorical competence under the assumption, based on previous research, that this is an indicator of the exercise of charismatic leadership.

The third limitation is that the analysis was conducted in the tradition of interpretive discourse analysis where there is no set number of steps or a structured recipe. Rather, the process was one of hermeneutic exploration, pattern-seeking, moving from textual fragments to the whole text and vice versa, until saturation of understanding was reached (i.e., further iterations did not lead to further insights). Hermeneutic methods afford the flexibility for in-depth exploration of the data, but may make it difficult to replicate a particular study. Future research therefore may seek to codify the analytical approach in a more structured fashion to facilitate the generation of additive knowledge.

### *Charismatic Leadership and Rhetorical Strategies*

Our findings suggest that charisma is not an ineffable, magical quality as classically understood, but can rather be seen as a consequence of the relationships among leader, audience, and context (Klein & House, 1995). We show that this relationship is one of social constructions of meaning, accomplished by charismatic leaders through their rhetorical competence. In particular, we extend the current understanding of the importance of rhetoric customization by leaders (Conger, 1991; Shamir et al., 1994) and specify particular rhetorical strategies showing how this customization can be carried out.

These findings provide a different perspective on the treatment of rhetorical strategies in prior research. For example, Heracleous (2006a, 2006b) operationalized rhetorical strategies through analytical application of enthymemes (rhetorical argumentations), Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) in terms of institutional vocabularies and theorizations of change, and Sharma and Grant (2011) in terms of a dramaturgical metaphor emphasizing management of front and back stages. We extend the understanding of the nature of rhetorical strategies, through our findings on the use of the classical dynamics of rhetoric and on the balance between continuity and customization.

Furthermore, our findings reaffirm and extend the idea that the ability of discourse to shape social reality is based primarily on discursive deep structures, such as rhetorical strategies, which enshrine and reaffirm similar ideas over time (Heracleous, 2006b). Discursive structures are “persistent features of discourse, which transcend individual texts, speakers or authors, situational contexts and communicative actions and pervade bodies of communicative action as a whole and in the long term” (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001, p. 758). As we found in our study of Steve Jobs’s rhetoric, such deep structures include central themes (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987; Thachankary, 1992), root metaphors (Audebrand, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Smith & Eisenberg, 1987), and rhetorical strategies (Hopkins & Reicher, 1997).

### *Relationships Among the Classical Dynamics of Rhetoric*

Our analysis shows that one element of the situation, the rhetorician’s perceived *ethos*, is fundamental in offering clues as to the appropriate rhetorical style to be employed. As Roberts (1954) noted, a leader’s *ethos* “may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses” (p. 25). It has indeed been suggested that rhetorical effectiveness is highest when *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* are seen as simultaneous dimensions of arguments (Faure, 2010). Research suggests that there is a specific sequence of emphasis on these dynamics of rhetoric at different stages of institutionalization processes; in the first few years, *pathos*, followed by *logos*, and finally *ethos* (Green, 2004; Green et al., 2008). What is the relationship among these rhetorical dynamics, however, when employed simultaneously in leadership rhetoric? What happens, for example, when perceived *ethos* is low, as in the SEC deposition?

To the best of our knowledge, prior empirical research on managerial rhetoric has not yet examined the simultaneous interplay among the three dynamics of rhetoric. Our data suggest that perceived *ethos* is a basic situational feature, which structures the whole rhetorical dynamics. We found that Steve Jobs’s perceived *ethos* in each rhetorical situation influenced the extent of employment of *logos* and *pathos*.

The audience's receptivity of the leader's key message depends partially on the leader's perceived *ethos*. With respect to the deposition, its very nature undermines authority and confidence, while placing honesty and trustworthiness into question. In this situation, the less that is said, the better. We found that Jobs's rhetoric in this low-*ethos* situation emphasized *pathos* and de-emphasized *logos*. In this situation, Jobs skillfully managed to use his less authoritative position to his advantage by portraying himself in a vulnerable light, as an under-appreciated person with honorable goals putting the company above his own interests, in an attempt to build an emotional bond with the audience. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that when *ethos* is low, *logos* may be de-emphasized and *pathos* highlighted as a potentially effective means of persuasion.

We can see the CNBC interview as an intermediate situation, where attributed *ethos* was medium, employment of *logos* was medium as far as the time-constrained situation allowed, and use of *pathos* also low, given the low level of need for its employment.

In contrast to the deposition, in the D8 conference, Jobs was perceived as a high-*ethos* character, employing his credibility to amplify the meaning of his oratory, which led to the use of more complex and expansive rhetoric (a higher use of *logos*) and little use of *pathos*. In high-*ethos* situations, the audience is highly receptive to arguments by the rhetor, which may lead to a higher use of *logos* and a low need to employ *pathos*. It may therefore be hypothesized that when *ethos* is high, *logos* is emphasized, and *pathos* is de-emphasized. Table 4 summarizes the relationship among these rhetorical dynamics.

### *Balancing Customization with Continuity in Leadership Rhetoric*

As Shamir et al. (1994) noted, the message itself matters, not just the way it is delivered, which reaffirms the classical definition of rhetoric that it is essential to customize the message to particular audiences and situations. Jarzabkowski and Sillince (2007), for example, found that rhetoric use in context is an essential means of increasing stakeholders' commitment to multiple strategic goals, and that rhetorical congruence is important (rhetorical congruence occurs when rhetoric is appropriate for contingencies and when the different elements of rhetoric in use are balanced; Sillince, 2005). Sillince (2006) showed how leaders can customize their rhetoric to emphasize different aspects of the organization's identity to different stakeholders, to achieve their strategic objectives and build competitive advantage, while at the same time supporting identities that can remain stable for years. We reinforce and extend these understandings through our finding of a balance between

customization and continuity. We found that Jobs's rhetoric exhibits both continuity (in terms of central themes and root metaphors) as well as customization (in terms of rhetorical style and emphasis on the principal dynamics of rhetoric) to suit the circumstances. We can view this ability to effectively integrate continuity and customization in a leader's rhetoric as an important competence of charismatic leadership, especially as the social construction of reality by leaders necessitates persistent and consistent messages over time to the various audiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

In sum, we found first that Steve Jobs exhibited high proficiency in customizing his rhetorical style to the broader contextual situation, but simultaneously there were constant features in his rhetoric, in terms of central themes and root metaphors, indicating that an important skill of charismatic leadership may be the integration of continuity and customization in leadership rhetoric. Second, we found that the customization process took place through rhetorical strategies such as re-framing, selective emphasis on the principal dynamics of rhetoric (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*), the level of precision or expansiveness of the rhetoric, and the use of additional rhetorical devices, such as amplification and repetition. In this context, we found that the driving factor in the dynamics of rhetoric was Steve Jobs's perceived *ethos*, which significantly influenced the pattern of customization and has respective effects on *logos* and *pathos*. When *ethos* was low, high levels of *pathos* were employed and low levels of *logos*. When *ethos* was high, lower levels of *pathos* were employed, and higher levels of *logos*.

Further research could establish whether the interrelations among the principal dynamics of rhetoric found in this study hold for other charismatic leaders and in different contexts. It could also explore whether the ability to integrate customization and continuity through their rhetoric is a key capability of charismatic leaders. Third, further research could explore what influences the nature of the central themes and root metaphors employed by charismatic leaders. Are these, for example, also influenced in some way by context, as is rhetorical style? If so, do different charismatic leaders in similar industries or organizations employ similar central themes and root metaphors?

### *Practical Implications*

In terms of practical implications, this research highlights the need for leaders to develop the competence to customize their rhetorical styles in accordance with the characteristics of the audience as well as with the broader context. As Conger (1998) suggested, leaders ought to have an "accurate sense of [the] audience's emotional state, and . . . adjust the tone of their arguments accordingly" (p. 93). Our findings suggest that leaders should

specifically try to understand not only the emotional state of the audience but also the level of their perceived *ethos* in that particular situation and then adjust their rhetorical style accordingly. Given that effective language skills can be learned (Bryman, 1992; Conger, 1991), organizational leaders may be able to increase their self-awareness on their respective rhetorical styles and consequently more consciously alter their rhetoric toward the context at hand.

Furthermore, leaders could gain a better understanding of how customization of style can be accomplished; for example, through the use of re-framing, of expansive or precise rhetoric, and specific rhetorical tools. One example of re-framing from our data shows how Jobs responded to the CNBC interviewer, in effect countering the interviewer's use of the underlying metaphor of *business is war* with his own metaphor, *business is a journey*, which had the effect of presenting Apple's decision to change suppliers as a natural, un-contentious one in the normal course of business rather than a radical break from an existing dominant supplier.

Furthermore, our findings also show that, while it is important to customize rhetorical style, leaders can still proceed to share a constant message, no matter what the context. This element of stability across situations is important for the effectiveness of leaders in influencing followers or shaping their social reality (Heracleous, 2006b; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). It would therefore be important for leaders first to be clear about the central themes they wish to emphasize and second to employ these across all rhetorical situations as far as possible. As Sillince (2006) found, rhetoric is intimately linked to developing competitive advantage and leaders can accomplish this through skillful balancing of continuity and customization in their rhetorical performances.

Collectively, these findings help us go beyond a view of charismatic leadership as a magical quality that cannot be explicated. We suggest that leaders can learn these rhetorical skills and employ them to increase followers' attributions of charisma as well as their own effectiveness.

## Appendix

### Glossary of Rhetorical Terms

*Alliteration*: Recurrence of an initial consonant sound and sometimes a vowel sound at the beginning of a number of successive words

*Analogy*: Reasoning or arguing from parallel cases

*Anaphora*: Repetition of same word or phrase at beginning of successive clauses or verses

*Antithesis*: Conjoining contrasting ideas

*Auxesis*: Words or clauses placed in climatic order

*Climax*: A gradual increase in intensity of meaning with words arranged in ascending order of importance

*Commoratio*: Emphasizing a strong point by repeating it several times in different words

*Conductio*: Repetition of a word or words in succeeding clauses

*Denotatio*: Dissuasion or advice to the contrary; used to express strong emotion

*Diacope*: Repetition of a word with one or a few words in between

*Dinumeratio*: Amplifying a general fact or idea by giving all of its details; offering a summary or recapitulation

*Enthymeme*: Rhetorical structures of argumentation that draw from the premises already held by the audience in particular social contexts

*Epimone*: Frequent repetition of a phrase or question to dwell on a point

*Ethos*: Persuasive appeal based on the perceived character or credibility of the rhetor

*Hyperbole*: An extravagant statement or the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect

*Hypophora*: Asking a question and immediately commenting upon it

*Logos*: A means of persuasion by demonstration of the truth, real or apparent, and through logical argumentation

*Metaphor*: Framing A in terms of B; assertion of identity between two domains

*Pathos*: The means of persuasion that appeal to the audience's emotions

*Polyptoton*: Repetition of words from the same root but with different endings

*Synonymia*: Amplification by synonym

*Tautologia*: Repetition of the same idea in different words

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Source. Based on Lanham (1991).

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### Author Biographies

**Loizos Heracleous** is Professor of Strategy and Organization at Warwick Business School. He earned his PhD at the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge. His research interests include strategy from an organizational perspective, organizational discourse and organization change and development.

**Laura Alexa Klaering** is Account Executive at Geometry Global. She graduated with an MSc in Marketing and Strategy from Warwick Business School in 2010.