The White Rose Movement: The Rhetorical Situation and Rhetorical Stances Surrounding the Six Anti-Nazi/Anti-War Leaflets

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THE WHITE ROSE MOVEMENT: THE RHETORICAL SITUATION AND RHETORICAL STANCES SURROUNDING THE SIX ANTI-NAZI/ANTI-WAR LEAFLETS

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by

Veronica Cruz

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Abstract

This study focuses on the White Rose Movement’s six anti-war/anti-Nazi leaflets the Movement produced and distributed between June 1942 and February 22, 1943 in Munich, Germany. The persuasiveness of the non-violent resistance Movement was analyzed and discussed using a Bitzerean and Booth rhetorical analysis. Though numerous active and passive social protests, such as marches, music, and rallies, have been examined rhetorically in the past, the research surrounding the written form of protest is minor. In direct regards to the White Rose Movement, specifically, the Movement has yet to be examined through a rhetorical lens until now. The Movement and its leaflets are unique in that the Movement had to act in deep secrecy to avoid detection as it composed and disseminated the leaflets in Nazi Germany. This study examined the persuasive quality of the leaflets through the use of the exigence, rhetors, audience, constraints, and rhetorical stances. This study concludes that the leaflets were not immediately as effective as the White Rose Movement hoped the leaflets would be.

Keywords: Bitzer, Booth, rhetorical analysis, rhetorical situation, rhetorical stances, White Rose Movement
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Hitler’s rise to power came at a time when the German people felt they needed him to lead the country down a more prosperous path. In the early 1930s, following Germany’s defeat in World War I, Germany suffered an economic depression that was also felt worldwide. As millions of Germans found themselves out of work, many lost faith and confidence in their homeland. This provided Hitler the opportunity to make his presence known. Adolf Hitler was considered a “powerful” and “spellbinding speaker” who understood the fears of the German people, and channeled those fears against the Jewish population (USHMM, 2017). After he was appointed Chancellor in 1933, he used rhetoric and propaganda to continue to spread his antisemitism views and began the “systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews” (USHMM, 2017). Aside from Jews, the Nazi regime also targeted people with mental and physical disabilities and murdered them in the Euthanasia Program, which was the first program of mass murder in Nazi Germany. Essentially, after the war started, Hitler’s intended victims, which included millions of Jews, Poles, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Gypsies, Russians, homosexuals, and blacks, were torn away from their families and either immediately executed or sent to various concentration camps in and around Germany where most later died – but they were not the only victims.

The Jews’ and other minorities’ depth of pain and suffering are most severe and can never be fully compared to the oppressive state German citizens found themselves in in Nazi Germany. Still, German citizens were victimized (although not to the same extent as the intended victims) by the Third Reich regardless of their religious, political, and social background; however, not all German citizens were victimized. There were some who did not feel victimized
and instead supported Hitler. In any case, oppression loomed over the land as Hitler, in the name of the Volk community – which unified all social and political classes behind the dictator – robbed the Germans of their basic rights (e.g., freedom of speech). No longer were people free to express themselves or allowed an opinion that differed from the National Socialist idealization. Those who actively or passively resisted were severely punished and executed for high treason – ramifications that certain pupils and a professor from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich were well aware of.

From June 1942 to February 1943, five college students (Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Christoph Probst) and Professor Kurt Huber became core contributors to the White Rose Movement, a crusade that rebelled against the Hitler regime. Other members of the White Rose included Traute Lafrenz, Katharina Schüddekopf, Lieselotte (Lilo) Berndl, Jürgen Wittenstein, Marie-Luise Jahn, Falk Harnack, Hubert Furtwängler, Wilhelm Geyer, Manfred Eickemeyer, Josef Söhngen, Heinrich Guter, Heinrich Bollinger, Helmut Bauer, Harald Dohrn, Hans Conrad Leipelt, Gisela Schertling, Rudi Alt, Wolfgang Jaeger, Susanne Hirzel, Hans Hirzel, and Franz J. Müller. These members did not use any means of violence to resist the Nazi regime. Rather, they resisted the government non-violently by producing copies of six anti-war/anti-Nazi leaflets titled “Flugblätter de Weisse Rose” (Pamphlets of the White Rose) and distributing these leaflets around Germany. Using the leaflets as a rhetorical tool, the White Rose members intended to enlighten the German people of the Nazi Party’s atrocities, and persuade the people to resist the totalitarian government. In July 1943, after the trial and execution of most of the core members, one of the leaflets was smuggled by the Allies who then took it upon themselves to make copies and drop them all over Germany. The study of the White Rose’s resistance rhetoric in Germany will not only help scholars
understand the mindset of Germans during the Third Reich, but it could set forth further
discussion and study of the written form of resistance rhetoric, especially regarding the rise of
resistance against various political discourses of the 21st century. Indeed, even though
movements, marches, and music have been examined for their rhetorical effectiveness to create
social change, op-eds and other penned messages of resistance have hardly been looked at
rhetorically. In a time when the risk of verbal protest was too great and the only way to
communicate with one’s audience was through anonymously writing, the Leaflets of the White
Rose (Flugblätter de Weisse Rose) can prove to offer a foundation of effective and persuasive
communication between rhetor and audience. It can be difficult to know if the White Rose
members were ever aware of the rhetorical choices they made throughout the production of the
leaflets, but the powerful effect of their words might suggest that they knew how to apply
rhetoric efficaciously to reach a desirable outcome. Further reasons justifying this study are
explored in the next section.

Justification

Examining the White Rose Movement’s rhetoric in their leaflets is necessary for various
reasons. First, it is highly probable the Movement’s rhetorical strategies are similar to rhetorical
strategies used by suffragists and abolitionists such as abolitionist orators Maria W. Stewart and
Frederick Douglass who persuaded hundreds if not thousands of people to act on creating social
change. Even though written communication and verbal communication are dissimilar methods,
the rhetorical strategies employed must remain the same to effectively persuade an audience.
Second, the leaflets are important examples of rhetoric as they are centered around the
Holocaust. Those who are not familiar with the extensive history of the Holocaust, or have not
lived in Germany, might not have heard of the White Rose Movement. For example, students in
Germany are required to have at least seven years of comprehensive Holocaust education, which includes studying the White Rose Movement. It is not until a non-German student takes a college-level Holocaust class, that he/she will become aware of the Movement’s existence. Third, even though the leaflets often receive attention in the history of the Holocaust and Third Reich, no one has yet read and analyzed these leaflets for their rhetorical power and their contemporary impact. Extensive research on the Movement’s impact on Germany’s social, economic, and political environment exists, but never through a rhetorical lens. In fact, no mention of the White Rose Movement has ever been made within the sphere of rhetoric until now.

Analyzing the Leaflets

To understand the functions of the White Rose Movement’s rhetoric, I examined all six anti-war/anti-Nazi leaflets: Leaflet of the White Rose I (Flugblätter de Weisse Rose I), Leaflet of the White Rose II (Flugblätter de Weisse Rose II), Leaflet of the White Rose III (Flugblätter de Weisse Rose III), Leaflet of the White Rose IV (Flugblätter de Weisse Rose IV), Leaflet of the Resistance Movement in Germany. Call to All Germans! (Flugblätter der Widerstandsbewegung in Deutschland. Aufruf an alle Deutsche!) (also known as Leaflet of Resistance), and Fellow! Fellow Students! (Kommilitoninnen! Kommilitonen!) (also known as the Last Leaflet). Only the first four leaflets were numbered; however, for the sake of this research, I will label them as Leaflet I, Leaflet II, Leaflet III, Leaflet IV, Leaflet V, and Leaflet VI to avoid confusion. It must be noted that a seventh leaflet was destroyed by the Gestapo before it was ever published. According to historians, the contents in that leaflet were only known to Hans Scholl and Christoph Probst, the author who penned the seventh leaflet. However, a researcher from the Center for White Rose Studies has claimed to have translated the seventh leaflet, so it is available.
to scholars. It must be noted, though, that the seventh leaflet is not included in this analysis considering the uncertainty of its existence since the leaflet was supposedly torn up by the Gestapo. Aside from the leaflets, other artifacts were also examined for this analysis.

One artifact I examined is “At the Heart of the White Rose: Letters and Diaries of Hans Scholl and Sophie Scholl,” edited by Inge Jens (1987). Even though this specific artifact is not part of the analysis, I studied it for its role as the foundation of Hans Scholl’s rhetorical process and actions regarding the White Rose Movement and the leaflets. This collection of individual personal letters from Hans and Sophie to their family and friends, as well as diary entries, gives the audience a chance to connect and relate with the siblings, especially Hans Scholl, of the Movement which is something that cannot be done by reading the leaflets alone. The leaflets provide the overall purpose of the Movement’s actions, including a small glimpse into the authors’ religious and political beliefs, but nothing is provided beyond that. With this specific text, however, the reader is allowed to understand the depth of love the Scholls have for human life and the length they will go to fight what they deemed as an oppressive and evil government.

After analyzing the texts, I then demonstrated the rhetorical significance of the leaflets as they pertain to the Holocaust and further study of resistance rhetoric. Ideally, a close reading of the leaflets could potentially answer this critical question: Why is it important to read the leaflets now in the 21st century when the resistance to Hitler’s autocratic government happened over 70 years ago?

**Methodology**

To answer the question of why the leaflets should continue to be read, I would need to focus on examining the rhetorical situation surrounding the leaflets, the authors’ rhetorical stances, strategies, and their previous influences that guided the direction of the Movement and
leaflets. Therefore, to highlight the rhetorical functions of the leaflets, I will give a brief overview of Bitzer’s (1968/1992), Vatz’s (1973), and Consigny’s (1974) models of the rhetorical situation, as well as briefly discuss Campbell’s (1982) model of the rhetorical act and Booth’s (1963) framework of rhetorical stances in this section.

In Bitzer’s (1968/1992) article, “The Rhetorical Situation,” his theoretical framework centers solely on the idea that rhetoric is situational, and more specifically on exploring the reasons why and what caused rhetorical discourse to occur in any given situation. Bitzer declared that certain situations demand specific responses from rhetors. Simply, it is not the rhetor that creates the rhetoric, but the situation which calls forth the rhetorical discourse. He took it one step further and expanded the scope of the traditional rhetorical theory by defining situation as “the source and ground of rhetorical activity” (Bitzer, 1968/1992, p. 6). As stated by Bitzer, the importance of analyzing rhetoric by using the features mentioned in his rhetorical situation allows one to understand how the powerful influence of rhetoric can potentially change reality.

According to Bitzer (1968/1992), the three distinct components of a rhetorical situation are exigence, audience, and constraints. Exigence is considered an urgent problem that demands a response, but it must be a problem that can be rectified by the actions of an audience. That said, audience has always been an integral feature of rhetoric, and it is no different under the rhetorical situation method. Anyone who listens to the rhetor, interprets the rhetor’s message, and is capable of acting upon the rhetoric of the situation is considered an audience. Constraints “include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives and the like” which affect the rhetor and his or her audience (p. 8). In addition to constraints, Bitzer offered the idea that a rhetorical situation must also have a “fitting response” to that situation. Therefore,
exigence, audience, and constraints are deemed as the defining characteristics of any rhetorical situation.

This belief was challenged by Vatz (1973) when he asserted the notion of the rhetor creating rhetoric, and not the situation. Vatz claimed that it is the rhetor’s responsibility to generate rhetorical discourse to persuade his/her audience. In addition, Vatz ascertained the possibility Consigny (1974) responded to the differing models Bitzer and Vatz built and concluded that both are correct in their respective assumptions. Consigny pointed out the interesting relationship between situation, rhetor, and audience by emphasizing the influence a situation has over the rhetor and audience, and how the rhetor, at the same time, can influence the situation and audience.

Regardless of how intricate the relationship between rhetor, audience, and exigence is, Campbell (1982) provided a simplistic and extensive perspective of the constraints within the rhetor, audience, and the situation’s subject/purpose. Understanding the constraints within the rhetor, audience, and subject/purpose is integral to engage effectively in rhetorical discourse. Aside from acquiring insight into the constraints between the above-mentioned elements, Booth’s (1963) model of the rhetorical stance draws emphasis on the importance of the rhetor. Very similar to Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, and ethos), Booth recreated the appeals and renamed them as the Pedant’s stance, Advertisement’s stance, and Entertainer’s stance. Furthermore, the author stressed the significance of implementing a healthy balance of the three stances in order to effectively persuade the audience.

Since I will conduct a rhetorical analysis based on Bitzer’s model of the rhetorical situation and Booth’s model of the rhetorical stances, this kind of analysis will look into the exigence, audience, and constraints of the rhetorical situation, as well as the rhetors’ use of the
Pedant’s, Advertiser’s, and Entertainer’s stances. Further, I will also contextualize the leaflets within the primary and core members of the White Rose (Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, Christoph Probst, and Kurt Huber), geographic location, and social and political situation as I apply the rhetorical analysis. Undoubtedly, these leaflets are intriguing works, but the meaning in each leaflet is situated in its rhetorical context.

Overview of Chapters

To prepare for the rhetorical analysis of the leaflets, Chapter 2 will consist of a review of literature into Bitzer’s (1968/1992) rhetorical situation. Not only will I go more into depth about the rhetorical situation, but I will also discuss critics of Bitzer’s work to gain a deeper understanding regarding the method. Moreover, a brief overview of the leaflets will be incorporated in this chapter as I illustrate the application of rhetorical theory as it is used to examine the documents. The methodology and procedure of administering the rhetorical analysis will be detailed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will comprise a rhetorical analysis of all six leaflets based on Bitzer’s rhetorical situation and Booth’s rhetorical stances applying variations of rhetorical theory, particularly the three features of the rhetorical situation (exigence, audience, and constraints) and stances (Pedant, Advertiser, and Entertainer). My final chapter (Chapter 5) discusses my findings, conclusions, and any implications for further study. This will include the influential power and limitations of the leaflets. The appendices include photographs of the White Rose primary members, photographs of the original leaflets in German, and English translations of the leaflets.

Conclusion

The majority of the White Rose members were college students, and were focused on their studies and family. When they recognized the Third Reich for what it was, they did not
hesitate to form a resistance group. These members’ stories must be told and their leaflets read
and analyzed. They should not only be seen as one of many acts of resistance during WWII, but
as rhetoricians whose strong belief empowered them to use rhetorical means to persuade the
German people and produce social change. The White Rose Movement deserves a place within
this sphere of mainstream rhetoric for its ability to employ an assortment of rhetorical strategies
to generate a deeply profound, influential, and empowering rhetoric for all generations.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The rhetorical situation, first coined by Lloyd F. Bitzer (1968/1992), is a model that generates discussion of the relation between the rhetor and the rhetorical discourse within a situation. This model will be used to examine the rhetorical strategies the White Rose Movement’s core members employed in the composition of the leaflets in order to negotiate the various challenges they faced such as the power and influence the Third Reich had over the White Rose Movement, as well as the power and influence the Movement had over the situation and its audience. Bitzer’s model of the rhetorical situation is applicable for this study considering that his theoretical framework allows one to study multiple scopes of a rhetorical situation. Indeed, it is vital to gain more knowledge on the rhetorical prowess that exists within the pages of the leaflets. Aside from Bitzer, the scholarship of Vatz (1973), Consigny (1974), Campbell (1996), and Booth (1963) also contributes to my analysis of the rhetoric within the Leaflets of the White Rose and how it functions within the constraints of the core authors, audience, and subject/purpose of the exigence. Furthermore, Bitzer’s (1968/1992) model will provide me the necessary tools to answer the research question guiding the analysis: How did the White Rose authors use their previous influence and education, as well as particular rhetorical strategies, to make the leaflets persuasive enough for scholars to continue reading them over 70 years later?

Rhetorical Situation

According to Bitzer (1968/1992), it is important to understand how the concept of the rhetorical situation and its development into rhetorical discourse functions. Now before delving further into the features of the rhetorical situation, which include the exigence, the audience and
the constraints, it is crucial to grasp a basic idea of what the rhetorical situation actually is. In a broader scope, the rhetorical situation, as defined by Bitzer (1968/1992), is:

…a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. (p. 6)

Since rhetorical discourse arises from dialogue between more than one person, Bitzer claimed that a situation, such as the Third Reich, must exist within that communication in order for discourse to exist. However, that is not always the case; Bitzer also argued that every situation is not accompanied by discourse. Depending on the type of situation, a situation can summon “the discourse into existence” (Bitzer, 1968/1992, p. 2). This perspective places more value on the situation itself rather than the rhetor. To give a concrete approach, if the Third Reich (situation) had not occurred to begin with, the White Rose Movement and their leaflets might not have existed. The Third Reich, in essence, brought discourse and invited the White Rose Members to engage within that discourse. However, this viewpoint of the model does have certain limitations that have been noted by other rhetoricians such as Richard E. Vatz (1973), Scott Consigny (1974), and Barbara Biesecker (1989). These rhetorical theorists criticized Bitzer’s model, and yet assisted in expanding the rhetorical lens that is the rhetorical situation.

Vatz (1973) first took an opposite view of Bitzer (1968/1992) regarding the notion that rhetoric is situational, as well as the location of meaning in a rhetorical situation. This is what concerned Vatz the most, and to which case he questioned where meaning exists if not in the actual situation itself. Bitzer claimed that meaning resides within the events; however, Vatz (1973) argued that meaning depends on the observer’s point of view:
Fortunately or unfortunately meaning is not intrinsic in events, facts, people, or “situations” nor are facts “publicly observable.” [sic] Except for those situations which directly confront our own empirical reality, we learn of facts and events through someone’s communicating them to us. (p. 156)

Moreover, Vatz also pointed out that “…meaning is not discovered in situations, but created by rhetors” (p. 157). In other words, rhetors who are involved in any given situation are solely responsible for creating meaning – not the situations themselves. According to Vatz, there is a two-part process that allows meaning to transpire in a rhetorical situation. The first process is the rhetor. Once the rhetor obtains enough knowledge and information on an event, he or she can choose what facts to present, or not present, to the audience. The second process focuses on how the rhetor creates meaning in a speech. It is therefore the rhetor’s job to impart interpretation to the audience, especially since “…the rhetorician can best account for choices of situations, the evocative symbols, and the forms and media which transmit these translations of meaning” (Vatz, 1973, p. 158). Therefore, according to Vatz (1973), a situation does not exist until a rhetor’s language describes the situation. The concept of rhetoric existing before the situation is vastly different from Bitzer’s theory of a situation existing before the rhetoric.

That said, Vatz’s (1973) version means that the Third Reich (situation) was not considered rhetorical to begin with; the Third Reich became a rhetorical situation when the White Rose members deemed it so. In a way, the Movement’s core authors were seen as gateways of communication because they (the writers and editors of the Movement) decided what information to impart to their audience and how to generate meaning within their information. In essence, Vatz’s model places more agency on the writers (rhetors) than the situation itself. Since the Movement’s writers had complete autonomy in choosing what is
salient, they were able to influence their audience and create rhetoric within the exigence. This notion is something that Consigny (1974) agreed with.

Soon after Vatz presented his argument of the rhetor creating meaning in any rhetorical situation, Consigny (1974) articulated both his own interpretation of the rhetorical situation and his criticism of Bitzer’s (1968/1992) and Vatz’s (1973) viewpoints. Consigny (1974) deemed the rhetorical situation as “…an indeterminate context marked by troublesome disorder which the rhetor must structure so as to disclose and formulate problems” (p. 178). When it comes to Bitzer (1968/1992) and Vatz (1973), Consigny felt that Bitzer “misconstrues the situation as being thereby determinate and determining” and that Vatz “fails to account for the real constraints on the rhetor’s activity” (Consigny, 1974, p. 176). However, despite how he viewed the two scholars as incorrect in their rhetorical thought, he does agree with them on certain aspects. For example, he does agree that a rhetor is partly – not solely – responsible for generating a rhetorical situation. Moreover, he asserts that rhetoric is artistic, and as such, both the rhetor and situation is what creates a rhetorical situation. Most importantly, he argued that a rhetor can engage in a situation by meeting two conditions: integrity and receptivity.

Indeed, similar to Vatz’s theory, Consigny deemed integrity as the rhetor’s ability to possess multiple opinions and strategies and use them to solve problems. Similar to Bitzer’s theory, Consigny considered receptivity as the situation’s ability to influence the opinions and strategies of the rhetor. If two conditions are met, then rhetoric must be “construed as an art of topics or commonplaces” (Consigny, 1974, p. 181). Therefore, including Consigny’s (1974) perspective within the White Rose Movement should be viewed as this: the Third Reich’s (situation) drew the attention of the Movement’s authors (rhetors) who then assessed the situation before responding to it. As the authors responded to the tyrannical government through
means of the leaflets, they were able to craft their arguments to influence and persuade the German population (audience). Altering the outcome of the Third Reich will then depend on the success of persuading the audience. In any case, it is interesting to take note of Biesecker’s (1989) article on Bitzer’s (1968/1992) and Vatz’s (1973) models.

Bitzer’s (1968/1992) concept of certain situations creating rhetoric and Vatz’s (1973) concept of the rhetor, and not the situation, creating rhetoric within the rhetorical situation is what caught Biesecker’s (1989) attention. In an attempt to utilize Derridean deconstruction to rethink the rhetorical situation, Biesecker focuses on the origins of situation and speaker, as well as the relationship between audience and text. She posited that Bitzer (1968/1992) and Vatz (1973) did not fully understand the full implication of the rhetorical situation. To arrive at this assumption, Biesecker (1989) examined the definition of rhetorical text as stated by Bitzer: ““Rhetoric,” here, is the name given to those utterances which serve as instruments for adjusting the environment in accordance to the interests of its inhabitants” (p. 113). Bitzer, as Biesecker pointed out, considers rhetoric as an effect from the situation producing it. With Vatz, she noted that “Vatz brought into the discussion what Bitzer had excluded—the intervention of an intending and interpreting speaker-subject” (Biesecker, 1989, p. 113). In her article, it appears as though she agreed with Vatz’s assertions of the rhetor’s choice regarding what information to include and exclude. However, she reminds her readers that regardless of who they believe, both Bitzer and Vatz hold the same presumption: who holds the origin of the rhetorical situation—the situation or the speaker?

To explore this idea, Biesecker (1989) decided to use Derrida’s conception of différance. According to Derrida, meaning can be found between two differing positions or texts. Since Biesecker is focusing on Bitzer (1968/1992) and Vatz (1973) as holding two contradictory views
regarding the rhetorical situation, she finds meaning between the two: deconstructing their works could lead to the process of discovering the origins of situation or speaker. To justify how deconstruction functions in this context, Biesecker (1989) stated, “That is to say, neither the text’s immediate rhetorical situation nor its author can be taken as a simple origin [Bitzer] or generative agent [Vatz] since both are underwritten by a series of historically produced displacements” (p. 121). Therefore, through the understanding of Derrida’s différance, Biesecker asserts that rhetors are influenced by rhetorical situations that are historically situated. In other words, even though a rhetor can create rhetoric, the rhetor cannot influence the current rhetorical situation; however, a rhetor’s rhetoric can influence future rhetorical situations and dialogue between the rhetor and audience.

Biesecker’s (1989) analysis is an interesting concept to ponder in regards to the White Rose Movement. Similar to Consigny (1974), Biesecker is in agreement with some aspects of Bitzer (1968/1992) and Vatz (1973). Even though the Third Reich started in 1933, the situation would still be deemed as historically situated considering the birth of the White Rose nine years later, especially since most of the Movement’s members were already heavily influenced by Hitler’s doctrine by that time. Again, reaffirming Bitzer’s model, the core authors of the leaflets were motivated by the situation; although, according to Biesecker’s (1989) work, the White Rose members were unable to alter the events of that time. Regardless, the White Rose Movement did initiate and produce future dialogue posthumously.

Exigence

In any rhetorical situation, it is also vital to understand the exigence, audience, and constraints in relation to the rhetor. When discussing the exigence, Bitzer (1968/1992) construed it as “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be
done, a thing which is other than it should be” (p. 6). As mentioned before, there are exigencies (problems/issues) that demand a “fitting” response with the expectation of creating change. In addition, exigencies that can be modified are considered to be rhetorical; this means that some exigencies, such as natural disasters and death, are not deemed rhetorical because nothing can be done to change them. Essentially, exigencies within a situation is what influences the rhetor’s ability to respond to that situation, and the dexterity to alter the exigence rests solely on the audience.

In terms of the White Rose Movement, the situation that surrounded the Movement was National Socialism, and the exigences were mainly oppression and death. National Socialism, in this case, encompasses Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Third Reich. Hitler’s rise was not only catastrophic to the minorities who were sent to concentration camps, but it was damaging to the rest of the German population. Using Bitzer’s (1968/1992) model, the Third Reich’s (situation) tyrannical nature (exigence) inspired the Movement’s core members (rhetors/writers) to react by composing and distributing the leaflets in the hopes of persuading the German citizens (audience) to rise against Hitler.

On the other hand, Vatz (1973) believed that exigence contrasts from Bitzer’s (1968/1992) view of meaning residing in an event. Vatz posited that Bitzer’s belief of exigence as an “obstacle or imperfection” could imply that exigence exists entirely autonomously of the rhetors. This, in turn, brought Vatz to question Bitzer on whether something should be done whenever a problem arises. Further, Vatz disagrees with Bitzer when Bitzer asserts that a situation is rhetorical only if something can and/or should be done. Vatz instead claimed that an audience can choose to agree or disagree with the rhetor’s solutions to a problem.
However, Consigny (1974), disagreed with Vatz’s (1973) stance on rhetors having the 
choice to create their own exigences. Instead, he sided with Bitzer (1968/1992) by stating, “The 
rhetor cannot create exigences arbitrarily, but must take into account the particularities of each 
situation in which he actively becomes engaged” (p. 176). For Consigny, the exigence must 
already be present within the situation before the rhetor formulates a response. Furthermore, 
there should at least be certain “material factors” for the rhetor to choose from (Consigny, 1974, 
p. 183). For example, since the White Rose Movement’s core authors cannot create exigence, 
they must use concepts that are already available within the situation such as oppression vs. 
man’s free will. Once the authors decide to focus on this particular point, then they must 
construct their entire arguments based on that issue in the hopes of persuading their audience.

**Audience**

Bitzer (1968/1992) recognized the invaluable quality an audience brings to any rhetorical 
discourse. According to Bitzer, the audience must be able to listen, interpret, and be motivated to 
engage in action. More specifically, a “rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are 
capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change” (Bitzer, 1968/1992, 
p. 8). It is indeed imperative for an audience to be influenced by the rhetor’s speech and, thus, 
create change within the situation. For example, the German population, as the White Rose 
Movement’s audience, had the potential to become “mediators of change” (p. 8). Those who 
shared the same values and beliefs as the members were able to contribute to the Movement’s 
cause. However, out of fear of death or deep loyalty to Hitler, there were those who refused to be 
a part of the White Rose. Such constraints between the rhetor and audience must be treated 
carefully.
Constraints

According to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1982), generating a particular discourse between the rhetor and audience depends on the constraints surrounding the two. Even though Campbell’s textbook has been used in various university public speaking courses, the author does provide in-depth philosophical and theoretical understandings of how potential rhetors can use public discourses to shape themselves and the society (situation) they are in. The author does not necessarily offer a new perspective of Bitzer’s (1968/1992) or Vatz’s (1973) view of the rhetorical situation or Booth’s view of the rhetorical stance per se, but she does go into detail of the obstacles and constraints within the rhetorical situation that comes into existence from the audience, subject/purpose, and the rhetor (known as “source credibility”), and the situation (Campbell, 1982, p. 121). Referencing Campbell’s work in an analysis of the White Rose Movement’s leaflets will highlight the core members’ dexterity at negotiating the three types of obstacles. Therefore, Campbell’s textbook will be vital in understanding the overall power and influence constraints have over the elements (rhetor, audience, and situation) and what obstacles they encountered.

Regarding obstacles arising from audiences, Campbell (1982) first argued the need to be aware of two errors rhetors tend to make with their audience: the assumption that audience members share the exact same constraints as the rhetor and the expectation of effectively persuading the entire audience to do what the rhetor wants. To solve this dilemma, a rhetor must “…recognize differences between yourself [the rhetor] and members of the audience and yet create common bonds between you from what you do share” (p. 71). In a sense, fully knowing one’s audience is vital in successfully persuading them, but one must first understand how to define exactly what an audience is. According to Campbell (1982):
An audience is: (1) those exposed to the rhetorical act, the empirical audience; (2) the target audience, the ideal audience at whom the act is aimed; (3) the agents of change, those who have the capacity to do as the rhetor wishes, who can make changes; and (4) the role the audience is asked to play, the audience as it is created by rhetorical action. (p. 71)

Being aware of how the audience functions will then allow the rhetor to focus on overcoming obstacles of inattention, misperception and misinterpretation, lack of motivation, and inertia within the audience. Therefore, successfully creating social change is wholly dependent on the rhetor’s dexterity to understand their audience’s constraints, as well as utilize the audience’s attitudes, values, and beliefs to influence them. Essentially, Campbell’s work highlighted one of the true cruxes of any rhetorical situation: the power of the audience.

The influence of the audience is displayed in the next obstacle: subject and purpose. Campbell (1982) deconstructed the subject and the purpose and discovered several challenges under the umbrella of subject and purpose. When it comes to subject/topic, Campbell (1982) noted two hurdles: “resistance created by complexity and resistance created by the cultural history of the issue” (p. 102). Topics that are considered as overly complex might increase the risk of excluding audience members who are not familiar with the topic; in other words, topics that appear as too technical and specific, only pertain to exclusive audience members or experts of that given field, or are seen as not having anything in common with the values/beliefs of the audience members may result in an unsuccessful attempt at persuading the audience. In addition, the cultural history of the topic can also lead to ineffective efforts at gaining the audience’s attention since audiences may react indifferently to the topic or experience “conflict with cultural values” (Campbell, 1982, p. 104). Aside from subject/topic, Campbell (1982) further mentioned
two impediments regarding purpose: “resistance to the cost of responding and audience perception that it has no control over the issue in question” (p. 106). Audience is an invaluable commodity in any rhetorical situation, and Campbell emphasized the importance of the audience’s cost (time, energy, etc.) and their ability to control (or their insecurity of having the inability to control) the outcome of any given situation.

The last obstacle Campbell (1982) analyzed was “source credibility,” which is often considered as the ethos of the rhetor (p. 121). According to the author, “Ethos is an attitude – the impressions of images persons have of the source of a message” (Campbell, 1982, p. 134). In fact, the author deems ethos as a “multidimensional” attitude with “two distinct factors,” which are “authoritativeness” and “trustworthiness” (p. 134). A rhetor who displays a sense of authority means that he/she is intelligent, perceived as an expert in their own chosen fields, and is reliable. A rhetor who is honest, selfless, and friendly often exhibits a sense of trustworthiness. Campbell (1982) also pointed out a third factor of dynamism, which is the attitude of boldness, aggressiveness, and forcefulness, but insisted that the third factor does not function as well as the others since its unpredictability could be detrimental in some situations. Furthermore, regardless if the rhetor demonstrates great “authoritativeness” and “trustworthiness,” an audience can still question “prior ethos” of the rhetor such as the rhetor’s appearance, introduction, and context well before he/she makes the speech.

**Rhetorical Stances**

In a similar fashion, and yet quite dissimilar to Bitzer’s (1968/1992), Vatz’s (1973), Consigny’s (1974), and Biesecker’s (1989) perspectives of the rhetorical situation, Wayne C. Booth (1963) focused on the concept of the rhetorical stance. Booth’s article was a response to
the lack of quality of student writing in where he stated that students should learn the rhetorical stances, which he stated as:

…a stance which depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker. (p. 141)

Simply put, the rhetorical stance takes a closer look into balancing the role of the rhetor in correlation to rhetor’s subject and audience. Even though audience is vital in every rhetorical situation, Booth suggested that it would be unhealthy if the rhetor regards their audience to a point where it becomes overbearing, and that is why there should be a healthy balance between the rhetor, audience, and subject. The rhetorical stances that Booth discovered originally stemmed from Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals: logos (logical appeal), pathos (emotional appeal), and ethos (credibility). Similar to the appeals, Booth suggested that to become an effective rhetor, one must adopt the combination of three styles, which are the “pedant’s stance” (logos), the “advertiser’s stance” (pathos), and the “entertainer’s stance” (ethos) (p. 141, 143, & 144). As mentioned by Booth, the description of each stance are as follows:

- Pedant’s stance: the first stance “consists of ignoring or underplaying the personal relationship of speaker and audience and depending [sic] entirely on statements about a subject-that is, the notion of a job to be done for a particular audience is left out” (Booth, 1963, p. 141). Essentially, a rhetor allows the facts to speak for themselves without following any kind of rhetorical purpose. However, relying completely on the Pedant’s stance could risk creating meaningless discourse.
• Advertiser’s stance: according to Booth (1963), the Advertiser’s stance derives from the notion of “…undervaluing the subject and overvaluing pure effect: how to win friends and influence people” (p. 143). Simply, this stance is where the rhetor can sell a point across by deceiving their audience. As with the Pedant’s stance, relying completely on the Advertiser’s stance mean that there would hardly be any ethical and honest rhetoric to engage the audience.

• Entertainer’s stance: Booth (1963) described the Entertainer’s stance as “the willingness to sacrifice substance to personality and charm” (p. 144). Specifically, this stance is where the rhetor is solely focused on entertaining their audience without the addition of “substance” (Booth, 1963, p. 144). Even though this stance is similar to the Advertiser’s stance, the purpose of the Entertainer’s stance is to simply entertain.

With the three stances, the author implored his readers regarding the need for rhetors to become knowledgeable about their topic (using the Pedant’s stance) and to employ tricks, such as emotional appeals, (using both the Advertiser’s and Entertainer’s stances) to successfully solidify their arguments. Fully understanding how to utilize these tools will, according to Booth, help rhetors reach their audience better.

Therefore, understanding the rhetorical stance and constraints of the audience, subject/purpose, and rhetor helps in knowing the full implications of the rhetorical act. Even though Bitzer’s (1968/1992), Vatz’s (1973), and Consigny’s (1974) works allow one to be familiar with the concept of the rhetorical situation, Bitzer’s model will be used for this study because he articulated how rhetors can create arguments when a situation demands some sort of response. To Bitzer, the situation simply controls the rhetoric. As such, the White Rose Movement’s leaflets would not have existed if it were not for the Third Reich. Furthermore,
Campbell’s (1982) textbook on the rhetorical act and Booth’s (1963) theory of the rhetorical stance drew new emphasis on the rhetorical situation. Campbell’s work, specifically, will broaden the scope into the audience and constraints existing within Bitzer’s framework. Booth’s model will be used for this study because it looks at the writer’s awareness of audience, purpose, and voice. Hence, this analysis of the leaflets will be guided by Bitzer’s rhetorical situation and Booth’s rhetorical stances.
Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology

Scope of Study

The scope of this study is on the six anti-war/anti-Nazi leaflets that were produced and distributed by a non-violent resistance group, the White Rose Movement, from June 1942 to February 22, 1943. The political-inspired discourse contained 5,752 words and was originally written in German. The six English-translated transcripts were downloaded from The White Rose Society, Center for White Rose Studies, and the Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team websites to compare and assess the accuracy of the leaflets translation. It must be noted that the English translations from The White Rose Society and the Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team are vastly different from the translations done by the Center for White Rose Studies. In fact, the translations from The White Rose Society and the Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team are, word-for-word, exactly the same; it is only the Center for White Rose Studies’ translations that were disparate from the other websites. There is no reason given for the contrasting translations; however, the English translations from the Center for White Rose Studies website will be used particularly because the site is copyrighted 2017. Since the Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team is copyrighted 2011 and no copyright is displayed anywhere on The White Rose Society website, these translations will not be used for the study.

Regarding the length of the rhetorical act itself, it would usually take an individual around 10 minutes, more or less, to read one leaflet. Reading all six leaflets would take around 30 minutes to complete. When the leaflets were distributed in Munich, Germany, however, the length of time it would take to read was left at the mercy of an individual’s own interest and willingness to read them. These leaflets were produced and dispersed in deep secrecy, and their
potential audience who found themselves with a leaflet in their hands were put in danger (Hanser, 1979). Some audience members who were curious about the contents within the leaflets and willing to read them had to hide the leaflets or destroy them (Scholl, 1983). These leaflets had no threatening designs or drawings that placed Germans on edge; on the contrary, the leaflets were designed to be unpretentious even if the messages suggested otherwise (see Illustration 1 below).

The effectiveness of the Movement’s leaflets depends on who the primary audience was during 1942 and 1943. The primary audience was all German citizens regardless of age, gender, and social status. However, considering the number of White Rose members and the danger of being caught distributing a leaflet, it is hard to determine just how far their influence reached the public. In several sources, the authors mentioned how some of the members traveled to
neighboring towns and cities to recruit new members and scatter the leaflets; however, the names of the towns and cities were never mentioned. Still, the leaflets were either mailed at random or deposited at pubs, buses, trains, phone booths, and at the University of Munich where the leaflets could be read by anyone: those who support Hitler and those who discreetly oppose Hitler.

That said, Bitzer’s (1968/1992) and Booth’s (1963) models of the rhetorical situation and stances will be used to examine the influences of the Nazi Party (the exigence), the White Rose Movement’s core members (the rhetors and their stances), and the Movement’s audience. Simply put, even though, holistically, the rhetorical situation focuses on the relationship between the rhetor, exigence, and audience, Booth’s three styles of rhetorical stance will help in emphasizing the role the White Rose Movement plays in conveying their messages.

In consideration of the White Rose Movement’s leaflets, I am most concerned with how the personal and social constraints of the authors shaped their rhetoric, as well as to what degree did the rhetorical strategies they used make their messages persuasive enough to affect the audience. This is where Bitzer’s (1968/1992) model will be an ideal starting point to analyze the authors’ rhetoric. Some of the leaflets’ core authors, as detailed in the historical section of the review of literature, were deemed as religious as they were able to incorporate biblical phrases to speak to their audience. Specifically, this will be where Booth’s (1963) rhetorical stance will be used to analyze the three stances: the pendant, the advertiser, and the entertainer. Moreover, aside from religious constraints (in which this will be where Campbell (1982) comes in), all the members were influenced by certain German philosophers who often shined light onto the importance of humanity; this, in turned, allowed the leaflets’ authors to include philosophical phrases to speak with their audience as well. The inclusion of biblical and philosophical phrases allowed them to direct their messages to those who believe in various interpretations of the Bible
and/or philosophical works; however, the authors’ range of audience is not limited to religious and philosophical believers. In fact, since the leaflets were distributed in and around Munich, the authors’ rhetoric was potentially able to reach and transform individuals who were not religious and who did not study philosophy. Thus, the works by the authors mentioned above will provide the practical framework for a comprehensive analysis of the authors’ rhetoric contained in the leaflets.

The limitations to the focus of this study includes the possibility of using inaccurate English translations of the leaflets, as well as the appearance of the seventh leaflet. Indeed, the seventh leaflet, which was originally thought to have been destroyed, was apparently translated by a researcher from the Center for White Rose Studies. The seventh leaflet, therefore, was not examined in this study since the validity of the leaflet needed to be confirmed. Again, the six leaflets were chosen based on the last update of the Center for White Rose Studies website.

Methodology of the Study

Design

A rhetorical analysis is a qualitative research method based on the researcher’s own interpretation of the rhetor and the rhetorical act, situation, and audience (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991). In addition, conducting a rhetorical analysis allows the researcher to study various means of verbal or visual communications, written texts, and other artifacts, as well as how the intended audience responded to the artifacts. This particular interpretation focuses on:

…a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. (Bitzer, 1968/1992, p. 6)
Considering the artifact was written as a response to the governmental strife of that time and is therefore deemed a political artifact, a Bitzerean rhetorical analysis is the appropriate methodology. This process consists of the application of the rhetorical situation, exigence, audience, constraints, and rhetorical stances (Pedant’s, Advertiser’s, and Entertainer’s). The Bitzerean rhetorical analysis comprises the following steps: 1) reassemble the context of the artifacts; 2) apply Bitzer’s and Booth’s models to the artifact; and 3) assess the overall influence the artifacts had on the primary audience.

**Procedure**

When using a rhetorical analysis based on Bitzer and Booth to interpret and analyze the White Rose Movement’s six leaflets, the following steps were implemented:

1. Reorganize the original context of artifacts in a new context followed by the research of historical articles pertaining to the history of Anti-Semitism, Adolf Hitler, the Nazi Party, and the Holocaust.

2. Reorganize the original context of the artifacts in a new context by examining historical articles pertaining to the background of the White Rose Movement, the Movement’s members, and the production and distributions of the leaflets.

3. Reorganize the original context of the artifacts in a new context by assessing the composition (point of view, author-reader relationship, etc.) within the leaflets.

4. Apply the rhetorical situation and rhetorical stances to the Leaflets of the White Rose by examining the use of
   a. Exigence – the issue/problem of the rhetorical situation
   b. Audience – the primary audience to whom the leaflets were aimed at
   c. Constraints – the shared values/beliefs between authors and audience
d. Pedant’s Stance – the author’s use of logical reasoning and facts

e. Advertiser’s Stance – the author’s ability to convince the audience to adopt a certain idea

f. Entertainer’s Stance – the author’s ability to entertain the audience

5. Highlight the strength and weakness of the Movement’s rhetoric according to the rhetorical situation and stances.

6. Assess the influence the authors have over their audience based on the arguments presented in the leaflets.

7. Assess whether the Movement succeeded in persuading their audience to create social change.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the written text, concepts, and context within the Leaflets of the White Rose. The challenging aspect of this study is that my perspective is, by necessity, limited. As with any study, each researcher brings a unique outlook to a topic; essentially, no two research topics are ever the same. Furthermore, it must be noted that conducting a rhetorical analysis, such as an Aristotelian analysis, will yield different interpretations, perceptions, and results as opposed to someone who applied a Bitzerean rhetorical analysis. Indeed, the same could be said for conducting an ethnographic study of the White Rose Movement to a narrative study of Sophie Scholl, a member of the Movement. In any case, the analysis is consistent throughout the Bitzerean criticism on the Leaflets, thus ensuring a reliable study.
Ethical Considerations

In any given study, it is possible for an ethical issue to arise from a researcher’s critical abilities to interpret the articles. Two ethical issues to be considered in this study are objectivity and honesty. Taking into consideration the Kairos (setting) surrounding the Leaflets, the events that transpired in Nazi Germany (Holocaust, e.g.) are still viewed as a sensitive topic for many, and will therefore be treated with respect. As a researcher, it is my responsibility to refrain from presenting personal bias and instead be as objective as can possibly be regarding the topic. The other ethical consideration, honesty, is just as crucial as objectivity because gathering all evidence (articles and other materials), is vital to include in a researcher’s own study. Failure to do so will question the validity of the study (Creswell, 2007). It is therefore my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that all articles selected are accurate and appropriate for this study.
Chapter 4: Bitzerean Rhetorical Analysis

Introduction

This study will concentrate on the rhetorical situation surrounding the Leaflets of the White Rose (Flugblätter de Weisse Rose). Not only are exigence, audience, and constraints considered in the Movement’s core authors’ persuasive use of written communication, but the specific constraints between the rhetor, audience, and subject/purpose, as well as the rhetors’ stances are considered as well. Through application of Bitzer’s and Booth’s rhetorical analysis to the artifact of the White Rose Movement’s leaflets from June 1942 to February 22, 1943, this study will help in understanding the rhetorical agents’ roles within the rhetorical situation and how the agents helped shaped the rhetorical context within the German culture. The English translations of these leaflets were gathered from the Center for White Rose Studies. Such artifacts were evaluated according to the historical exigence, the rhetors, the constraints, and the influence on the audience of that time.

Results of the Study

Exigence

Fundamentally in rhetoric, exigence is considered to be an issue or situation that can be changed by discourse; however, depending on who one chooses to believe – Bitzer, Vatz, or Consigny – the very role exigence plays in a rhetorical situation differs. Where Bitzer believed that exigence dictates the rhetorical situation by prompting rhetors to write or speak, Vatz, on the other hand, asserted that rhetors dictate the rhetorical situation by deciding what issues to address. In a combination of both perspectives, Consigny claimed the two agencies have an equal share in creating the rhetorical situation. Despite the variations of the models presented by Bitzer, Vatz, and Consigny, Bitzer’s model will be used to analyze the leaflets. Therefore,
exigency will be redefined as a direct and intense issue that prompts a rhetor to decide what side of the issue to present to their audience.

That said, two varying dimensions were considered in discussing the exigence of the rhetorical situation: the political exigence and the exigence presented within the pages of the leaflets. The existence of the political exigency was what originally prompted the White Rose core members to write the leaflets. Further, the political exigence gives a general understanding to the rise of Hitler and the life the German people lived under his rule. The exigencies in the leaflets, on the other hand, discussed the umbrella exigency of oppression in Nazi Germany with a specific theme of apathy towards basic human dignity. To grasp the exigency the core authors proposed in the leaflets, one must comprehend the political exigence that initially led to more exigencies the White Rose members noticed.

**Political Exigence.** The Austrian-born German politician Adolf Hitler quickly climbed the political ladder to become the dictator of Nazi Germany in the early-20th century. Even though he was born and mainly raised in Austria, Hitler adopted German nationalism ideology when he was a child and began to express his loyalty to Germany. According to Manheim (1998), who translated Hitler’s book, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler’s anti-Semitic beliefs originated during his time in Vienna, Austria, where he was exposed to the city’s prejudice and racism against the Jewish people. His conviction of “standing guard against the Jew” in order to defend “the handiwork of the Lord” was the foundation that led to his many acts upon the Jewish people (as cited in Manheim, 1998, pg. 59).

Hitler was not only determined to eliminate the Jewish people, but he was also adamant on becoming a symbol of hope, or a Savior, to the German people, and he did this by controlling the Nazi Party. Before forming the Nazi Party, Hitler was a member of the German Workers’
Party, which discussed ideas of nationalism and racism against the Jews (Shirer, 2011). In fact, Shirer (2011) claimed that the German Workers’ Party was the predecessor to the Nazi Party. During 1933-1945, Germany became a fascist totalitarian state, and the Nazi Party controlled every aspect of German life (Shirer, 2011).

Antisemitism and racism were central themes of the regime, especially where Hitler convinced the non-Jewish German population that they were the purest Aryan race (the “master” race) (Shirer, 2011). Influenced by Hitler, this ideology became oppressive towards the Jews and anyone else who opposed his rule such as churches, liberals, and socialists to name a few; simply, anyone who opposed Hitler was either killed or imprisoned at one of the concentration camps that were littered across Germany. Even though the German economy was booming and people’s faiths were being restored under Hitler, the entire German population was still regulated by the Nazi Party. The Nazis controlled the media, the arts, and, most importantly, the education; children were taught racial biology (“scientific racism”), population policies, and even prepared for military services (Shirer, 2011). The younger generation, who was fascinated with National Socialism, was required to join Hitler Youth Groups that prepared them for war.

The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were popular among German boys and girls during the Third Reich. According to Dearn (2006), Heck (1979, 1985), and Koch (1975), the first Hitler Youth group was established in 1926, and by 1933 both groups’ membership grew to over 100,000. After Hitler came into full power, the groups expanded to 4 million members. Children found themselves engrossed with the two groups’ propaganda messages, especially since the “messages emphasized that the Party was a movement of youth: dynamic, resilient, forward-looking, and hopeful (USHMM, 2017). Children from ages 10 to 18, and who were believed to be of pure Aryan descent, were required to become members. Those who resisted
going, or parents who refused to allow their children to join, were sent to prison (Heck, 1979).
With the start of these youth groups, Hitler sought to rid Germany of other groups and organizations not affiliated with the Nazi Party, and he did so with the intention of keeping the younger generation heavily involved in the Hitler Youth (Dearn, 2006).

The reason for creating these groups was because Hitler believed that Germany’s future started with its children. Boys were taught military skills, and girls were taught to become good mothers who would look after their family. Physical activities were seen as a more important skill to have than expanding one’s knowledge through books: “The school curriculum had to make more time available for physical exercise on the grounds that there was no point in loading young minds with an excess weight of knowledge of which only a fraction would be retained anyway” (Koch, 1975, p. 163). In essence, the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls strived to “shape the beliefs, thinking and actions of German youth” in order to “be willing to die for Führer and the Fatherland” (USHMM, 2017). Therefore, as Hitler and the Nazi Party took full hold of Germany as it sought to eliminate all Jews and other minorities, the non-Jewish German population became oppressed (again, not to the extent of the Holocaust) by the totalitarian government. Such governmental oppression over the German people is what started the White Rose Movement’s act to resist.

**Leaflet-Driven Exigency.** The initial exigencies that existed during the Third Reich were what propelled the core authors of the White Rose Movement to pen the leaflets in an act of resistance. Through a Bitzeran lens, the assumption of exigence in a rhetorical situation influencing the rhetor and audience is accurate. That said, all the leaflets, starting from Leaflet I written by Hans, began with the discussion of oppression and what oppression was doing to human dignity as a whole. In fact, Leaflet I set the tone and purpose for the other leaflets, which
was to bring awareness of the severity of the issue and to persuade its audience to act against the Nazi Party. Since the introduction of Leaflet I, the authors explored three reoccurring motifs of exigence which are oppression, apathy, and corruption of the Nazi Party.

As the first exigence, oppression existed beyond the Jews and other minorities; oppression was experienced, though to a lesser degree, by Germans as well. Essentially, the Germans’ basic right to free will was suppressed by an authoritarian government, and in turn, Germans consented and complied with Hitler’s dictatorship. For example, Hitler and the entire Nazi Party became more controlling over the Germans’ education and media, just to name a few, and this sense of consent led the Movement to take notice: “Nothing is more shameful to a civilized nation than to allow itself to be “governed” by an irresponsible clique of sovereigns who have given themselves over to dark urges – and that without resisting” (Leaflet I). Still, why did the people consent to begin with? Since adherence was something Hitler wanted from the German people, he gained their loyalty and devotion by rectifying the unemployment issue and leading Germany to become a powerful country by eliminating certain minorities who he felt were at fault for Germany’s economic depression – and he did so through “coercion and terror” (Gellately, 2001, pg. 2). The minority groups he targeted (i.e., Jews, Gypsies, etc.) were met with little sympathy from the rest of the German population (Gellately, 2001); therefore, the majority of Germans consented to be oppressed by Hitler. Furthermore, the consent of the government to deprive the people of their free will was what alarmed the White Rose Movement. Indeed, the reoccurring oppression motif of free will in all six leaflets reminded the German audience of their inalienable rights. But what is free will and why is it important? For years, philosophers have debated on what constituted free will; however, the scope of free will “depends on one’s view of what free will is” (Timpe, n.d., para. 7). Timpe (n.d.) argued the difference between
freedom of will and freedom of action, and noted the importance of free will leading to the performance of free action. According to the author, free will acts as a requirement for “moral responsibility,” which is something the White Rose Movement argued for as well (Timpe, n.d.). Indeed, the Movement felt that the oppression of free will, will ultimately become detrimental to the development of a community. The other side of oppression, which is the consent of being oppressed, is seen in Leaflet III: “Why do you permit this autocrat to rob you of one sphere of your rights after another, little by little, both overtly and in secret?” (Leaflet III). Again, using the term “rights” reminded the German readers of what their government was doing to the German people. To gain a better grasp of the oppressive nature surrounding the Germans, Kurt penned this in Leaflet VI:

We have grown up in a nation where every open expression of opinion is callously bludgeoned. Hitler Youth, the SA and SS have tried to conform, revolutionize, and anesthetize us in the most fruitful years of our educational lives. The despicable methodology was called “ideological education”; it attempted to suffocate budding independent thought and values in a fog of empty phrases. (Leaflet VI)

When it became mandatory for all German children to attend a Hitler Youth Group in 1939, boys and girls were discouraged from having free thought and were forced to comply to the National Socialism ideology. It is the overall exigence of oppression (fighting against and consenting to) that activated the uprising of the White Rose Movement and their actions to encourage the Germans to fight for the “Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, [and] the protection of the individual citizen from the caprice of criminal, violent States…” (Leaflet V). Persuading the Germans to resist the Nazi government was, however, met with resistance in the form of apathy.

The second exigence, apathy, is just as concerning as oppression. Historians, including those from the United States Holocaust Museum (USHMM), labeled the apathetic Germans as “Bystanders” (USHMM, 2017). According to the USHMM (2017), there were two types of
bystanders: external/international bystanders and internal bystanders. The external/international bystanders involved anyone from Allied nations to “religious institutions and Jewish organizations.” Internal bystanders, on the other hand, were Germans who were passive and indifferent when witnessing the persecution of the Jews. USHMM asserted a difference between passivity and indifference: ““passive” implies “inaction”” while ““indifferent” is defined as “having a lack of interest in or concern about something: apathetic.”” The Germans could have been passive because they either feared for their own safety or some supported the Nazi ideology and their treatment of the Jews. As for Germans being indifferent, perhaps one reason was their preoccupation with their own daily economic hardships that limited their care about the hardships of other people. Regardless of such reasons, though, the White Rose Movement became disgusted by the inactive and apathetic nature of the people:

It is his apathetic conduct that gives these sinister people the possibility to carry out their deeds. He tolerates this “government” that has incurred such infinite guilt. Yes, he is even guilty himself that this government come could [sic] into existence! (Leaflet II)

All throughout the leaflets, the White Rose Movement never wasted an opportunity to shine light on this exigence. It is very possible that by doing so, the Movement hoped to inspire the audience to act against the government. What the Movement probably did not anticipate, though, was the level of corruption that existed in most Germans.

The third exigence, corruption, was an obvious issue within Nazi Germany. During the transportation of Jews to ghettos or concentration camps, German politicians who affiliated themselves with Hitler confiscated property taken away from the Jews. (Bauer, 2002; USHMM, 2017). Moreover, other forms of corruption were seen at the hands of Heinrich Himmler, several industrialists, the judiciary, and Hitler. As a leading member of the Nazi Party, Himmler, was considered as the architect behind the death camps; Himmler’s goal was to invent ways to
exterminate large populations. Industrialists, such as automobile industries, received Jewish slave labor after supporting the Nazi Party. Nazi judges carried out discriminatory laws such as annulment of marriages based on race and sterilizing men and women who were deemed unfit by the Nazis, just to name a few (Bauer, 2002). Hitler, of course, was the mastermind behind the whole vision of a “new” Germany. Furthermore, corruption in Nazi Germany existed beyond Himmler, industrialists, judiciary, and Hitler. According to USHMM (2017), professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and civil servants, were also responsible for the Holocaust. In fact, without these individuals, the Holocaust “could not have happened without them” (USHMM, 2017). These forms of corruption also did not go unnoticed by the White Rose Movement who expressed it in these two leaflets:

If the German nation is so corrupt and decadent in its innermost being that it is willing to surrender the greatest possession a man can own, a possession that elevates mankind above all other creatures, namely free will – if it is willing to surrender this without so much as raising a hand, rashly trusting a questionable lawful order of history; if it surrenders the freedom of mankind to intrude upon the wheel of history and subjugate it to his own rational decision; if Germans are so devoid of individuality that they have become an unthinking and cowardly mob – then, yes then they deserve their destruction (Leaflet I)

And what is the German nation doing? It sees nothing, it hears nothing. It is blindly following its seducers to destruction. Victory at any price, that is what they have written on their flags. I will fight to the last man, says Hitler, but yet the war is already lost. (Leaflet V)

From the start of the White Rose Movement’s leaflets, the authors had recognized the corruption that took hold of Germany. They hoped that by bringing awareness of malfeasance, the German people will gain enough courage to rise up against Hitler. The amount of corruption that riddled the German government since the upsurge of the Nazi Party and the rise of Hitler, however, was, once again, met with passivity and apathy. It seemed that as long as people were satisfied with the economic growth of Germany, people were willing to look the other way. Still, there were
German citizens who, just like the core authors of the White Rose Movement, condemned the actions of the Nazi Party. The following section will detail just who these authors were and what led to their decision to resist.

**The Rhetors**

**Hans Scholl.** Hans Fritz Scholl, the second of six children, was born on September 22, 1918 in Ingersheim to liberal-minded parents, Robert and Magdalena Scholl. His father, Robert, was highly involved in politics and was a mayor of three towns: Ingersheim (1917 – 1920), Forchtenberg (1920-1930), and Ulm (1945-1948). When Robert was not engaging in political discourse, he invested most of his time to his six children, Inge Alcher-Scholl (1917-1998), Hans Scholl (1918-1943), Elisabeth Scholl Hartnagel (1920-), Sophia Magdalena Scholl (1921-1943), Werner Scholl (1922-1944), and Thilde Scholl (1925-1926). Only five of the Scholl siblings were raised by Robert’s political and Lutheran views. In fact, as with his siblings, Hans was taught and encouraged by his father to express ideas, form differing opinions, and to think for himself. Furthermore, Hans learned the values of education and the importance of freedom of speech. However, after the family moved to Ulm in 1932, he distanced himself from his father’s teachings as he and his siblings found themselves being swept away with Hitler’s promises of a united Germany with a powerful community.

Even though Hans was urged to question National Socialism by his father, he and the rest of the Scholl siblings were allowed to make their own choices. According to Hans’ sister, Elisabeth, the Scholl children did not heed their father’s advice because they felt he did not understand what Adolf Hitler wanted for Germany. Hitler was successful in affecting the young generation’s perception of reality, and soon Inge, Hans, Elisabeth, Sophie, and Werner became active and enthused participants in the Hitler Youth Groups in 1933, six years before it became
mandatory for all German children to join the Youth Groups (Scholl, 1983). Hans believed in a better Germany, and therefore worked hard to rise up in the ranks of the Youth Group. However, National Socialism quickly became nothing more than an illusion when Hans, as a flag bearer, attended the Nuremberg Rally in 1936, which was an annual rally of the Nazi Party. Scholl (1983) pointed out that the rally created a change within Hans:

> His joy was great. But when he returned, we could not believe our eyes. He looked tired and showed signs of a great disappointment. We did not expect any explanation from him, but gradually we found out that the image and model of the Hitler Youth which had been impressed upon him there was totally different from his own ideal. (p. 8)

Once the cloak was removed, Hans was able to see the Hitler regime for what it was: an act to exterminate all minorities. Shortly following his disappointment, he began to question National Socialism and rebel against it.

Hans left the Hitler Youth Group in 1936 and joined the German Youth Movement. This Movement allowed Hans the freedom to express his own beliefs and idealisms, and read books that were banned by the Nazi Party, e.g., books written by Jewish authors. During the time of the Hitler regime, groups and organizations that differed from the Hitler Youth Groups were outlawed. Members of such organizations were usually arrested and jailed. In 1937, while a member of the German Youth, Hans was also involved in the National Labor Service which all German youth were mandated to join once they reached 19 years of age. The National Labor Service kept young people off the streets and employed them in government agencies where they were further indoctrinated in the National Socialist views. As per the German law of that time, youths who spent six months in the National Labor Service were then drafted into the German Army. Months after Hans was accepted into the cavalry unit, he was arrested by the Gestapo on
suspicion of his involvement in the German Youth Movement. Sophie, Inge, and Werner were also arrested. Sophie was released the same day she was arrested, and Inge and Werner were released after spending a week in confinement, but Hans was detained longer in the hopes of him revealing other members of the German Youth Movement until his commanding officer vouched for his innocence. Still, this did not deter him, and soon he began his studies in medicine at the University of Munich where he met other medical students who shared the same beliefs about National Socialism.

In 1940, Hans served in the medical corps when the German Army invaded France and met what would be future members of the White Rose Movement: Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf (Scholl, 1983). Even though they did not fight in the war, they did witness the devastating aftermath of the war as they tended to soldiers’ wounds. Between assisting in operations and limb amputations, Hans and his friends continued to question the morality of the Nazi Party. When Hans returned to Munich, Alexander Schmorell introduced him to another future-White Rose member, Christoph Probst. Shortly, Hans decided to form a group similar to the German Youth Movement where he and his like-minded friends could freely talk poetry, literature, and politics without fear of repercussion from the Nazi Party. This group eventually developed into the White Rose Movement which Sophie and Professor Kurt Huber later joined.

Sophie Scholl. Born on May 9, 1921, Sophia Magdalena Scholl was the fourth of six children. She was considered by numerous biographers to have a carefree childhood under a Lutheran household around the 1930s. As with her siblings, Inge, Hans, Elisabeth, and Werner, Robert, their father, taught his children to question the rationality of the Nazi Party. According to Scholl (1983), Sophie and her siblings did not pay much attention to their father’s warnings of Hitler and were soon enthralled with the vision of a better Germany. In fact, the Scholl siblings
felt that Hitler “would help this fatherland to achieve greatness, fortune, and prosperity. He would see to it that everyone had work and bread. He would not rest until every German was independent, free, and happy in his fatherland” (Scholl, 1983, p. 9). Furthermore, Scholl (1983) also admitted that she and her siblings:

…found this good, and we were willing to do all we could to contribute to the common effort. But there was something else that drew us with mysterious power and swept us along: the closed ranks of marching youth with banners waving, eyes fixed straight ahead, keeping time to drumbeat and song.... We entered into it with body and soul, and we could not understand why our father did not approve, why he was not happy and proud. On the contrary, he was quite displeased with us. (p. 9)

Inevitably, it is for this reason that Sophie and her sisters joined the Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls) when she was 12 years old, and she quickly became a squad leader. Her enthusiasm for the Hitler regime was short lived, however, when Hans returned from the Nuremberg Rally of 1936. Her brother’s demeanor was uncharacteristic and it generated great worry among the siblings. His heightened doubt of the Third Reich evoked a similar apprehension and qualm that the rest of the Scholl children felt, and it caused Sophie to notice how exclusive the Nazi Party was.

Sophie’s perspective of Hitler further altered when her deep Christian beliefs did not coincide with National Socialism, and when she was not allowed to read poems by Heinrich Heine who was her favorite Jewish writer. Her love of literature, philosophy, theology, music, and art were suddenly endangered by the Nazi Propaganda Ministry, led by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, which banned newspapers, books, art, music, movies, and radio whose messages did not coincide with the Nazi beliefs. The Nazi education she received in her youth also made her question the
values of National Socialism. She took notice of how educators who defied the Nazi belief were fired, and those who stayed on to teach had to convince their superiors that they were true Nazis: “Teachers had to pretend to be Nazis in order to remain in their posts, and most of the men teachers had families which depended on them” (Evans, 2005, p. 266). Aside from that, educators who fully believed in National Socialism often encouraged their students to inform on their parents – something Sophie was adamantly against. Moreover, it was the rigid system of National Socialism that made her detest it: “Her zest gradually diminished as it became more and more clear that the BDM [League of German Girls], like all other National Socialist programs, was designed for conformity rather than liberation” (Hanser, 1979, p. 44). Eventually, her repulsion of Hitler’s regime intensified when Hans was arrested on suspicion of his involvement in the German Youth Movement.

Because the Gestapo arrested Hans for participating in an anti-Nazi organization, Hans’ siblings (Sophie, Inge, Elisabeth, and Werner) were also arrested; however, only Sophie was released the same day since “she seemed too young and girlish to be a menace to the state” (Hanser, 1979, p. 69). After her initial arrest, Sophie became a difficult student at her local secondary school by openly expressing her anti-Nazi views to her teachers. Her actions quickly ceased when the principal of the school threatened to forbid her from taking university entrance exams.

In 1940, Sophie successfully graduated from secondary school and became a kindergarten teacher at the Frobel Institute in Ulm in the hopes of fulfilling the requirements to be admitted to the University of Munich. Unfortunately, she found out that, as per the National Socialist policy, she must serve six months of auxiliary war service at the National Labor Service as a nursery teacher in order to take the entrance exams and be admitted at the University.
Therefore, serving six months at the National Labor Service functioned as a prerequisite to any German university. During her time at the National Labor Service, Sophie continued to criticize the Hitler regime despite the danger. Even though she confessed her condemnation of Hitler to her family, close friends, and her fiancé, Fritz Hartnagel, her actions were alarming nonetheless. According to Scholl (1983), those who criticized Hitler were risking their lives:

We were living in a society where despotism, hate, and lies had become the normal state of affairs. Every day that you were not in jail was like a gift. No one was safe from arrest for the slightest unguarded remark, and some disappeared forever for no better reason...Hidden ears seemed to be listening to everything that was being spoken in Germany. The terror was at your elbow wherever you went. (as cited in Hanser, 1979, p. 92)

Still, the threat of persecution itself did not intimidate or dissuade Sophie from her dream of continuing her education at the University of Munich. In 1941, she passed her entrance exams.

Sophie’s desire of attending the University finally transpired in May 1942 where she double-majored in biology and philosophy and found herself greatly influenced by her philosophy professor, Kurt Huber. She was specifically intrigued with Huber’s lectures on German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s argument that the ability to reason – and not the ability to obey any order of authority – is the basis of morality. Learning about Kant opened her viewpoint more about the oppressive nature of National Socialism. However, Sophie, as with some other German citizens, did not know the full extent of Hitler’s intention with the Jews until she found out the truth from Fritz Hartnagel. While serving in the German Army at the Battle of Stalingrad, Sophie’s fiancé, Hartnagel, witnessed the shooting of Jews by his comrades. He revealed his horrifying findings to Sophie, which made her more hostile toward the Nazi Party. By this time, Sophie
already had become acquainted with Hans’ friends: Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Christoph Probst. Hans originally did not want his sister involved in the White Rose Movement for fear of his sister’s safety, and he tried to keep it from her; but once Sophie found out about the Movement, she joined it.

**Alexander Schmorell.** Alexander Schmorell was born on September 16, 1917 in Orenburg, Russia. His father, Hugo Schmorell, was a German doctor who was raised in Russia and his Russian-born mother, Natalia Petrovna Vvedenskaya, was the daughter of a Russian Orthodox priest. Even though Hugo was Lutheran, he allowed his son to be baptized in a Russian Orthodox Church (Hanser, 1979). Soon after Natalia died of typhus during the Russian Civil War, Hugo hired a Russian nanny named Feodosiya Lapschina. Lapschina not only took care of Alexander, but also took the boy to church. Hugo later remarried in 1920, and the entire family, including the nanny, left Russia for Munich, Germany in 1921 to escape the Bolsheviks.

Growing up in Germany proved somewhat difficult for Alexander because of his familial background. Under the Schmorell household, Russian was the dominant language since Lapschina, their nanny, did not speak German. This essentially made him and his younger halfsiblings bilingual in Russian and German. Aside from retaining their first language, Alexander was also taught to love everything about the Russian culture – regardless of how much trouble he got for it in school.

As a student in Germany, his grades and academic standing suffered for protesting against being taught to despise Russia. His stepmother had the sense to have him change high schools, and it was at his new school where he became fast friends with Christoph Probst. While he was at school, he was also encouraged by his father and stepmother to attend Orthodox religion classes in Munich. Hence, it was Alexander’s familial and religious teachings that kept
him from adopting the Nazi mindset. It must be noted that, according to Orthodox Christian websites (e.g., In Communion Website of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship and Orthodox Wiki), Alexander Schmorell did not join any Hitler Youth groups. However, Hanser (1979) referenced that Alexander did join the Hitler Youth group, although the reason for doing so was never mentioned. If he did, then unlike the Scholl siblings, Alexander was never enthused with the “marching and singing and saluting” and “found the whole experience repellent” (Hanser, 1979, p. 112). Again, if Alexander did join the Hitler Youth, then it could be safe to conclude that he made sure not to reveal his genuine disposition about the Nazi Party while he was in the Hitler Youth.

In any case, after Schmorell served in the National Labor Service, he joined the German Army where he worked in the horse-artillery unit. Alexander originally wanted to become a sculptor, but decided to become a doctor to please his father. He began studying medicine at the University of Munich in 1939 along with Christoph Probst, but in 1942, they were not assigned to the same medical corps. At any rate, Schmorell became friends with Hans Scholl and Willi Graf. Upon returning from Munich, Alexander was a member of Hans’ close-knit group of friends, which included Sophie Scholl, who could talk candidly about poetry, literature, or politics. This group later became the White Rose Movement. He also took it upon himself to introduce Hans to Christoph Probst.

**Willi Graf.** Wilhelm Joseph Graf, born on January 2, 1918 in Kuchenheim, Germany, was possibly the most religious member of the White Rose Movement. His father was a wine wholesaler and, after the family moved to Saarbrücken, a manager of Johannishof, which was one of the largest banquet halls in Saarbrücken. His mother was very devoted to her children. Graf once stated that, “The relationship with my mother was extremely affectionate. She did
everything for her children. Her concern for her family was her whole life” (as cited in Hanser, 1979, p. 141). Both parents were strict about raising their children as Roman Catholics, and at eleven years old, Willi joined the Bund Neudeutschland (New Germany), a Catholic youth movement.

The Bund Neudeutschland was later banned when Hitler came into power in 1933. In 1934, Willi became a member of another Catholic youth movement, the Grauer Orden ("Grey Order") (Hanser, 1979). This movement spread anti-Nazi rhetoric, and in turn reaffirmed his initial assumption of the perilous and totalitarian government. Because Graf was absolute in his beliefs, he did not join any Hitler Youth Groups. In fact, Hanser (1979) mentioned that Willi “…rebelled at being dragooned into an organization for which he had no sympathy. He regarded the Nazi insistence on lockstep conformity as an affront to his self-respect” (p. 140). In 1938 when Hitler banned any organization that is not affiliated with the Nazi idealism, Willi Graf, along with eighteen leading members, was arrested and spent three months in custody. Graf was eventually released and allowed to work in the German Labor Service.

After spending six months working for the government, Willi became a medical student at the University of Bonn. In 1940, he was conscripted to the German Army as a member of the medical corps where he met Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell. Throughout his deployment in the medical corps from 1940 to 1942, he witnessed the horrifying side of the Hitler regime such as the Warsaw ghetto in Poland and the deplorable treatment of Russian civilians. When his tour ended, he decided to continue his medical training at the University of Munich, and soon became affiliated with Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst. In all terms and purposes, it seemed as though Willi was meant to be a part of the White Rose Movement, especially since Hanser (1979) described his character as one whose “allegiance could not be coerced, but when it was
freely given it endured” (p. 140). Indeed, it appeared that Hans noticed it as well when he confided to Alexander that “[Willi’s] one of us” (as cited in Hanser, 1979, p. 140).

**Christoph Probst.** Christoph Hermann Probst was born on November 6, 1919 in Murnau am Staffelsee, Germany to Hermann and Katharina Probst. Hermann Probst, Christoph’s father, was a highly successful “scholar in oriental religions” who specialized in the study of Sanskrit, a sacred, philosophical, and literary language of Greater India (Hanser, 1979, p. 117). Hermann believed in religious freedom, and it is this premise that he passed down to both his children: Angelika and Christoph. The two Probst children grew up under their father’s care even in the midst of their parents’ divorce.

When the Nazis came into power, Christoph became very critical of the Nazis’ anti-Semitic views; however, avoiding full participation in the Hitler Youth was almost impossible. Regardless of how much Christoph detested the Hitler regime, he, nonetheless, enrolled in the Hitler Youth for academic advancement only. When he was able to remove himself from the Hitler Youth, he and his older sister were sent to liberal boarding schools that were not conducive to Nazi ideals. It was at a high school in Munich where he befriended Alexander Schmorell. Both Probst and Schmorell had similar experiences, i.e., the death of their respective mothers and their distaste for joining the Hitler Youth, and their friendship deepened when Christoph’s father unexpectedly committed suicide when he was 17 years old.

After graduating high school, both Christoph Probst and Alexander Schmorell worked in the National Labor Service, served in the German Army, and began their medical studies at the University of Munich. In 1940, he married Herta Dohrn, and had three children: Michael Probst, Vincent Probst, and Katharina Probst. His friendship with Alexander was incredibly profound to a point that Alexander was best man at Christoph’s wedding, as well as a godfather to
Christoph’s second son, Vincent. It was during this time that Alexander introduced Christoph to Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, and Willi Graf. Soon enough, the White Rose Movement was formed; however, even though Christoph was considered an official member, he was unable to have an active role in the organization because he was the only member who had a family (wife and children) to protect.

**Kurt Huber.** Born on October 24, 1893 to German parents, Kurt lived in Chur, Switzerland until his parents moved to Stuttgart, Germany four years later. Both his parents were scholars and talented musicians, and he naturally followed in their footsteps. Following the death of his father, his mother moved Kurt and his siblings to Munich, Germany where he started his schooling. As a young child, he suffered from diphtheria, an infection of the nose and throat, and required surgery. Complications from the infection and surgery left him with neurological problems that affected his walking and other motor skills: “the after-effects of the illness and the traumatic treatment had never left him... his hands always trembled... except when he played piano; then he was able to lose himself in the concentration required at the keyboard” (Sherratt, 2013, p. 210). Indeed, he showed great aptitude for music and he did not allow his disability to deter him from pursuing his interest in music.

Not much is revealed about his education during his adolescent years, but he did attend the University of Munich where he studied musicology, psychology, and philosophy. One must be made aware of the discrepancy of information regarding his doctorate. Multiple book and website sources have claimed that Kurt earned his doctorate in either 1917 or 1926. In addition, numerous sources did not clearly reveal what he earned his doctoral degree in. However, because Hanser (1979) mentioned that Kurt attempted to get a job as a psychology professor, one can possibly assume that Huber obtained his doctoral degree in psychology. Regardless of this
conceivable inconsistency of what and when he received his doctorates, all sources did state that he became an associate professor at the University of Munich around the 1920s.

In 1929, Kurt married Clara Schlickenrieder, and had two children over the next few years: Birgit and Wolf. Huber’s attempt at becoming a psychology professor to support his family never came to fruition because the Nazis did not consider him part of the master race since he had a neurological disability. Instead, he continued teaching at the University of Munich. As a philosophy professor, he lectured on philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Hegel, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte to name a few. Aside from teaching philosophy, he was responsible for reviving an interest in German folk music: “His was a mind that immersed itself with scholarly zest in the music of peasants and mountain dwellers as well as in the philosophical profundities of Hegel, Schelling, and Fichte” (Hanser, 1979, p. 155). After successfully organizing numerous folk music festivals, recording folk music, and engaging discussion about folk music, he was given a temporary position as a musicologist in Berlin. However, because the position was temporary, he chose not to accept it and instead decided to become a professor of folk music. During the years at the University of Munich, he continued to lecture on both philosophy and musicology.

As Hitler became more powerful and influential throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, Kurt developed an increasing sense of condemnation for him. Sherratt (2013) described Huber’s political views as “a nationalist conservative, believing in the sanctity of tradition and the importance of the nation” (p. 214). He deeply criticized Hitler for leading “a mass movement of revolutionaries” that discriminated against certain individuals (Dumbach & Newborn, 1986, p. 87). In fact, he solely believed in Kant’s philosophical views where each individual has the freedom to question and reason authority, something Sophie Scholl believed as well. Huber met
Scholl while she was in his class as a student in biology and philosophy. Eventually, after meeting Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Christoph Probst, he started joining them in their countless discussions of the Hitler regime. By the time Kurt discovered that Hans, Sophie, Alexander, Willi, and Christoph were members of the White Rose Movement, four of the leaflets were already circulating around Germany. He was asked to join the White Rose Movement, but declined their invitation. He did not feel that the leaflets were an ideal tool to affect the German people’s mindsets, and he was concerned about the danger if one was caught with a leaflet. However, he changed his mind after observing a speech made by Gauleiter of Bavaria, Paul Giesler, at the University of Munich. In January 13, 1943, Giesler, a member of the Nazi Party, addressed the thousands of students that universities should be discouraged from producing young intellectuals whose belief and character do not coincide with Nazism. Moreover, Giesler even stated that a woman’s role should be at home with her husband and family and not at a university. This did not sit well with the female students in attendance, and soon protests from the students erupted. In fact, this instance propelled Kurt to pen Leaflet VI to respond to the actions of the students. Essentially, the event after Giesler’s speech was what led Kurt, Hans, Sophie, Alexander, Willi, and Christoph to trust in the power of their message, as well as to trust the power of an audience. But who exactly was their audience?

**Audience**

Since the Nazi Party had complete control over the media, there was no safe approach for the leaflets’ authors to disseminate any form of dissent to their audience without the prospect of persecution. As emphasized by Hanser (1979), the White Rose’s “Aryan” German audience also faced the possibility of persecution, especially since responsible German citizens were required to report any suspected wrongdoing which includes reading a leaflet:
Not reporting [a leaflet] would be almost as grave a crime as originating it. Not reporting it would be taken to mean that the recipient approved of it, thus exposing himself as an enemy of the state. Arrest and prosecution would follow, promptly and inevitably. (13)

The question of whether anyone was actually punished for merely reading a leaflet still remains to be answered. Still, the concept of persecution did not deter the movement from producing the six leaflets for their audience to read during June 1942 and February 1943. Further, considering that audience is an essential component in any rhetorical situation as they have the ultimate power to help create social change, it is prudent to keep in mind the difference between a speaker’s audience and a writer’s audience. Ong (1975) made this distinction of audiences based on his belief that the universal term of “audience” is unfitting relating to reading and writing. Where a speaker’s primary audience is seen as a collective unit being exposed to information at the same time, a reader is more individualistic. Information is processed and interpreted individually depending on a reader’s own time and understanding of the material. Therefore, the “Aryan” Germans who read the leaflets did so at a discreet time and place of their own choosing, even though the leaflets were scattered throughout Munich.

The leaflets were disseminated at the University of Munich, pubs, bus stops, and phone booths in varying quantities by different members of the White Rose. At the time, the Movement’s intended readers were presumably adult males and females who were public servants, doctors, educators, and university students alike. However, one can make the argument that the intended audience is only adult males considering the dominant masculine presence exhibited in all six leaflets:

Therefore in this last hour every individual must arm himself as best he can, aware of his responsibility as a member of the Christian and western civilization. He must work against the hostage of humanity, against fascism and all similar systems of an absolute State. (Leaflet I)
This androcentric point of view clearly expresses the culture and history of the early 20th century where men were expected to have better education and employment status than women. In addition, the mentioning of “…a member of the Christian…” may also play a role into who the intended audience was. Since most Bibles were translated by men, androcentric views were kept. This means the teachings of the Bible were written from a male perspective. That said, the androcentric view seen all throughout the leaflets leads me to believe that they were most likely written by the male writers of the White Rose leaflets. It must be noted that even though some historians believed that Sophie Scholl participated in the actual composition of the leaflets, other historians believed she had no role in writing the leaflets and her only significant role was that of secretly gathering papers, envelopes, and stamps (in small quantities since larger quantities could alert the Gestapo). Regardless of this uncertainty of historical facts surrounding Sophie’s role in the leaflets, the androcentric viewpoint in the leaflets is intriguing nonetheless. At any rate, it was vital for the Movement to reach readers who shared the same liberal-minded sentiments as the members. The Movement’s secondary readers were those who: 1) were not employed in any of the professions listed above; 2) read the leaflets after the Allies made further copies and dropped them all over Germany; and 3) read the leaflets well after WWII. In fact, some of these secondary readers could also include children.

Regardless of primary and secondary readers and regardless of which of the five White Rose authors wrote what leaflets, all readers share an interactive relationship with the authors. In such an author-reader relationship, readers would often think the authors are speaking directly to them even though it is not entirely so. In fact, the author-reader relationship has existed back to the classic rhetoric of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, and has expanded to current studies of the relationship between the author and readers (Phares, 2002). Phares (2002) referred to Olson’s
(1994) work to note “…that literary devices such as figures of speech, sarcasm, irony, understatement, and hyperbole depend upon the reader’s ability to consider authorial intent, stance, voice, and tone” (p. 6). Hence, it is the author’s responsibility to create the content and anticipate their reader’s response. With regards to the White Rose, the Movement’s members hoped their readers would perceive and interpret their message. To do so, the core members of the White Rose Movement chose to write mainly in first person and second person pronouns.

The use of first person pronouns, such as “I,” “our,” and “we,” can establish a sense of casualness and informality with their writing. Indeed, by using the terms “us,” “our,” and “we” throughout the leaflets, the authors managed to connect and relate with their audience on a personal level. This form of writing started with Hans:

Who among us can imagine the degree of shame that will come upon us and upon our children when the veil falls from our faces and the awful crimes that infinitely exceed any human measure are exposed to the light of day? (Leaflet I)

Even though “us” and “our” may seem vague and might generate questions as to why the authors are generally speaking for the German people, “us” and “our” is unifying the author with its readers. Creating a sense of unification between the author and his readers while discussing the idea of “shame” being placed on Germans allowed Hans to start on his persuasive rhetoric to take action against Hitler:

Offer passive resistance – resistance, wherever you may be, prevent the continuation of this atheistic war machine before it is too late, before the last of our cities lie in ruins like Cologne, and before the last of the youth of our people have been bled to death by the hubris of a subhuman. (Leaflet I)

Using imperative verbs, such as “offer,” in a sentence created the appearance of the author commanding his readers to conduct a certain action. Furthermore, the author’s rhetorical technique of diction accompanied with the literary device of flashforward created an emotional connection between the audience and text. Essentially, Hans’ use of figurative language to depict
specific events, such as the destruction of Cologne, was strategically done to encourage his readers to passively resist the Nazi government. Therefore, the call for the entire non-Jewish German audience to act on passive resistance is seen as the first formal written command from the author.

The pattern of unifying the author and readers is repeated in Leaflet II written by Alexander:

> It is not up to us to pass final judgment regarding the meaning of our history. But if this catastrophe shall be our sure salvation, then it shall be so: We will be cleansed by suffering, we will long for the light from the midst of the blackest night, we will summon our energy and finally help shake off the yoke that oppresses the world. (Leaflet of the White Rose II)

Using first person pronouns can also help to establish the author’s position in their argument. In addition, the use of figurative language in this passage highlights a significant part of the argument. Such a literary device can engage readers while making the author’s argument quite convincing. In this case, Alexander employed literary devices, such as repetition, imperative verbs, and a metaphor, throughout Leaflet II as a way to rile up this audience and prepare them for the resistance in Leaflet III:

> Sabotage in armaments factories and other businesses vital to the war effort. Sabotage in all assemblies, rallies, festivities, organizations that were breathed into life by the National Socialist Party, prevention of the smooth operation of the war machine… Sabotage in all scholarly and intellectual realms that exist for the continuance of the current war… Sabotage at all cultural events that could possibly exalt the “prestige” of fascists among the people. Sabotage in all branches of the fine arts that have the least connection to National Socialism and serve its goals. Sabotage in all areas of literature, all newspapers that are on the payroll of the “government”, and that fight for their ideas, for the dissemination of the brown lie… (Leaflet III)
It is in Leaflet III where Alexander specified what the White Rose Movement meant by passive resistance. Using imperative verbs, such as “Sabotage…” is another instance of a direct command given to the readers by the author in the hopes that the readers might act on it.

The sense of unification between the author and readers is again seen in Leaflets IV and VI; however, Leaflet V is written mostly using second person pronouns with a few first person pronouns. In the following passage composed by Willi and edited by Kurt, the two sets of pronouns can be seen:

Germans! Do you and your children wish to suffer the same fate as the Jews? Do you wish to be measured with the same measure as your seducers? Shall we forever be the most hated and rejected nation in all the world? No! Therefore, separate yourselves from the National Socialist subhumanity! Prove with your deeds that you think differently! A new War of Independence is beginning… (Leaflet V)

As with the other leaflets, the use of first person pronouns in Leaflet V allows the existence of a close and personal relationship between the authors and their readers. This connection with the German audience shifts with the application of second person pronouns, which Willi and Kurt employed to create rhetorical effect. As a literary tool, second person pronouns, such as “you” and “your,” grants the author the ability to speak directly to their intended audience.

The White Rose’s readers’ response to the Movement’s influential leaflets first came to light when Paul Giesler, the Gauleiter of Bavaria, presented his speech at the University of Munich. Now whether students’ protest stemmed directly from the leaflets themselves or the protest stemmed straight from Giesler’s speech still remains to be answered. It is noted by historians, though, that the protest among students that took place during his speech was all the positive feedback the White Rose members needed to continue their work to oppose Hitler. However, even though the actions from some of their intended readers (mainly students) during the protest reassured the White Rose of their purpose, the members’ overall readers felt
otherwise. Soon after the arrests of the Scholl siblings and Christoph Probst, some students from the university protested against them (Hanser, 1979; Scholl 1983). The same set of intended readers the core members wrote the leaflets for and who objected to Giesler’s speech, were the ones who, out of fear of Hitler or loyalty to Germany, revolted against the White Rose Movement. The type of protesting done against the White Rose members is not mentioned in any historical source including in Hanser’s (1979) and Scholl’s (1983) works; however, researchers from the Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team (2007) listed the possibility that university students regarded the Movement as “anti-national” and “continued their studies as usual.” Still, the Movement’s members were suddenly labeled as traitors and defeatists by their readers. Unbeknownst to the members, however, they found a new audience on a nation-wide scale when the Allies managed to acquire Leaflet VI, make copies, and drop them all over Germany in July 1943. To determine why the White Rose Movement did not achieve a desired positive response from their readers, the constraints between the authors (rhetors), audience, and subject/purpose must be examined.

**Constraints**

Constraints, as defined by Bitzer (1968/1992), are “made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (p. 8). Using this definition and Campbell’s (1982) extended discourse into the constraints of the rhetor, audience, and subject/purpose, it is clear to see how the first constraint between the White Rose authors and their readers is shared values and beliefs. As mentioned briefly in the Literature Review section, Campbell argued the two common errors rhetors tend to make with their audience. One error is the assumption of the audience sharing the same values/beliefs as the rhetors, and the second error is the expectation of
the audience to act upon the directions given by the rhetors. In Leaflet I, by stating, “Isn’t it true
that every honest German is ashamed of his government these days?” (Leaflet I), Hans was
literally speaking for the audience; in fact, this was one of the main purposes of the White Rose
Movement: becoming a voice for the German people. The Movement acted out of a sense of
duty for the welfare of humanity by expressing concerns they assumed all “honest Germans” felt.
It is interesting here to look at the word “honest.” The author redefined the term “honest” and
claimed that honest Germans must be ashamed for allowing Hitler to rule them. To Hans, his
interpretation of an “honest German” was one who saw the immorality of Hitler. However, it is
possible that some Germans deemed themselves as “honest” Germans for expressing the love
and devotion of their country despite the actions of Hitler (i.e., Holocaust). Therefore, it is
possible to discern that the author and some readers had similar values, but it was not transferred
to all readers. It appeared as though Hans assumed too much of his readers, and this led to a
disconnect of the values/beliefs constraints between the rhetor and audience.

The same issue of the values/beliefs rhetorical constraint is apparent in all six leaflets.
The White Rose Movement was steadfastly against Hitler and the entire Nazi Party, but only
some, or even few, of their readers felt similarly fervent to denounce Hitler. For example,
Alexander wrote:

But our present State is a dictatorship of Evil. “We’ve known that for a long
time,” I can hear you say, “and it is not necessary for you to remind us of it once
again.” So I ask you: If you are aware of this, why do you not stir yourselves?
Why do you permit this autocrat to rob you of one sphere of your rights after
another, little by little, both overtly and in secret? … Has your spirit been so
devastated by rape that you forget that it is not only your right, but your moral
duty to put an end to this system? If a person cannot even summon the strength to
demand his rights, then there is nothing left for him but destruction. We will have
deserved to be scattered to all corners of the globe, as dust before the wind, if we
do not pull ourselves together in this eleventh hour and finally summon the
courage that we have been lacking till now. Do not hide your cowardice under the
cloak of cleverness! Because every day that you delay, every day that you do not
resist this spawn of hell, your guilt is steadily increasing, like a parabolic curve… (Leaflet III)

In this particular passage, the author used colloquial language to castigate his audience and express the belief of National Socialism being an evil entity, especially considering that the totalitarian government gave the Gestapo “enormous new powers to track down political opponents and those deemed to be ‘race enemies’” (Gellately, 2001, p. 90). Additionally, the author seemed to assume that some, if not all, Germans were well aware of the oppressive state of Nazism. If such Germans were aware of the oppression, but, as Alexander stated, “…permit[ted] this autocrat to rob [them]…of [their] rights” (Leaflet III), then it could be because those Germans were either indifferent/passive about their situation or loyal to Hitler. Simply, some Germans felt that National Socialism presented an ideal society while other Germans felt otherwise. With this in mind, it could be asserted that the author directed his written text to those who already expressed similar sentiments about the Nazi Party.

The second disconnection of constraint between the rhetors and audience is the level of education. Hans, in particular, relied on anecdotes by German poets and philosophers, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), and Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (Novalis) (1772-1801). Alexander used passages from Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu (604 BC-531 BC), or Laozi as he is also known, and Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC). Willi and Kurt did not reference any philosophers in the Leaflets of the White Rose V and VI. The reason why Hans and Alexander referred to these philosophers was most likely because each one presented themselves as freethinkers who spoke against authoritarian governments. For example, Goethe deemed the Jews and Greeks as a tragic people, which is something the White Rose members had noticed about the Jews as well. Another example is Schiller, who often wrote philosophical papers on
ethics. This philosopher addressed two disparate governments, Lycurgus and Solon, that existed during the era of the Greeks. Since Lycurgus was considered an oligarchic government while Solon was deemed a republican form of government, Hans made a direct reference to Schiller’s work to draw connections between Lycurgus and Hitler’s Germany. One last example is Lao-Tzu who preached of limited government and the threat of corruption and political power. The reason why the constraint of education was not fully met is because the White Rose authors hoped to reach readers with the same educational level as the members. Even though the upper and middle classes would most likely know these philosophers, it would still seem illogical to assume all Germans knew of these philosophers, especially taking into consideration that education was controlled by the Nazis. It is possible that a few professors, such as Kurt, rebelled within the sanctuary of their classrooms as they lectured against the political discourse that is National Socialism.

The third and final constraint is one of religion. Because all members of the White Rose Movement were religious, religious terms and proverbs were mentioned in the leaflets. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) (2017), “Almost all Germans [in Nazi Germany] were Christian, belonging either to the Roman Catholic…or the Protestant…churches.” Even though most Germans considered themselves religious, it still did not mean all shared the same religious views as the White Rose Movement’s members. Anti-Semitism was inculcated in Christian ideologies all throughout Europe for hundreds of years. Most notably, Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German priest, preached to his followers that, “Know, Christian, that next to the devil thou hast no enemy more cruel, more venomous and violent than a true Jew” (as cited in Dawidowicz, 1985, p. 23). Indeed, USHMM (2017) claimed that Church leaders often viewed Jewish people as a “threat to the Church hierarchy.” In fact,
some of the Church leaders supported Nazism; however, “With time, anti-Nazi sentiment grew in both Protestant and Catholic church circles, as the Nazi regime exerted greater pressure on them” (USHMM, 2017). Hence, if the White Rose members were to form any connection with their audience, it would be through religion:

The Irrational, that is the battle against the demon, against the messengers of the Anti-Christ. Everywhere and at all times, the demons have waited in darkness for the hour in which mankind is weak; in which he voluntarily abandons the position in the world order that is based on freedom and comes from God; in which he yields to the force of the Evil One, disengaging himself from the powers of a higher order.

I will ask you, those of you who claim to be Christians: In this struggle for the preservation of your most precious goods, is there a hesitancy, a pretense of intrigue, procrastination of your decision in the hopes that someone else will raise his weapons to defend you? Did not God Himself give you the strength and the courage to fight against [these powers]? We must attack the Evil One where it is strongest, and it is strongest in the power of Hitler. (Leaflet IV)

In the above two passages, the author beseeched to their Christian audience and forced them to question the morality of the Nazi regime. To the Christian members who opposed the Third Reich, it would have seemed the White Rose finally found their audience and shared the same religious constraints as them. However, if most Germans were Christian, then the question still remains of how effective were the White Rose leaflets in persuading their readers when they assumed their readers shared the values/beliefs and educational levels as the White Rose authors? The question is still difficult to answer because the only shred of evidences of a direct response to their leaflets was the protest that took place at the University of Munich against Paul Giesler and the outcry against the White Rose following the arrest of Hans, Sophie, and Christoph. To gain a better understanding on how effective the Movement’s arguments were, especially when up against a religious community, one must first examine the rhetorical stances that were used.
Rhetorical Stances

Similar to Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals, logos, pathos, and ethos, the rhetorical stances, a term coined by Booth (1963), focus on the role of the rhetor and how that rhetor utilizes the stances to create an effective argument and persuade their audience. The three components of the rhetorical stance are the Pedant’s stance, Advertiser’s stance, and Entertainer’s stance. To be clear, the Pedant’s stance allows rhetors to focus entirely on the subject (facts) without pursuing a persuasive agenda, thus, disregarding the audience. The Advertiser’s stance allows rhetors to sell their points to the audience in an attempt of assuming what the audience wants to be told; doing so forsakes the need for the subject to be accurate and truthful. The Entertainer’s stance is where rhetors focus on themselves; disregarding the subject and audience, the rhetor shows off their own intellectual prowess and other traits. In a more specific definition, the rhetorical stance centers around “the available arguments about the subject itself [Pedant], the interests and peculiarities of the audience [Advertiser], and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker [Entertainer]” (p. 141). Even though it is erroneous for a rhetor to rely on just one stance, a healthy balance of appealing to the audience logically (Pedant), persuasively (Advertiser), and engagingly (Entertainer) should help the rhetor achieve success when persuading their audience.

Pedant’s Stance. When examining the leaflets from the Pedant’s stance, one must note that the entire subject surrounding this piece is the threat against humanity by an oppressive government. Aside from the subject, one main fact mentioned is one of the largest cities in Germany, Cologne: “…wherever you may be, prevent the continuation of this atheistic war machine before it is too late, before the last of our cities lie in ruins like Cologne…” (Leaflet I). Cologne faced heavy bombing from the Royal Air Force on May 31, 1942, which killed
hundreds of Germans and left thousands homeless; it was this catastrophe the White Rose members wanted to avoid. Aside from placing blame on the German people for allowing National Socialism to take control over Germany, the Movement also urged the people to resist the Hitler regime by any means necessary to avoid a similar outcome as Cologne. In addition, the teachings from Goethe and Schiller can be seen as a Pedant’s stance because it educates the readers and helps them focus on the facts of the effects of National Socialism. In Leaflet II, the Pedant’s stance is more noticeable, particularly after Alexander quoted a sentence from Hitler’s own book: “You would not believe how one must deceive a nation in order to rule it” (as cited in Leaflet II). After quoting Hitler, Alexander also spent time to discuss the Jews: “…we would like to mention by way of example the fact that since Poland was conquered, three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered in that country in the most bestial manner imaginable” (Leaflet II). Poland was mentioned for two particular reasons: to remind readers how WWII started and to educate them on how many Jews were murdered when Germany invaded Poland. Just as with Leaflet I, referencing Lao-Tzu was for educational purposes.

Leaflet III starts with a Latin proverb: Salus publica suprema lex. The various wordings of Salus populi suprema lex translates to “welfare of the people shall be the supreme law” (US Legal, 2016), “the welfare of an individual yields to that of the community” (Duhaime’s Law Dictionary, n.d.), or “let the welfare of the people be the supreme law” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Another case of the Pedant’s stance is the citation of “the civitas Dei” (Leaflet III). Augustine of Hippo (354-430) wrote a book about Christian philosophy in Latin called The City of God Against the Pagans. Incorporating the book allowed Alexander to make his own position: “Every individual human being has the right to a useful and just State that guarantees the freedom of the individual as well as the common good” (Leaflet III). After stating his stance, the
author then continued his rhetoric regarding the importance of liberating people’s inalienable rights from “a dictatorship of Evil” (Leaflet III). He also listed numerous methods of resistance, such as “Sabotag[ing] in armaments factories and other businesses vital to the war effort. Sabotage in all assemblies, rallies, festivities, organizations that were breathed into life by the National Socialist Party…” (Leaflet III), before referencing a passage about tyranny from Aristotle’s “About Politics.” Moving on to the Leaflet of the White Rose IV, Hans presented facts as he cited Hitler’s victories in Africa, Russia, and Egypt, but he cautioned his readers “against every form of optimism” due to the increased number of deaths on both sides. Aside from acknowledging the calamitous effects of war, the author also relied on Novalis’ warning of anarchy.

Leaflet V hardly contained any form of a Pedant’s stance except to restate some facts regarding the war:

The war is coming to its certain end. Just as in 1918, the German government is trying to draw attention to the growing submarine danger, while in the East the armies endlessly retreat and an invasion is expected in the West. America’s mobilization has not even reached its zenith, yet even now it surpasses anything that has gone before in history. (Leaflet V)

The information presented here acted as a springboard to start the conversation concerning the need to defy the Nazi Party. Starting from Leaflet I to Leaflet V, the White Rose members took time to prepare their readers for the inevitable demise of National Socialism. As each leaflet alerted readers of the destruction of WWII, the need to retaliate against Hitler and defend the very essence of humanity became more desperate. The crescendo to resist is more prominent in Leaflet VI. In this particular leaflet, Kurt briefly mentioned the German army’s defeat in Stalingrad before discussing the history of the tyrannical government’s abuse on every German citizen:
We have grown up in a nation where every open expression of opinion is callously bludgeoned. Hitler Youth, the SA and SS have tried to conform, revolutionize, and anesthetize us in the most fruitful years of our educational lives. The despicable methodology was called “ideological education”; it attempted to suffocate budding independent thought and values in a fog of empty phrases. “The Führer’s pick” – something more simultaneously devilish and stupid could not be imagined. (Leaflet VI)

The author unraveled certain truths within Hitler’s regime, as well as pointed out the response from the female German students, as an attempt to appeal to logic. Indeed, the core authors of the leaflets effectively utilized forms of the Pedant’s stance to generate concern of humanity and the importance to resist. The use of the Pedant’s stance in the leaflets was effectively done considering the careful application of facts and evidence. According to Booth (1963), the main concern of the Pedant’s stance was the risk of composing a “pointless” argument that does not draw emphasis to the rhetorical purpose of the subject.

**Advertiser’s Stance.** The Advertiser’s stance is the most used stance throughout all the leaflets. In any given genre (academic essays, personal narratives, etc.), an author’s point of view is important because it reveals the author’s beliefs, values, and attitudes toward a certain subject. Even though each author’s writing is different, all the authors’ purpose is conspicuous: they intend to inform and educate their readers of Hitler’s agenda in the hopes of trying to get the readers to believe the White Rose Movement’s message, feel the pain and horror for their country under Hitler’s ruling, and act on passive resistance. To convey their message in a coherent and persuasive manner, the authors incorporated specific devices, such as figurative language and descriptions, to disclose their beliefs. For instance, in Leaflet I, metaphorical language, such as deeming Germans as “a shallow, irresolute herd of opportunists who have had all the marrow sucked from their bones” (Leaflet I), was used as a rhetorical device to allow the rhetor to divulge their opinions and positions as he discussed important matters in a familiar and
innovative way. Particularly, in Leaflet I, the author used figurative language to appeal to the emotions of his readers to sell them the concept of Hitler and his regime as a corrupt and destructive organization. In this leaflet, therefore, Hans placed blame on the German people for giving Hitler power, but at the same time, Hans, by incorporating the teachings, urged his audience to “…not forget that every nation deserves the government that it endures” (Leaflet I). With Leaflet II, crimes Germans committed in the name of National Socialism were delineated to emphasize the troublesome times:

Is this a sign that the Germans have become brutalized in their most primitive human emotions? That no chord shrieks [in horror] in the face of such deeds? That they have fallen into such a fatal sleep out of which they will not awake, never, ever? It appears so. (Leaflet II)

In this case, Alexander employed description as a rhetorical device to illustrate and describe the overall exigence of apathy and indifference from the Germans to the crimes committed by the Nazi Party. As with Leaflet I, the author of this leaflet wanted his readers to understand just how concerning the passivity among the Germans is. According to Alexander, aside from the actual act of crime itself, it is the acclimation of insensitiveness of the Germans that was one of the true tragedies of the Third Reich.

More rhetorical devices used to highlight the authors’ beliefs are seen in the next two leaflets. Leaflet III, once again, employs the description device to pursue a sense of reasoning with the German population. In such a case, it is apparent that while Hans used figurative language to communicate with his readers, Alexander, on the other hand, relied on description to define the problem and seek a clear solution:

Why do you permit this autocrat to rob you of one sphere of your rights after another, little by little, both overtly and in secret? …Many, perhaps most of the readers of these leaflets are not certain how they can practice resistance. They do not see the possibility of so doing. We will attempt to show you that every person is in a position to contribute something to the overthrow of this system…And now
every resolute opponent of National Socialism must ask himself this question: How can he most effectively contend with the current “State”? How can he deal it the severest blow? Undoubtedly through passive resistance. Clearly, it is impossible for us to give every individual specific guidelines for his personal conduct. We can only allude to general issues. Everyone must find his own way to realize resistance...Sabotage in armaments factories and other businesses vital to the war effort. (Leaflet III)

It is in this leaflet where the author truly defined the type of passive resistance that would be ideal and urged readers to participate in the resistance. In fact, Leaflet III acted more as an instruction, or guideline, for readers. Leaflet IV, in contrast, was written to convince the audience of who and what Hitler was as perceived to be by the White Rose Movement: “[Hitler’s] mouth is the stinking maw of hell and his might is fundamentally reprobate” (Leaflet IV). In addition, Hans spent time in Leaflet IV to pen the purpose of the Movement as the Germans’ “guilty conscience” who sought “…to achieve a revival of the deeply wounded German spirit from within” (Leaflet IV). Moreover, it is important to note how Hans and Alexander inserted their own unique writing style within the four leaflets. In a typical academic or professional setting where a team of individuals must produce written work, it is imperative for a work to be read as if one individual wrote it. With the case of the first four leaflets, however, it is obvious that these leaflets were written by more than one person because the diction and tone are different. Since there is no mention of this difference in previous historical accounts of the Leaflets of the White Rose, it is therefore difficult to assume whether Hans and Alexander did it deliberately or by accident. In any case, both Hans and Alexander applied metaphorical language and figurative language to advertise multiple ideas to their audience such as the destruction of Hitler and his regime, German apathy, and the need to resist the totalitarian government.
With Leaflet V, the call to action using descriptive language is evident. The usage of descriptive language here gave the rhetor a different way to help the audience understand the situation and issues presented by the rhetor. Not only did Willi want his readers to accept the notion that Hitler’s regime is bad for Germany, but he wanted his readers to comprehend the calamity of WWII and what that would mean to future generations of Germans. This pattern of sentiment is seen in the last Leaflet, but with a more direct message to students:

For us now there is but one watchword: Fight against the Party! Get out of the Party organizations in which they wish to keep us politically muzzled! … The German name will be forever defamed if German youth does not finally arise, avenge, and atone, if he does not shatter his tormentor and raise up a new intellectual Europe. Students! The German nation looks to us! (Leaflet VI)

The purpose of the Advertiser’s stance in Leaflet VI was to appeal to college students; it is the only leaflet that called out to a specific audience. In this leaflet, Kurt felt he had a chance to reason with the university students and implore the need to rebel. Indeed, the reason why the author wrote Leaflet VI with his particular readers in mind is because the last known leaflet acted as a response to the uprising of students after listening to Paul Giesler. As with the other leaflets, Kurt promoted the idea of an evil, oppressive government that robbed the German people of their freewill, and the overall need to rebel against the government.

On another note, it is again interesting to point out the use of first, second, and third person pronouns in the six leaflets. The application of the pronouns in the six leaflets helped create an open dialogue in a conversational tone, yet concerning, tone. Therefore, incorporating all the pronouns also established a connection between the authors with their readers. In any case, however, how effective did the White Rose Movement apply the Advertiser’s stance? To effectively apply the Advertiser’s stance, the rhetor must be able to tell the audience what they think they want to hear; hence, it is important for the rhetor to gain their audience’s trust before
instructing them to perform a certain task. Considering that half, or possibly most, of their potential readers were Hitler supporters, the overall result of the affect the stance had on the audience is rather difficult to know.

**Entertainer’s Stance.** The Entertainer’s stance was not used throughout all the leaflets. Even though this stance is similar to that of Aristotle’s ethos in that it deals with the rhetor him or herself, the full usage of the stance mostly focuses on displaying the rhetor’s ability to entertain, thus placing less attention to the audience. That said, to create a healthy balance of the Entertainer’s stance, one could focus on establishing their credibility, thereby reimagining the Entertainer’s stance as more of Aristotle’s ethos. With that in mind, the ethos/Entertainer’s stance is quite difficult to locate in the leaflets. The setting of the leaflets must be noted because it is vital to understand the need for secrecy. It was prudent for the White Rose members to conceal their identity, and due to the importance of being discreet, the German readers never knew who the writers were until the arrest, trial, and execution of the White Rose Movement’s authors. Therefore, although the Movement’s purpose and tone were clearly stated in the Leaflets, the ethos/Entertainer’s stance was difficult to discern.

However, if one were to examine the Leaflets for any trace of the ethos/Entertainer’s stance, one could point to Hans’ and Alexander’s references from Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Lao-Tzu, and Aristotle. Referring to these philosophers gave substance to the White Rose’s arguments and increased their credibility. Regardless if the identity of the authors were never revealed within the pages of the leaflets, readers can easily infer that the leaflets’ authors had a formal education. In addition, the quotation from Ecclesiastes 4:1 and 4:2 also increased their ethos:

> So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on
the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter. Wherefore, I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. (Leaflet IV)

Incorporating a biblical quote was used to inspire the German people, especially considering that most Germans were Christians. It also established the Movement as being led by religious and spiritual individuals. Possibly more importantly, citing from Ecclesiastes meant the White Rose Movement felt they were facing a spiritual attack from those the Movement deemed an enemy: Hitler and the Nazi Party. In the end, how effective was the application of the ethos/Entertainer’s stance in the leaflets? Although the secret of their identity made their ethos questionable, the usage of quotes and biblical references might have made them seem credible. Now when separating the Entertainer’s stance from Aristotle’s ethos, the Leaflets’ authors did not use this particular stance at all. Most likely, it was because of the serious context of their messages. Indeed, the White Rose members implemented enough facts and logical reasoning (Pedant), as well as emotional appeals (Advertiser) to convince many Germans to resist Hitler; however, they did everything short of entertaining or engaging their audience.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation to this study was the reliance on the English translations regarding the White Rose Movement’s six leaflets. Because multiple websites surrounding the topic of the Movement had various translations, the context of the subject changes with differing wording and punctuation. Another limitation to note was the existence of a seventh leaflet. Historians have claimed that Leaflet VII was destroyed by the Gestapo after discovering a draft of the leaflet on Hans’ person. According to a researcher from the Center for White Rose Studies, however, Leaflet VII was uncovered and translated. As a result of not receiving a reply from the Center inquiring the authenticity of the leaflet, I made the decision not to include Leaflet VII in this study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the rhetorical situation surrounding the Leaflets of the White Rose that were produced and distributed from June 1942 to February 22, 1943. From the use of the Bitzerean rhetorical analysis, the exigence, rhetors, audience, constraints, and rhetorical stances – the Pedant, the Advertiser, and the Entertainer – were used as the basis for rhetorical analysis in this study. The political exigence surrounding National Socialism, WWII, and the Holocaust influenced the White Rose Movement’s decision to pen six anti-war/anti-Nazi leaflets. In these leaflets, the authors effectively acknowledged three exigencies they felt their German readers should know: oppression, passivity and apathy, and corruption. The reason for bringing awareness to these exigencies is because, as fellow Germans, they felt obligated to save the entire German population from Hitler. Most of the White Rose authors were members of Hitler Youth Groups; however, their Nazi-influenced education did not blind them
to the totalitarian government that Germany had become. Because the Movement’s members were Germans themselves, they felt they knew who their audience was. Although their targeted readers were educators, doctors, and civil servants, the constraints between the authors, readers, and subject/purpose were not met, thus not creating the desired effect the Movement hoped for. This is most likely due to the audience’s fear of persecution if they were caught with a Leaflet in their hands. In addition, the White Rose Movement’s authors did not establish a healthy balance of the Pedant’s, Advertiser’s, and Entertainer’s rhetorical stances. This is significant because effectively persuading the audience to create social change depends on knowing one’s audience, understanding the shared constraints, and applying an ideal balance of all three stances.

The other purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the White Rose Movement’s Leaflets in persuading their German readers to rise up against Hitler. Considering that most of the German audience were Nazi supporters, especially doctors, lawyers, educators, and civil servants (the Movement’s primary audience), they were likely offended by the messages in the Leaflets. Further, since the threat of persecution and/or death loomed over Germans who opposed the Third Reich, the fear for their own safety prevented readers from conducting any form of resistance. That said, were they then successful at making their arguments effective to produce social change? It did not seem so. The White Rose Movement assumed too much of their audience and placed high expectations for their audience to help create social change. Regardless, we can still learn much from the Movement’s efforts. In our current time, social protests and passive resistance (marches, music, rallies, boycotting, etc.) around the world have become part of our normal lives. Although researchers have studied the role of agency in active protests (e.g., marches), there is little research that examines the
effectiveness of written protests. Using the Leaflets of the White Rose can potentially act as the foundation for further study of written protesting for years to come.
Bibliography


Appendix 1: The White Rose Members

Hans Scholl
Sophie Scholl
Alexander Schmorell

Willi Graf
Christoph Probst
Kurt Huber

Appendix 2: The Leaflets

Leaflets of the White Rose I: Images of original Leaflets
Leaflets of the White Rose I: English translation

Nothing is more shameful to a civilized nation than to allow itself to be “governed” by an irresponsible clique of sovereigns who have given themselves over to dark urges – and that without resisting. Isn’t it true that every honest German is ashamed of his government these days? Who among us can imagine the degree of shame that will come upon us and upon our children when the veil falls from our faces and the awful crimes that infinitely exceed any human measure are exposed to the light of day? If the German nation is so corrupt and decadent in its innermost being that it is willing to surrender the greatest possession a man can own, a possession that elevates mankind above all other creatures, namely free will – if it is willing to surrender this without so much as raising a hand, rashly trusting a questionable lawful order of history; if it surrenders the freedom of mankind to intrude upon the wheel of history and subjugate it to his own rational decision; if Germans are so devoid of individuality that they have become an unthinking and cowardly mob – then, yes then they deserve their destruction.

Goethe speaks of the Germans as a tragic nation, like the Jews and the Greeks. But these days, Germans appear more like a shallow, irresolute herd of opportunists who have had all the marrow sucked from their bones. Now that they have been robbed of their essence, they are willing to be pursued to their destruction. This is how it appears, but it is not so. Rather, every individual has been jailed in an intellectual prison after having been slowly, deceptively, and systematically raped. Only as he lies there in chains is he aware of his doom. A few recognized the pending perdition [for what it was]. The reward for their heroic exhortations was death.

There is more to say about the fate of these people.

If everyone waits till someone else makes a start, the messengers of the avenging Nemesis will draw incessantly closer. And then the last sacrifice will have been thrown senselessly into the jaws of the insatiable demon. Therefore in this last hour every individual must arm himself as best he can, aware of his responsibility as a member of the Christian and western civilization. He must work against the hostage of humanity, against fascism and all similar systems of an absolute State. Offer passive resistance – resistance, wherever you may be, prevent the continuation of this atheistic war machine before it is too late, before the last of our cities lie in ruins like Cologne, and before the last of the youth of our people have been bled to death by the hubris of a subhuman. Do not forget that every nation deserves the government that it endures.

From Friedrich Schiller, “The Legislation of Lycurgus and Solon.”

“… When contrasted to its actual purpose, the legislation of Lycurgus is a masterpiece of political science and anthropology. He wanted a powerful, indestructible State that was completely self-reliant. Political strength and permanence were his goals. He achieved this goal as much as was possible, given the circumstances. But if you compare the goals that Lycurgus had for himself with the goals of humanity, hearty disapproval replaces the amazement that had been one’s first impression of [Lycurgus’s accomplishment]. Everything may be sacrificed for the good of the nation, except for those things for which the State itself serves as a means. The State itself is never an end in itself, it is merely important as a condition under by which humanity’s goals may be realized. And humanity’s goals are never anything other than development of all of mankind’s powers, or progress. If the constitution of a nation denies
development of all the powers of which mankind is capable; if it prevents the progress of the
spirit, then it is reprehensible and injurious, no matter how well-thought-out and complete it may
be in its own way. Its very permanence then becomes reproach instead of glory. It is nothing
more than a prolonged evil. The longer it exists, the more injurious it becomes.

“…Political profits are then achieved at the expense of all moral emotions and all energies are
dedicated to that end. In Sparta, there was no matrimonial love, no maternal love, no filial love,
no friendship – there was nothing but citizens. There was no virtue but civic virtue.

“…Legislation turned inhumanity to slaves into a duty. These unfortunate victims of war were
cursed and abused by mankind. The legal codes of Sparta preached the dangerous principle that
men are to be seen as means and not as ends – and in so doing, the very fundament of natural law
and morality was legally torn asunder.

“…In contrast, the rugged warrior Caius Marcius provides a far more pleasing spectacle in his
encampment before Rome when he sacrificed vengeance and victory, because he could not bear
to see the tears of a mother!

“…Lycurgus’s nation can endure under only one condition, namely that the spirit of the nation
comes to a stand-still. In other words, he can only succeed when he misses the highest and only
goal of national existence.”

From Goethe’s “The Awakening of Epimenides2,” second act, fourth scene: Spirits …..
That which has arisen bravely from the pit
Can conquer half the globe
With a pitiless destiny,
But return it must to the abyss.
Monstrous fears are threatening now,
In vain will he resist!
And all those who cling to him
Will follow him to ruin.

Hope

Now I meet my good men
Who have gathered in the night
To keep silence, not to sleep.
The lovely word of freedom
Is spoken lisping and stammering
Until in unaccustomed newness
We stand upon our temple steps
And cry anew enraptured:

(Loudly and with conviction)
Freedom!
(Moderately)
Freedom!

(Echoing from every side and corner)
Freedom!

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We ask that you copy this document, making as many carbon copies as possible, and pass it on!
Leaflets of the White Rose II: Images of original Leaflets
Leaflets of the White Rose II: English translation

It is impossible to come to terms with National Socialism on an intellectual basis, because it is simply not intellectual. You cannot speak of a National Socialist ideology. If such a thing existed, you would be forced to try to defend or engage it on an intellectual basis. Reality offers us a completely different image. When the movement was still in embryonic form, it relied on deception of its fellow man. Even then, it was rotten to the core and could preserve itself only on the basis of constant lies. Hitler himself wrote in an early edition of “his” book – a book that is written in the most awful German I have ever read, despite which the nation of poets and thinkers have elevated it to the status of the Bible: “You would not believe how one must deceive a nation in order to rule it.” If this cancerous growth in the German nation was not too noticeable in the early phases, then that is because there were enough forces for good at work to try to slow its growth. But as it grew larger and larger and finally ascended to power by means of one last vulgar corruption, the abscess erupted and defiled the whole body.

This caused the majority of its previous opponents to hide themselves. German intelligentsia took refuge in holes in the cellar like Solanaceae, hiding from light and the sun, gradually suffocating. And now we are facing the end. Now it is a question of mutually coming to our senses, of mutually keeping one another informed. We must always keep these things in mind and allow ourselves no rest until the last man is convinced of the utmost necessity of his battle against this system. If a wave of insurrection surges through the country, if “it is in the air,” if many join us, then this system can be cast aside with one last mighty effort. An end with terror is always better than terror without end.

It is not up to us to pass final judgment regarding the meaning of our history. But if this catastrophe shall be our sure salvation, then it shall be so: We will be cleansed by suffering, we will long for the light from the midst of the blackest night, we will summon our energy and finally help shake off the yoke that oppresses the world.

We do not wish to address the Jewish question in this leaflet, nor do we wish to pen a case for the defense. No – we would like to mention by way of example the fact that since Poland was conquered, three hundred thousand Jews have been murdered in that country in the most bestial manner imaginable. In this we see a terrible crime against the dignity of mankind, a crime that cannot be compared with any other in the history of mankind.

Jews are human beings too – it makes no difference what your opinion is regarding the Jewish question – and these crimes are being committed against human beings. Perhaps someone will say, the Jews deserve this fate. Saying this is in itself a colossal effrontery.

But let us assume that someone has said this. How can he face the fact that the entire population of aristocratic Polish youth has been exterminated (would God that the extermination is not yet complete!)? You may ask, and in what manner has this taken place? All male offspring of aristocratic families between 15 and 20 years old are sent to concentration camps in Germany as forced labor. All the girls of the same age group are being sent to the SS brothels in Norway!
But why are we bothering to tell you all this, since you know everything anyway? If you are not aware of these specific crimes, then surely you are aware of equally heinous crimes committed by these terrible subhumans? Because this touches on a question that affects all of us deeply, a question that must make us all stop and think: Why is the German nation behaving so apathetically in the face of all these most abominable, most degrading crimes?

Hardly anyone even gives them a second thought. The facts are accepted as just that and filed away. And one more time, the German nation slumbers on in its indifferent and foolish sleep and gives these fascist criminals courage and opportunity to rage on – which of course they do.

Is this a sign that the Germans have become brutalized in their most primitive human emotions? That no chord shrieks [in horror] in the face of such deeds? That they have fallen into such a fatal sleep out of which they will not awake, never, ever? It appears so. And it must be so if the German does not finally rise up from his numbness, if he does not protest wherever he possibly can against this clique of criminals, if he does not have pity on these hundreds of thousands who have been sacrificed.

And he must not merely feel pity – no, much more: He must share in the guilt. It is his apathetic conduct that gives these sinister people the possibility to carry out their deeds. He tolerates this "government" that has incurred such infinite guilt. Yes, he is even guilty himself that this government come could into existence!

Each man wishes to be acquitted of his complicity – everyone does so, then lies back down to sleep with a calm, clear conscience. But he may not acquit himself. Everyone is guilty, guilty, guilty!

But it is not too late to rid the world of this most awful of all miscarriages of government, in order to avoid incurring even more guilt. Those of us who have had our eyes completely opened in recent years since we know with whom we are dealing – it is high time for us to exterminate this brown horde.

Until war broke out, the majority of the German people were hoodwinked. National Socialism did not show itself in its truest form. But now that we have recognized it for what it is, it must be the sole and primary duty of every German – indeed, our most holy duty – to annihilate this wild inhuman beast!

“He whose administration is unobtrusive, his people are happy. He whose administration is meddlesome, his people are broken. Distress, oh!, that is what happiness is built upon. Happiness, oh!, masks distress. And what is the end of this? The end cannot be seen in its entirety. Order becomes disorder, good becomes bad. The nation becomes confused. Has it not been this way every day for a very long time?

“That is why the Great Man is rectangular, but he does not injure; he is angular, but he does not wound; he is upright, but not rough. He is transparent, but he does not glitter.”

Lao-tse.
He who undertakes to rule a kingdom and forms it as he pleases, I do not see him achieving his goals. That is all.

The kingdom is a living organism. Verily, it cannot be fabricated! He who wishes to take it in hand will ruin it. He who wishes to usurp it will lose it.

Therefore: “Some creatures lead, others follow them. Some are cold-blooded, others are warm-blooded. Some are strong, some are weak. Some attain wealth, others are overthrown.”

The Great Man therefore refrains from excesses, refrains from arrogance, refrains from infringements.
Lao-tse.

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Leaflets of the White Rose III: Images of original Leaflets
“Salus publica suprema lex.”

All ideal forms of government are utopias. A State cannot be designed strictly theoretically. It must grow, mature, just as an individual person will. However, one may not forget that at the beginning of every civilization, a prototype of the form of government existed. The family is so old – old as mankind itself – that out of this initial communal being the logic-endowed man created a State whose foundation would be justice, whose greatest law the good of all. The State represents an analogy of the divine order. The greatest of all utopias – the civitas Dei – is the model it seeks to emulate. We do not wish to pass judgment on all the various forms of government: democracy, constitutional monarchy, monarchy, etc. However, one thing should be accentuated clearly and plainly: Every individual human being has the right to a useful and just State that guarantees the freedom of the individual as well as the common good. For mankind must be able to attain his natural goal – his temporal happiness – in self-reliance and autonomy. This pursuit of happiness should take place free and unencumbered in association and collaboration with the national community, in accordance with God’s will.

But our present State is a dictatorship of Evil. “We’ve known that for a long time,” I can hear you say, “and it is not necessary for you to remind us of it once again.” So I ask you: If you are aware of this, why do you not stir yourselves? Why do you permit this autocrat to rob you of one sphere of your rights after another, little by little, both overtly and in secret? One day there will be nothing left, nothing at all, except for a mechanized national engine that has been commandeered by criminals and drunks. Has your spirit been so devastated by rape that you forget that it is not only your right, but your moral duty to put an end to this system? If a person cannot even summon the strength to demand his rights, then there is nothing left for him but destruction. We will have deserved to be scattered to all corners of the globe, as dust before the wind, if we do not pull ourselves together in this eleventh hour and finally summon the courage that we have been lacking till now. Do not hide your cowardice under the cloak of cleverness! Because every day that you delay, every day that you do not resist this spawn of hell, your guilt is steadily increasing, like a parabolic curve.

Many, perhaps most of the readers of these leaflets are not certain how they can practice resistance. They do not see the possibility of so doing. We will attempt to show you that every person is in a position to contribute something to the overthrow of this system. It is impossible to lay the groundwork for the overthrow of this “government,” much less to effect its overthrow as soon as possible, if one opposes it alone in the manner of embittered loners. This can only be accomplished through the cooperative efforts of many unshakable, energetic people – people who are unified regarding the means necessary to achieve their goal. There are not a great many choices we have regarding the means to use; one and only one is at our disposal – passive resistance.

The purpose and the goal of passive resistance is the overthrow of National Socialism. In this war, we may not be deterred from any course of action or from any deed, no matter what the scope. National Socialism must be attacked in every place in which it is vulnerable. This Un-State must be brought quickly to an end. If fascist Germany were to win this war,
the consequences would be unfathomable and frightful. The first concern of every German should not be a military victory over Bolshevism, but rather the defeat of the National Socialists. The leaflets following this one will explain why the latter demand is of greater importance.

And now every resolute opponent of National Socialism must ask himself this question: How can he most effectively contend with the current “State”? How can he deal it the severest blow? Undoubtedly through passive resistance. Clearly, it is impossible for us to give every individual specific guidelines for his personal conduct. We can only allude to general issues. Everyone must find his own way to realize resistance.

Sabotage in armaments factories and other businesses vital to the war effort. Sabotage in all assemblies, rallies, festivities, organizations that were breathed into life by the National Socialist Party, prevention of the smooth operation of the war machine (a machine that operates only for one war, one that focuses on the preservation and maintenance of the National Socialist Party and its dictatorship). Sabotage in all scholarly and intellectual realms that exist for the continuance of the current war – this whether it be in universities, colleges, laboratories, research facilities, or technical offices. Sabotage at all cultural events that could possibly exalt the “prestige” of fascists among the people. Sabotage in all branches of the fine arts that have the least connection to National Socialism and serve its goals. Sabotage in all areas of literature, all newspapers that are on the payroll of the “government”, and that fight for their ideas, for the dissemination of the brown lie. Do not put even one penny in the collection plate, even if it is disguised as a charity.

For this is merely camouflage. In reality, your gifts never make it to the coffers of either the Red Cross or the pockets of the destitute. The government does not need this money, it does not depend upon these collections. Its printing presses run uninterrupted and print any quantity whatever of paper money. But the nation must be kept constantly in harness. The pressure on the bridle bit never lets up. Donate nothing to the collections of metal, textiles, and other goods! Seek out all your acquaintances from among the lower classes of the people and seek to convince them of the senselessness of continuing the war, of the hopelessness of ever winning, tell them of the intellectual and economic enslavement by National Socialism, of the destruction of all moral and religious values. Prevail upon them to exercise passive resistance!

Aristotle in “About Politics”: “...In addition, a characteristic of a tyrant is that he seeks to keep anything from being hidden of that which a subject says or does. Everywhere, spies eavesdrop on the subject. ... He also seeks to incite the whole world against one another, to set friends on one another, to provoke the poor against the noble and the rich among themselves. Likewise, among the measures taken by a tyrant: He makes his subjects poor so he can pay his bodyguards. Once they are poor and must scrabble for their daily bread, they will have neither time nor leisure to foster a conspiracy. ... In addition, a tyrant levies such high income taxes – as were levied in Syracuse – for under the rule of Dionysius, the citizens of that State happily spent their entire estates on taxes within five years. The tyrant also tends to provoke wars incessantly. ...”

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Leaflets of the White Rose IV: Images of original Leaflets
Leaflets of the White Rose IV: English translation

There is an old proverb that children are always taught anew: Pay attention or pay the consequences. A smart child will only burn his fingers once on a hot stove.

In the past few weeks, Hitler has registered successes both in Africa and in Russia. As a result, optimism grew among the people on the one hand, while consternation and pessimism grew on the other hand – and this with a rapidity that is unrivalled [in a nation known for] inertia. On every side among the opponents of Hitler – that is, among the better part of the nation – one heard plaintive calls, words of disappointment and discouragement, which often ended with the exclamation: “But what if Hitler really...?”

In the meantime, the German offensive in Egypt has ground to a halt. Rommel must hold out in a dangerously exposed position. And yet the march eastward continues. This apparent success has been at the expense of the most ghastly sacrifices, so that it can no longer be described as advantageous. We therefore must warn against every form of optimism.

Who has counted the dead, Hitler or Goebbels? Probably neither. Thousands fall every day in Russia. It is the time of harvest, and the reaper approaches the standing crops with all his energy. Mourning returns to the cottages of the homeland and no one is there to dry the tears of the mothers. But Hitler deceives the ones whose most precious possession he has stolen and driven to a senseless death.

Every word that proceeds from Hitler’s mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war. And when he names the name of the Almighty in a most blasphemous manner, he means the almighty evil one, that fallen angel, Satan. His mouth is the stinking maw of hell and his might is fundamentally reprobate. To be sure, one must wage the battle against National Socialism using rational means. But whoever still does not believe in the actual existence of demonic powers has not comprehended by far the metaphysical background of this war. Behind the tangible, behind that which can be perceived by the senses, behind all factual, logical considerations stands The Irrational, that is the battle against the demon, against the messengers of the Anti-Christ. Everywhere and at all times, the demons have waited in darkness for the hour in which mankind is weak; in which he voluntarily abandons the position in the world order that is based on freedom and comes from God; in which he yields to the force of the Evil One, disengaging himself from the powers of a higher order. Once he has taken the first step of his own free will, he is driven to take the second and then the third and even more with furiously increasing speed. Everywhere and at every time of greatest danger, people have risen up – prophets, saints – who are aware of their freedom, who have pointed to the One God and with His aid have exhorted the people to turn in repentance. Mankind is surely free, but he is defenseless against the Evil One without the true God. He is like a ship without a rudder that is given over to the storm, like a nursing child with a mother, like a cloud that dissolves.

I will ask you, those of you who claim to be Christians: In this struggle for the preservation of your most precious goods, is there a hesitancy, a pretense of intrigue, procrastination of your decision in the hopes that someone else will raise his weapons to defend you? Did not God Himself give you the strength and the courage to fight against [these powers]? We must
attack the Evil One where it is strongest, and it is strongest in the power of Hitler.

“So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.

“Wherefore, I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.” (Proverbs)

Novalis: “True anarchy is the element of procreation for religion. When everything positive has been destroyed, religion raises its glorious head as the benefactor of a new world...If Europe will awaken, if it will become a nation of nations, then a new political science would be at hand! Should perhaps hierarchy … be the principle for a union of nations? ... Blood will pour over Europe until the nations are aware of their terrible insanity that drives them around and around in circles. Then touched and soothed by holy music, they approach their former altars in the beauty of diversity, taking up works of peace, and tearfully celebrating a great festival of peace on the smoking battlefields. Religion alone can revive Europe and secure the rights of nations and install Christianity in its peace-giving office visibly on this earth with new glory.”

We expressly state that the White Rose is not a hireling of a foreign power. Though we are aware that the might of National Socialism must be broken militarily, we seek to achieve a revival of the deeply wounded German spirit from within. However, this rebirth must be preceded by a clear confession of all the guilt the German nation has incurred and by a ruthless battle against Hitler and his too-numerous helpers’ helpers, Party members, Quislings, et al. The chasm between the better part of the nation and everything connected with National Socialism must be brutally forced open. There is no punishment on this earth that is adequate for the deeds of Hitler and his followers. Out of love for the generations to come, we must make an example [of them] after the conclusion of the war so that no one will ever have the slightest desire to attempt something similar. Do not forget even the little scoundrels of this regime. Note their names, so that no one escapes! After all these atrocities, they should not be able to change sides at the last minute and thereby pretend as though nothing had happened!

For your reassurance we will add that the addresses of the readers of the White Rose have not been documented in writing anywhere. The addresses were chosen at random from address books.

We will not keep silent. We are your guilty conscience. The White Rose will not let you alone!

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Leaflets of the White Rose V: Images of original Leaflets
Leaflets of the White Rose V: English translation

The war is coming to its certain end. Just as in 1918, the German government is trying to draw attention to the growing submarine danger, while in the East the armies endlessly retreat and an invasion is expected in the West. America’s mobilization has not even reached its zenith, yet even now it surpasses anything that has gone before in history. With mathematical certainty, Hitler is leading the German nation to disaster. Hitler cannot win the war, he can only prolong it! His guilt and the guilt of his assistants have infinitely exceeded all measure. A just punishment grows ever closer!

And what is the German nation doing? It sees nothing, it hears nothing. It is blindly following its seducers to destruction. Victory at any price, that is what they have written on their flags. I will fight to the last man, says Hitler, but yet the war is already lost.

Germans! Do you and your children wish to suffer the same fate as the Jews? Do you wish to be measured with the same measure as your seducers? Shall we forever be the most hated and rejected nation in all the world? No! Therefore, separate yourselves from the National Socialist subhumanity! Prove with your deeds that you think differently! A new War of Independence is beginning. The better part of the nation is fighting with us. Rend the cloak of apathy that you have wrapped around your hearts! Make up your minds, before it is too late!

Do not believe the National Socialist propaganda that has driven the fear of Bolshevism into your very being! Do not believe that Germany’s salvation is wed to a victory of National Socialism for better or for worse! A band of criminals cannot attain a German victory. Separate yourselves from everything connected to National Socialism while you still have time! Later, all those who hid themselves cowardly and undecided will have to stand before a terrible and just court of law.

What can we learn from the outcome of this war, which was never a national war?

The imperialistic notions of power must be forever rendered harmless, regardless of which side they come from. A one-sided Prussian militarism shall nevermore come to power. The groundwork for reconstruction can only be created in a liberal cooperative effort of European nations. Every centralized power, such as that which the Prussian state has attempted to exert over Germany and Europe, must be nipped in the bud. The Germany of the future must be a federalist state. Only a healthy federalist form of government will be able to breathe new life into a weakened Europe. The working class must be liberated from their menial slavery through a practical form of socialism. The illusion of a self-sufficient economy must disappear from the face of Europe. Every nation, every individual has a right to the goods of the world!

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the protection of the individual citizen from the caprice of criminal, violent States – these are the bases of the new Europe.

Support the resistance movement, disseminate the leaflets!
Herr Militiamann! Herr Kolonialist!
durchtreibt stets unser Volk vor den Ungern der Wahrheit von Stalins
und, wenn wir ihn, sagen, Sa, Sa, Sa haben uns in den fruchtbaren Bildungs
1913 die Schaffung des Nationalsozialismus, es 1933 durch die
Befreiung des Nationalsozialistischen Terrors aus der Machtergreifung des
Gelingen, in einem ehemaligen Durchbruch der Freiheit und Ehre!
Leaflets of the White Rose VI: English translation

German Students!

Our nation stands shaken before the demise of the heroes of Stalingrad. The brilliant strategy of a Lance Corporal from the World War has senselessly and irresponsibly driven three hundred thirty thousand German men to death and destruction. Führer, we thank you!

Unrest ferments among the German people: Shall we continue to entrust the fate of our armies to a dilettante? Do we wish to sacrifice the remainder of our German youth to the vile instinct for power of a Party clique? On no account!

The day of reckoning has come, the reckoning of our German youth with the most abominable tyranny that our nation has ever endured. In the name of all the German youth, we demand that Adolf Hitler’s government return to us our personal freedom, the most valuable possession a German owns. He has cheated us of it in a most contemptible manner.

We have grown up in a nation where every open expression of opinion is callously bludgeoned. Hitler Youth, the SA and SS have tried to conform, revolutionize, and anesthetize us in the most fruitful years of our educational lives. The despicable methodology was called “ideological education”; it attempted to suffocate budding independent thought and values in a fog of empty phrases. “The Führer’s pick” – something more simultaneously devilish and stupid could not be imagined.

This “Führer’s pick” raises its future Party bosses in Ordensburgen so they will be godless, brazen, and conscienceless users and assassins, blind, stupid disciples of the Führer. We “Workers of the Spirit” would do well if we bludgeoned this new class of men. An intellectual and moral elite of student leaders and Gauleiter hopefuls distrusts us systematically from every disciplined, deep course of study. They seek to fritter away our time with roll-calls, Party gatherings, and trade association conferences. Soldiers who have fought on the front lines are reprimanded like schoolboys by these gentlemen. The Gauleiter and student leaders insult the honor of female students with lascivious jokes.

German female students at the college in Munich have given a dignified answer to the besmirching of their honor. German male students have gone into action on behalf of their female comrades and stood firm. This is a beginning in the fight for our free self-determination; without this, intellectual values can never be created. Thank you to all the brave comrades who have led the way with such an illuminating example!

For us now there is but one watchword: Fight against the Party! Get out of the Party organizations in which they wish to keep us politically muzzled! Get out of the lecture halls of the SS-Noncom-or-Major-Generals and the Party sycophants! This has to do with genuine scholarship and true freedom of thought! No threats can dismay us, not even the closing of our colleges.

This is a battle that we all must fight for our future, our freedom and honor in a political system
that is conscious of its moral responsibility.

Freedom and honor! For ten long years, Hitler and his associates have abused, stomped, and twisted these two glorious German words till they are loathsome. Only dilettantes are capable of doing this, dilettantes who cast the highest values of a nation before swine. Over the last ten years, they have more than shown us what freedom and honor means to them – they have destroyed all material and intellectual freedom and all moral substance in the German people. The terrible blood bath that they have caused in all of Europe in the name of the freedom and honor of the German people – a blood bath that they cause anew every day – has opened the eyes of even the stupidest German.

The German name will be forever defamed if German youth does not finally arise, avenge, and atone, if he does not shatter his tormentor and raise up a new intellectual Europe. Students! The German nation looks to us! In 1943, they expect from us the breaking of the National Socialist terror through the power of the spirit, just as in 1813 the Napoleonic [terror] was broken. Beresina and Stalingrad are going up in flames in the East, and the dead of Stalingrad beseech us: “Courage, my people! The beacons are burning!” Our nation is awakening against the enslavement of Europe by National Socialism, in a new pious revival of freedom and honor!
Curriculum Vita

Veronica Cruz, a native of El Paso, Texas, has a Bachelor’s degree in English and American Literature from the University of Texas at El Paso. She is currently pursuing a Master’s degree in Rhetoric and Writing Studies at the same university with the expectation of graduating in Summer 2017. Come August 2017, she plans to pursue her Doctorate’s in Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Texas at El Paso. She has experience working as an English composition tutor at the university’s Writing Center. Additionally, she worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the English Department where she taught composition classes to undergraduate students at the university. Because El Paso is a neighbor to the Mexican city of Juarez, Veronica is familiar with the border city’s unique culture and has express a level of understanding and empathy towards her students’ struggle of communication through the written word. As she pursues her doctoral degree, she plans to continue on as a Graduate Assistant Instructor.

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This thesis was typed by Veronica Cruz