Good Works: The Topoi of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Travel and Tourism Industry

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GOOD WORKS:
THE TOPOI OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

by

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This dissertation focuses on the identification and analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) topoi in the travel and tourism industry. A sample set of six companies was selected for the study due to their size and prominence in the industry -- namely Disney, Hilton, Intercontinental, Marriott, Starwood, and Wyndham. Topoi were identified through a blended method of research that employed rhetorical analysis, modified grounded theory, and NVIVO content analysis software. The research followed three guiding principles to recognize textual cues and drive analysis: common and special topoi; topoi as heuristic; topoi for association and amplification; and topoi as fluid and movable. The common CSR topoi, triple bottom line and shared value, were also used as overarching categories for coding the texts. The results of the method yielded six unique topoi that were specific to each company; these included Inspiration, Higher Purpose, Collaborative Innovation, Leadership, The Age of Great Change, and Green. Results also included a set of seven special industry topoi that were common across all of the sample companies; these included Commitment, Management, Alignment, Environment, Engagement, Achievement, and Sustainability. The rhetorical synergy and topological levels identified through this research can inform other studies of CSR about the generative potential of topoi and its fluidity when viewed from different conceptual vantage points.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BP: British Petroleum
CEO: Chief Executive Officer
CFO: Chief Financial Officer
CR: Corporate Responsibility
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
EABIS: European Academy of Business in Society
IHG: Intercontinental Hotel Group
LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
PR: Public Relations
SARF: Starwood Associate Relief Fund
T&T: Texts and Technology
TBL: Triple Bottom Line
UCF: University of Central Florida
US: United States
CHAPTER ONE

“One of the greatest fallacies about corporate social responsibility or corporate citizenship is that it is easy—a philanthropic cheque written here and a compliance box ticked there. This could not be further from today’s reality. Balancing long-term goals with short-term imperatives...calls for new leadership skills and new approaches to communication” (World Economic Forum, 13).

Milton Friedman famously said, "The business of business is business" (1970). However, progressive companies have found that acting with social responsibility leads to better business. In the article, “Can Corporations Save the World,” Alan Hassenfeld, former chairman of Hasbro, states that "in order to make a profit in this day and age, companies are not going to exist if they don't have corporate responsibility. You have to do the right thing" (Adler). When companies feel a responsibility to society, regardless of whether they do it for their own gain or not, the greater good is served. As Gillian Caldwell, the executive director of WITNESS, a human rights organization, states, "Companies can do well by doing good, and that's okay. It will take a collective commitment to do what we can to ensure the sustainability of the planet" (Adler).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a popular, yet complex, topic within the business world of the 21st century. Driven in part by corporate scandals, increased attention on the environment, greater understanding of the importance of corporate reputation on the bottom line, and pressure from publics and activist groups, the focus on CSR has become a vital part of organizational strategy. Tim Sanders, in Saving the World at Work: What Companies and
Individuals Can Do To Go Beyond Making a Profit to Making a Difference, posits that we are moving toward a “responsibility revolution” involving corporations, governments, and individuals (29). After the industrial and information revolutions, a responsibility revolution may be an important next step. However, the idea of a responsibility revolution does not go uncontested, as some argue that the revolution is primarily a rhetorical one where CSR is being used to recast and redirect neoliberal goals.

Current statistics support the rapidly increasing attention and importance placed on CSR by both stakeholders and consumers that may be fueling the responsibility revolution. For instance, according to the 2013 Cone Communications/Echo Global CSR Study, “Corporate Social Responsibility is no longer an option—it is emphatically and indisputably a must-do.” The survey of over 10,000 consumers in 10 of the largest countries in the world by GDP, reports that nearly 90% of global consumers consider CSR when deciding where to shop, and “just six percent of global consumers now believe the singular purpose of business is to make money for shareholders, while the clear majority expects companies to do more than play a limited role in communities or simply donate time and money.”

Increasingly, rhetorical strategy remains a driver in how CSR is enacted and reported, especially since CSR continues to be a largely misunderstood concept and communication strategies are problematic. In the same 2013 Cone Communications report mentioned above, the topic of CSR communication receives a great deal of attention. The report points out that, “nine-in-10 (91%) global citizens are eager to hear about CSR initiatives and progress, but for that
communication to resonate, messages must be honest and clear.” The study notes that 70% of those surveyed report being confused by the messages companies use in their CSR discourse.

Miscommunication about CSR was also raised in a report issued in 2013 by the Reputation Institute, where it was noted that although companies are investing millions to promote CSR, their communication is largely mismanaged and “the public isn’t buying it.” The report showed that out of over 45,000 consumers across 15 of the world’s largest economies only 35% said that “companies are good corporate citizens that support good causes and protect the environment.” Poor communication coupled with other contributing factors to public mistrust of CSR, such as questions about corporate motives and benefits, certainly opens the door for rhetorical intervention.

Companies investing in CSR communication, yet not convincing stakeholders with their message, raises a number of questions about the persuasion strategies being employed by corporate rhetors, such as: what arguments are being presented, where and how are the arguments being presented, and who is the intended audience. This research study analyzes CSR to determine the topoi employed by companies in the travel and tourism industry to persuade stakeholders. Through this research I clarify the specific topics of argument, special topoi, and how they are used within the discipline of CSR in one industry. Because CSR is a complex subject and its communication problematic, it is a topic ripe for rhetorical research that analyzes the arguments seeking to persuade and unify a diverse audience, but may be polarizing some publics.
Study Background

In 1989, I began my career as a writer with The Walt Disney Company in Orlando. At that time, Disney’s physical locations were primarily confined to Walt Disney World in Florida, Disneyland in California, Tokyo Disneyland in Japan, and movie studios. Owning The Disney Store in over 450 countries, theme parks and resorts in France, Hong Kong and Shanghai, a resort in Hawaii, major theatrical productions on Broadway, and networks like ABC, ESPN and The Disney Channel were not yet on the drawing boards.

Disney has transformed into a global powerhouse that touches entertainment, consumer products, travel and tourism, and countless other industries in ways that once were not fathomable. Another, possibly less noticed and less publicized, transformation has also occurred since 1989 when I first became a part of Team Disney. This transformation has become particularly evident within the last 10 years as there has been a shift from no noticeable mention of “corporate social responsibility” within the company to Disney being named the number one socially responsible corporation of 2014 by The Reputation Institute.

In 2006, I became a Ph.D. student in the Texts and Technology (T&T) program at the University of Central Florida after having received an MBA degree from Stetson University. My studies provided me a theoretical framework for viewing my practical experience in the corporate world. I began to thread together what I was learning in the T&T program with what I had participated in and witnessed in roles as a Disney communication, training, and marketing manager in relation to the intensifying focus on CSR as a major business driver. I began to tie
together themes among the exigencies of rhetoric and how they were woven into what was happening with CSR, at Disney, and elsewhere. Therefore, it was early in the T&T program when I began cultivating the ideas that are presented in this dissertation focusing on the concept of CSR and how it affects and is affected by rhetoric. As a T&T student, I sought to explore the questions: How are these concepts defined, and what is the context for their study?

*Disney CSR Rhetoric*

From 2007 through 2010, I monitored CSR communication on the Web site of The Walt Disney Company. The Walt Disney Company is a major multinational corporation that has a presence all over the globe through its consumer and media products and popularity of its theme park tourist destinations. Disney is primarily viewed as a “place” due to its theme park locations in America, France, Japan, and China; however, the company has over 180,000 employees in 42 countries, and its subsidiaries range from news outlets to retail stores. Between 2007 and 2010, the company completely restructured their approach to CSR and it is reflected through changes on the corporate Web site.

Disney’s image sets up a unique context for them in relation to CSR. Disney’s products seem largely intangible because of the ideologies associated with them. Disney’s mission is to make people happy, and that is difficult to valuate. From Home Depot or McDonalds, people buy tangible products, such as food or tools, but from Disney they buy entertainment, happiness, magic, and dreams. Yet, the public is also aware of Disney’s enormous wealth and power due to their far-reaching affiliations in the world of media, consumer products, and travel and tourism.
For these reasons, and more, it is vitally important that Disney is seen as a good corporate citizen that gives back to the community/world more than most companies. Disney has set a high standard of excellence for itself, and people expect the company to live up to it. McDonalds hamburgers fill stomachs, and that is important, but Disney characters put smiles on faces and fill hearts with joy—like family members, Disney characters become a part of some people’s lives from birth through adulthood—and people expect Disney to be good citizens.

In 2007, it was difficult to ascertain a direct representation of Disney’s CSR strategy or programs on their Web site. On the Disney.com home page it was not readily apparent where to find CSR information. Through determined searching, I found a text link within the footer of the home page to “Corporate Info.” From there, a small text link in the left menu navigation listed “Corporate Responsibility,” yet a tab at the top listed “Disney’s Outreach” leading to a page describing corporate philanthropy endeavors, and another listed “Environmentality” (Disney-speak) leading to a page about the company’s environmental commitments and activities. Basically, information relating to CSR was buried within the site, and was disjointed and fragmented with various portions of CSR programs located in different places. Once arriving at the pages containing CSR related information, such as the “Disney VoluntEARS” (Disney-speak) details, the information was engaging and well presented, but there was little context for the company’s overall CSR strategy.

In 2007 it was impossible to even find a mention of the corporate mission statement. In the past, as an employee of the theme park division of the company, the mission statement was a
prominent part of the first day of training. The mission statement as I knew it was “to provide the finest in family entertainment to people of all ages everywhere.” However, it was not prominent on the Web site. The most direct representation of the company’s mission listed on the Web site in 2007 was in the “Corporate Information” area of the site that stated:

The Walt Disney Company's objective is to be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information, using its portfolio of brands to differentiate its content, services, and consumer products. The company's primary financial goals are to maximize earnings and cash flow, and to allocate capital profitability toward growth initiatives that will drive long-term shareholder value.

The diversification of the company’s products led it to attempt to distance itself from completely relying on its “family” entertainment image; however, because the products most often identified with the name Disney, such as the theme parks, characters, and Disney Channel are primarily oriented toward kids and families, the company maintains the family image.

I mention this snapshot of Disney’s CSR Web site communication because it is a striking contrast to the CSR presentation on their site as of 2010. Between 2007 and 2010, Disney created a Senior Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility position along with an entire bureaucratic structure charged with integrating all CSR efforts for the company. The integration of the CSR functions obviously led to a complete restructuring of the company’s CSR
communication strategy. A review of the Web site in 2010 stood in stark contrast to the 2007 review debriefed above.

In 2007, after landing on the Disney.com home page one would have to be intentionally searching for corporate information to eventually get to the “About Disney” text link at the bottom of the screen. However, in 2010, once landing on the “Corporate Information” page, “Corporate Social Responsibility” was one of the five prominent tabs at the top of the page. Clicking the tab displayed a landing page with an overview of the company’s CSR strategy:

At The Walt Disney Company, we believe that being a good corporate citizen is not just the right thing to do; it also benefits our guests, our employees and our businesses. It makes the Company a desirable place to work, reinforces the attractiveness of our brands and products and strengthens our bonds with consumers and neighbors in communities the world over.

The Company has put in place a comprehensive, integrated approach to corporate responsibility, building on our established infrastructure for addressing crucial issues related to the environment, community, workplaces and product development. Special emphasis has been placed on how these issues affect our key audience of kids and families.

With the very first statement on the landing page (see fig. 1), Disney begins positioning citizenship and profit-making goals as working together rather than in tension with the statement: “At The Walt Disney Company, we believe that being a good corporate citizen is not just the right thing to do; it also benefits our guests, our employees, and our businesses.
Figure 1: Disney 2010 CSR Web Site Landing Page


To find out more about the company’s CSR activities, a link to an electronic version of the 2008 CSR Report was provided. It was intuitive to navigate the electronic report using headline tabs to move to each element of the CSR program, “Overview, Children and Family, Content and Products, Environment, Community, Workplaces, and Looking Ahead.” This main page of the report (see fig. 2) included photos and videos with voiceovers about the company’s activities in the six main areas of their program as listed above.
Figure 2: Disney 2008 Electronic CSR Report


The revamped corporate section of the Disney Web site, putting CSR into the main header and devoting one extensive section to the explanation of the company’s CSR structure and activities, establishes a context for stakeholders signaling that Disney accepts CSR as part of their business mission and is committed to being a good corporate citizen in addition to—or perhaps as a means of—making profits. By positioning the CSR information in the corporate context, without the Disney whimsy surrounding it, Disney attempts to persuade stakeholders (investors, shareholders, employees, consumers, etc.) that CSR is serious business.
CSR as serious business was further reiterated after clicking to the “Overview” section that immediately displayed a photo of and message from CEO, Robert Iger. On this page (see fig. 3), Robert Iger acted as corporate spokesperson to introduce the company’s commitment to CSR and explain the rationale. Iger’s photo establishes an authority figure that conveys a visual image of credibility. The photo shows Iger looking the reader straight in the eye, sincerely and intently. Again, a departure from the usual Disney rhetoric about magic and dreams, Iger’s message primarily appealed to logos, describing a rational connection between Disney and CSR. In the text of his introductory message, Iger set up several important points that continued to be reflected throughout the other sections of the report.
Message from Our CEO

Dear Stakeholders,

Over its 85-year history, The Walt Disney Company has brought great stories, characters and experiences to children and families the world over while endeavoring to be an organization that people want to invest in, work for, live near and do business with. While there’s always room for improvement, we seek to be a good corporate citizen and hope to be as admired for the way we do business as for the quality of the family entertainment we create.

There are good reasons for doing so. A strong commitment to corporate responsibility makes our brands and products more attractive. It strengthens our bonds with consumers. It makes our Company a more desirable place to work. And it builds goodwill in the communities in which we operate. All of this adds shareholder value.

There is something deeper too. Many years ago, Walt Disney spoke of the “awesome responsibility” he felt as a “shaper of the world of tomorrow.” Children and families are at the heart of so much of what we do at Disney, which is why setting positive examples through the entertainment and experiences we produce is critical to our business approach.

Disney has a wonderful legacy of charitable giving, of volunteerism and of environmental stewardship. We have long been a major supporter of children’s hospitals and wish-granting organizations around the world. We just celebrated the 25th anniversary of our VoluntEARS program, through which our Cast Members and employees have donated more than 5 million hours to the betterment of their communities. And, for over a decade, our Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund has supported habitat preservation and efforts to save endangered species.

First, he established that the relationship between CSR and the Disney brand is a natural one that is not new, but is receiving renewed vigor. He also stressed that CSR is not a flavor of the month program at Disney, but a continuous improvement process that involves the actions of everyone in the company, stating the goal as “further embedding corporate responsibility into Disney's business DNA, making sure it continues to be taken into consideration in decisions big
and small.” Iger also set up an important disclaimer in his message, basically saying “we’re not perfect, mistakes will still happen, but we’re trying in a big way.” In Iger’s words: “It is, in other words, the opening step in a long journey to greater transparency and accountability, and one which we hope you will find illuminating.” This disclaimer was echoed throughout other parts of the report, consistently noting that there is still a lot of work to be done in regard to CSR.

The “Governance” page (see fig. 4) included a sidebar of links into further information about the company’s CSR structure. Again, this information stressed the connection between Disney’s business and CSR, supported with facts and figures about CSR efforts. This logical appeal was supported by the format of the pages that were dominated by text, but with a complementary photo at the top emphasizing the page’s topic, such as the photo showing the structure of the top of the Team Disney headquarters building being held up by the seven dwarves. Other pages within the “Overview” section continued to set the tone for CSR as serious business, displaying an organizational chart for the CSR structure (see fig. 5) and a description of the company’s CSR divisions and classifications in chart form (see fig. 6).
Governance

The Walt Disney Company believes that good governance is integral to achieving long-term shareholder value. The company is committed to governance policies and practices that assure shareholder interests are represented in a thoughtful and independent manner. In pursuit of this commitment, the company’s Corporate Governance Guidelines have established the policy that a substantial majority of directors be independent of the company and of the company’s management. The guidelines also establish independence standards that meet, and in some cases exceed, the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange. Currently, nine of the 12 members of the company’s Board of Directors have been determined by the Board to be independent pursuant to these standards.

The Board of Directors monitors trends in governance practices to ensure that it continues to meet its commitment to thoughtful and independent representation of shareholder interests. The Board has adopted a number of practices that strengthen its ability to meet this goal, including elimination of a classified board, establishment of strict independence requirements, adoption of the requirement that a substantial majority of the directors (currently nine out of 12) be independent of management, and holding of regular executive sessions of the Board without management present. In addition, the Board’s Compensation Committee adopted a policy setting out the requirements for determining that the executive compensation consultant to the Committee is independent of management.

The Board has established committees to facilitate and assist in the execution of the Board’s responsibilities. The three most important committees are the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee, and the Governance and Nominating Committee. These committees are comprised entirely of independent directors. The company posts the charters of each of these three committees (as well as that of the Executive Committee, which serves primarily as a means of taking action

Figure 4: Disney 2008 CSR Report: Governance Page

Figure 5: Disney 2008 CSR Report: Business Integration Page

In the “Community” section of the CSR report, an obvious appeal to pathos became more evident. Photos with captions convey the goodwill of the Disney characters as they visit sick children, connecting characters and children to the company’s core brand (see fig. 7 and 8). Other photos and text in the “Community” section provided a sense of inclusiveness. Through
these photos one is lead to believe that everyone at Disney, not just Robert Iger, is dedicated to being good citizens.

Figure 7: Disney CSR Report: Character Photo 1

This section also emphasized Disney’s expansive reach and the fact that they are not just good U.S. citizens, but are good global citizens. In cities around the world, Disney mobilizes their employees through a program called “Disney VoluntEARS” that offers support to numerous other organizations at the local level. The visions of all types of employees from all types of cultures working as Disney VoluntEARS demonstrate the diversity of people and cultures that can be represented within one company in different locations, some of them immigrants or guest workers in that location, that can come together for common causes to make a difference. Not only the images, but also the text-based narrative of the report, pointed to details of how Disney VoluntEARS were making an impact on people in cities in America, Europe, China, and India (see fig. 9). Many of the VoluntEARS shown helping in their
communities were the same people that serve tourists on a day-to-day basis in their “real” jobs (see fig. 10). In this way, Disney presents workers as being rewarded for serving locally in the VoluntEAR capacity, although some scholars of globalization would argue that employee volunteer programs exploit low-paid workers.

Figure 9: Disney 2008 CSR Report: China VoluntEARS Photo

The emphasis on Disney VoluntEARS activity as shown in the report was an indication of the time and financial investments that Disney devotes to community service initiatives. The site reported that:

Disney supports employee volunteerism with a paid staff to organize and manage volunteer projects at our sites around the world. During 2008 alone, Disney VoluntEARS contributed more than 495,000 hours of volunteer service. Since the program’s inception 26 years ago, VoluntEARS in more than 42 countries have donated some 5 million hours of service.

In many cases, though not all, Disney VoluntEARS activities are performed during working hours and employees may be paid for the time. In that case, the company is paying the employee for
the service. In addition, the site also reports that in 2008 Disney donated more than $209 million in cash and in-kind support to various charities throughout the world.

The arrangement and comprehensive scope of the CSR report on the Disney site lends credibility to the message. The positioning of the report on the site, the consistent layout of the report, the tone of the text, and the supporting images provide a strong appeal to logos. Nothing in the report shouted “look at us, we’ve got it all figured out and we’re the best,” nor did it descend into a Disney character parade of meaningless propaganda. The report was convincing in its approach that Disney believes in being a good corporate citizen and was putting the structure and programs in place to prove it.

This research demonstrates that the Web was used in 2010 as an effective mechanism for reaching multiple stakeholder audiences with CSR messages. Various rhetorical strategies were being employed in the representation of CSR via the corporate Web site. A survey of the online CSR rhetorical strategies of The Walt Disney Company is an excellent model for comparing with other companies seeking to promote their corporate citizenship, and prompted the lines of inquiry and methodology for the research project presented in this dissertation.

Project Overview

Extending my prior research on Web-based representations and rhetoric of CSR at The Walt Disney Company, this study focuses specifically on CSR topoi and is broadened to include additional companies in the travel and tourism industry and additional types of texts. In this study, I include the CSR texts of six major companies within the industry that can be accessed
online (for example, Web sites, reports, press releases, and social media posts). In addition to Disney, the study includes Marriott International, Hilton Worldwide, Intercontinental Hotel Group, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide and Wyndham Worldwide, all of whom are among the largest hospitality companies in the world with each of the companies operating globally. Each of the companies devotes significant attention to CSR, and Disney, Marriott and Hilton have been recognized among the best corporate citizens in the world in various CSR ratings reports.

Using a blended methodology employing rhetorical and modified grounded theory, I analyze the CSR communicative and persuasive strategies of the six sample companies to identify topoi in CSR rhetoric within the travel and tourism industry in order to understand what these topoi are, how they work, and how they shape CSR arguments and stories. By recognizing the topoi, it should then be possible for corporate rhetors and their audiences/stakeholders (including critics) to better discern the kinds of arguments the industry is making, and how the arguments do or do not align with stakeholder concerns. Corporate rhetors could then strengthen or change their arguments to better connect with stakeholders. Likewise, the audiences/stakeholders could have a more precise framework for evaluating CSR communication and critically interpreting the arguments.

In addition, an underlying purpose of this study is to contribute to conversations about how topoi work by examining how a particular domain (industry) uses topical arguments to persuade stakeholders. My analysis does not just focus on ways that topoi are used for classification, but also how they are generative and fluid. Through this research, it should be
apparent that topoi can be flexible, conceptual vantage points that can reappropriate values and ideas (Scott, 2009). This research benefits academia as it further explores topoi and how rhetoric can impact the trajectory of business and its stakeholders.

The Rhetoric of CSR

In “Rhetoric and Corporate Social Responsibility,” Ihlen notes that “overall, the amount of literature on rhetoric and CSR is meager” (149). Ihlen points out that the research that has been done on CSR rhetoric by those such as Livesey (2002), Livesey and Kearins (2002), Livesey and Graham (2007), Ihlen (2009), Saiia and Cyphert (2003), and Onkila (2009), has resulted in three primary research streams: corporate advocacy or issues management, ethos or legitimacy, and the corporate role or aspects of morality (152). Ihlen goes on to use the rhetorical situation as a heuristic for analyzing the CSR communication of the top 30 companies on the 2009 Fortune Global 500 list. Ihlen’s analysis clearly shows how CSR is inherently rhetorical (153).

For example, one of the exigencies of CSR that can be addressed rhetorically is criticism of how a company conducts business. Companies involved in scandal have little choice but to engage in rhetorical responses to maintain or rebuild their reputations. Ihlen also addresses the audience of CSR as a diverse and complex rhetorical challenge demanding careful rhetorical consideration, since the audience for a company’s CSR communication ranges from governmental entities to individual consumers. Lastly, Ihlen analyzes the constraints within the CSR rhetorical situation. The primary constraint facing companies is the expectation by society
to communicate how they are responsible to a public that is reluctant to believe corporate claims (157).

Through highlighting these points in the CSR rhetorical situation, Ihlen is able to point out options available to corporate rhetors for creating, shaping, and responding to situations. As Ihlen explains, “By paying attention to the constraints of the rhetorical situation and juxtaposing them with the possibilities that also exist, or can be constructed and exploited, in that situation, we can recognize the collective discourse that has grown around CSR and that helps corporations to carry on with their business” (155). He goes on to write that more effective rhetoric is needed by corporations to both embrace CSR and engage appropriately with their diverse audiences, and notes that the CSR rhetorical strategies employed can differ by industry, circumstances and culture. It is the corporate rhetors’ job to successfully analyze the rhetorical situation at hand and craft fitting responses. Ihlen ends with a statement that underscores the importance of rhetoric in relation to CSR:

It is possible to conduct analysis of CSR rhetoric with an applied, as well as a critical, goal. In one corner, you find those who see CSR as beyond rescue—it is merely a tool for corporate domination—and, in the other, you find those who see CSR as the necessary path to a more humane form of capitalism. Rhetorical theory serves those in both corners. (160)

Coupland studied the specifics of how CSR is defined through argument on the Internet through analysis of four multinational companies in the oil producing and refining industry (358). A framework of argumentation repertoires was developed that focused on the appearance
of legitimacy, or fact (362). Coupland uncovered a circular relationship between business and society and called for further research in CSR rhetorical strategies (364).

Two studies review differences in CSR rhetorical strategies on corporate Web sites from a multi-national perspective. Maignan and Ralston researched the self-presentation of companies via their Web sites in the U.S. and Europe. The study employed a particularly detailed coding scheme to measure the content of the sites and their motivational value (499-500). Fukukawa and Moon focused on corporate Web site representations in Japan and compared the models of CSR there with those found in the U.S. The study focused on the language of disclosure especially within the dimensions of environment, community involvement, employee relations, and supply chain principles (49-50).

Other studies have also analyzed the discourse of CSR from various perspectives, and through traditional media as opposed to the Internet. For instance, Burchell and Cook used a critical discourse analysis approach to dissect several documents, such as the EU Green Paper, and support their premise that the discourse of CSR is not entirely in the control of businesses but that it is interactive and evolving (132). Notably, Livesey performed an exhaustive discourse analysis of Shell’s language concerning sustainable development pointing out metaphors and methodology (329).

Likewise, Ihlen and Roper studied the rhetoric of sustainability and sustainable development in non-financial corporate reports and concluded that sustainability and sustainable development are common terms and values (48-49). The metaphor of “balance” is used repeatedly in relation to the environment and socio-economic concerns, and the corporations
studied rhetorically implied that they have ingrained sustainability into their corporate culture (48-49). In their article, “Searching for New Forms of Legitimacy Through Corporate Responsibility Rhetoric,” Castello and Lozano note that “there is increased interest in rhetorical analysis as a building block of organizational theory” (14). To highlight the need for corporate legitimacy and how it is enabled by CSR rhetoric, they analyzed annual sustainability reports to conclude that corporations employ three types of CSR rhetoric to build and maintain legitimacy with stakeholders: strategic, institutional, and dialectic. In particular, strategic rhetoric links CSR to the overall corporate strategy. It embeds CSR as a core part of the organization’s purpose and supports the goal of revenue maximization (20).

**CSR and the Travel and Tourism Industry**

The CSR communication strategies of several industries, such as the oil and petroleum refining sectors, or those who have been singled out of the Fortune 500 list as having exceptionally good or bad CSR practices, have been studied in detail. However, research regarding online CSR activities and rhetorical strategies employed in the travel and tourism industry are not as prevalent. While CSR research has been growing over the past two decades, my literature search about CSR in the travel and tourism industry yielded few results compared to other industries, providing fertile ground for this study.

Font et al produced a study of the CSR disclosure-performance gap in the travel and tourism industry in 2012 and noted, “There is little information in tourism that assesses the state of CSR reporting although there appears to be growing interest in this area” (1546). The authors note that the studies of CSR in tourism have resulted in the finding that while “CSR is assuming
a greater importance for hotel chains…the message of the importance of CSR has yet to hit home” (1546). They reiterate this point when the article concludes with the statement, “There is then a clear role for continued independent scrutiny of CSR disclosures” (1552).

Mattera and Melgarejo also point out that “the effect of a business strategy including CSR in its main guidelines in tourism firms is an area that has been scarcely studied” (38). The authors state that “the tourism industry is particularly client-oriented, so it becomes essential to deliver the elements which will result in customer satisfaction, brand enhancement, value creation, and consequently a steady competitive advantage” (42). Roner (2006) and Nord (2006) have each noted that the hotel industry lags behind other industries when it comes to CSR.

It is surprising that more attention has not been paid to CSR in the travel and tourism industry since the sector is so large and has the potential to make a huge global impact through CSR. To frame the perspective about the size and economic importance of the travel and tourism industry, the World Travel and Tourism Council reported in 2013 that the industry generates more economic output that higher education, automotive manufacturing, mining, and chemicals manufacturing, and contributes the same share of global GDP as the global education and banking industries.

The importance of the travel and tourism industry in terms of employment is also pronounced. To frame the perspective about the size and importance of the sector relative to employment, the World Travel and Tourism Council reported that the industry is one of the leading job creators in the world with 102 million people directly employed in 2013 and 266 million people indirectly sustained through the industry. While many industries have offices in
several countries around the world, the travel and tourism industry has locations in virtually every city in the world. Having a large number of employees physically located throughout the world who are able to make daily, face-to-face contact with important stakeholder groups allows interesting CSR opportunities for businesses in this sector.

While many CSR studies focus on more traditional business perspectives, such as financial metrics or environmental impacts, my study explores the roles of rhetoric in shaping CSR efforts. The research adds to the area of rhetorical studies, on the topic of CSR specifically, but also acts as a model for using topoi for rhetorical analysis. Hospitality studies, where relatively little has yet been written about CSR, can also benefit from this new knowledge for the industry.

**CSR, The Travel and Tourism Industry, and Rhetorical Studies**

Persuasion lies at the heart of CSR, and because rhetoric is the art of persuasion, rhetoric lies at the heart of CSR. The travel and tourism industry spans the globe and is a highly competitive sector that depends on reputation and the satisfaction of stakeholders to be successful. For this reason, as well as others, it is extremely dependent on rhetoric to enact CSR efforts. An analysis of the rhetorical contexts faced by the travel and tourism industry reveals a number of exigencies that require rhetorical response. For instance, the industry is a heavy consumer of natural resources and producer of waste. Therefore, it is imperative that the corporations in the industry rhetorically present themselves as responsible citizens. Also, the audience that the travel and tourism industry addresses is vast, diverse, and complex, making the rhetorical situation challenging.
The challenging rhetorical situation presented by CSR and the travel and tourism industry provides new possibilities and opportunities for significant contributions to rhetorical studies. Understanding how rhetoric shapes the industry provides a more complete picture of CSR arguments, a notable benefit to rhetorical studies at large and to corporate rhetors in particular. This research provides an analysis of CSR rhetoric in the travel and tourism industry to help corporate rhetors understand how they are currently communicating CSR and the potential of rhetorically inventing new ways of communicating about the subject in the future. Through an accounting of the rhetoric about CSR in the industry, perhaps companies will feel additional pressure to continue to improve their CSR practices. By learning from a rhetorical analysis of CSR communication, corporate rhetors can become more aware of how the story constructed in the hospitality industry is rhetorically framed, and could potentially decide to change the conversation. In my experience as a corporate rhetor for over 25 years in this industry, I would find a study of this sort to be valuable.

Finally, this study blends the field of business with the humanities to contribute to a corpus of research that could be termed “the rhetoric of CSR.” Much in the way the studies of rhetoric and science previously brought together those respective fields, the rhetoric of CSR could lead to an entirely new body of research for rhetorical studies. Although the rhetoric of science has matured within the area of writing and rhetoric, the rhetoric of CSR is still in its infancy. However, CSR rhetoric has the potential to evolve to be a larger area of focus in rhetorical studies as more and more research projects of this sort, focusing on various industries and CSR rhetorical situations and strategies, are presented.
“Rhetoric of CSR” implies that CSR contains its own rhetoric, a subcategory of the rhetoric of business. Examination through the lens of the “rhetoric of CSR” carries the notion of mining CSR texts for their rhetorical components. Through studying CSR texts we can determine how they were put together and how that construction influences audience actions. How are CSR texts rhetorically framed, what are the arguments, and how can this knowledge help shape the ongoing discussions about the topic? The obvious issues inherent in CSR communication coupled with the gap in CSR literature for the travel and tourism industry, as well as the interest in CSR within rhetorical studies, make this project particularly timely and relevant.

Research Questions

The overarching purpose of this project is to discover what elements of rhetoric constitute topoi of CSR rhetoric in the travel and tourism industry. The primary research question is:

1. How are corporate rhetors using topoi to frame arguments and values about CSR in the travel and tourism industry?

Secondary questions that are answered to provide context and support the primary research question include:

2. What does the use of topoi reveal or suggest about the industry’s relationships (existing or desired) with its stakeholder audience?

3. What are corporate rhetors trying to persuade stakeholders of regarding CSR, and how are they doing it?
4. What can we learn about industry, CSR, and rhetoric from studying CSR topoi through blended theory?

**The Evolution of CSR**

CSR is not a new concept. The fundamental CSR debate, whether or not companies are in business for profit only or also have obligations to society, has existed since the advent of the corporation. As William C. Frederick, one of the leading CSR scholars in the U.S. since the 1950’s puts it, “The philosophical belief that those in power should be called to account for their power by those subject to it extends far back into human history” (57). Numerous studies have examined the evolution of CSR and its influence on society today (Anderson, 2004; Bais and Huijser, 2005; Barrett, 1998; Baumann, 2008; Benn and Dunphy, 2008; Burke, 2005; Campbell, 2007; Castello and Lozano, 2011, 2013; Cradden, 2005; D’Aprix, 1976; Dayal-Gulati, Finn, and Diermeiser, 2007; Ditlev-Simonsen, 2010; Edwards, 2005; Fishman and Cherniss, 1990; Freeman and Gilbert, 1988; French, Nesteruk, Risser and Abbarno, 1992; Hawkins, 2006; Himmelstein, 1997; Hollender and Breen, 2010; Hood, 1996; Houck and Williams, 1996; McIntosh, Leipziger, Coleman, 1998, 2003; Mitchell, 1989; Rubenstein, 2004; Sanders, 2008; Schultz, Castello and Morsing, 2013; Willmott, 2001; Wilson, 2000; Werna, Keivani, and Murphy, 2009).

Banerjee, in *Corporate Social Responsibility: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, goes back to the 1800’s when the concept and legal framework were established that made corporations entities with “no official or legal requirement to serve the public interest, which was the case when state charters defined the corporation’s identity and purpose” (10). Almost immediately
after the private corporation came into existence there began conflicts about public and private interests, and “any reference to ‘social good’ was at best symbolic and derivative in that the economic function provided the social good” (10).

The CSR debate continues today, with times of alternating intensities throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As DeChaine noted, “in only a few decades CSR rhetoric has expanded its reach from the exclusive purview of corporate biz-speak to inform a breadth of public discussion regarding proper relations between corporations, national governments, nonstate actors, cultural collectivities, and individuals” (76). The alternating intensity of focus on CSR through the years has corresponded with simultaneous cultural, social, technological, and political trajectories.

It is difficult to name a distinct start date for CSR as a topic of study and practice since many of the ideas of CSR have been around for centuries, but Frederick traces the roots and evolution of CSR strategy and practice as coalescing near the beginning of the twentieth century (6). In the 1920’s, “corporate philanthropy, social give-back philosophies, community service, the executive as public trustee, codes of conduct, religious guidelines” were already topics of discussion among the business and academic community. The Great Depression and World War II “stifled and slowed the widespread adoption of CSR by leading corporations” (7). It was then in the 1950’s, Frederick reports, “the doctrine of corporate social responsibility emerged in full view” (7).

Banerjee also points to the 1950’s as the primary awakening for CSR thinking as we still experience it today. Banerjee notes that starting in the 1950’s there was “an attempt to cultivate
civic virtue in corporations” (14). Likewise, Himmelstein points to the 1950’s when corporate philanthropy became an institutionalized function (14). Frederick credits “the Age of Mechanism” as the driving thrust during the 1950’s that drove the focus back to CSR. According to Frederick, business as “technology’s sponsor” coupled with the resulting rise of mega-corporations and the ensuing culture of consumption, led many corporate titans to ponder: “Should not business yield to society, technology to custom, economy to humanity?” (11). Attempts to answer this question maintained momentum throughout the 1960’s, and continue today.

The revolutionary social and cultural shifts of the 1960’s continued to propel the notion of CSR toward mainstream attention. Seven of the main thrusts of the 1960’s and early 1970’s that brought CSR to the forefront, according to Frederick, included: the civil rights movement, the ecology movement, the women’s liberation movement, the youth movement, the consumer movement, the anti-war/anti-militarist movement, and the work ethic revolt (27-28). Each of these movements in some way “stands in direct opposition to one or more central practices, values, or traditions of business” (29). For instance, with the enactment of equal opportunity/affirmative action mandates and environmental initiatives, businesses were subjected to laws and regulations that naturally drove them toward being more responsible. With the forming of consumer awareness groups (for example, Ralph Nader), as well as the rise of progressive shareholders, companies came under new pressures to move toward social responsiveness in order to remain competitive and profitable.
Michael Hopkins, in The Planetary Bargain: Corporate Social Responsibility Matters, also points to the 1960’s as the decade when CSR gained momentum and was “a period of enlightenment for many” (2). Hopkins points to the end of the Korean War and the beginning of the Vietnam War along with a citizenry in the U.S. that was “distrustful of government, of business, and of the undefined ‘establishment’” as a pressure point for CSR (2). He notes that consumers were growing more interested in the food and products they were consuming, the environmental effects of industrialization, and the overwhelming power being held by big business, and they outwardly began to expect and demand more accountability from both the public and private sector.

After the gains of the 1960’s, the 1970’s brought a renewed defense of the free market system and invigorated rejection of government intervention to the forefront, and thereby CSR initiatives were pushed to the margins. Frederick points to two landmark reports from the Council for Economic Development (CED) that illustrate the CSR shifts during the 1970’s. In 1971, the CED issued a report which fervently called on “business to expand its social horizon by thinking of itself as a socioeconomic institution,” positing that the social contract of business had shifted and more was expected of the corporation than ever before. Their directive was for businesses to react expediently to this shift by increasing their socially responsive posture.

However, the ensuing problems of recession, inflation, and massive drop in public faith in government of the 1970’s turned public attention squarely back to economic concerns, and by 1979 the CED had completely reversed its earlier position. In 1979, the CED issued another report stating, “the political and governmental system has reduced the effectiveness of markets
and the market system to the detriment of society” (49). This report advocated for “a largely unassisted free market as the engine of social and economic progress” (50). In eight short years the CED had gone from promoting a socially responsible business approach as the means for progress to reliance on an unfettered free market system as the answer to society’s ills.

The 1980’s proved to be a time of setbacks for CSR with government power unraveling and sinking to all-time lows and unregulated corporate power rising to all-time highs. This created a tremendous void for social programming normally supported by the government, and business did not fill the gap or create equilibrium as free market system zealots might lead people to believe. In the end, however, it was the supercharged pro-business/government deregulation environment of the Reagan Administration that helped to usher in the globalization explosion and the next push for CSR that began growing in the early 1990’s. This turning point for CSR is reiterated by Hopkins who states, “This concern for the social responsibility of business has even accelerated since the fall of the Berlin Wall, which symbolized the collapse of communism and (more importantly) has turbo-charged globalization” (2).

As Hopkins reports, “before 1991, relatively little literature or research existed in the area of corporate social responsibility…since that date, however, social responsibility has not only entered corporate acceptability but has also blossomed into a large number of activities” (26-27). DeChaine echoes this sentiment, stating:

An ostensible corporate social responsibility movement has taken shape in our time. Representing a discursive articulation of humanitarianism, development, citizenship, and business, and emerging as a response to pressures exerted on
corporate culture by an increasingly global civil society, the CSR movement is a preeminently rhetorical event—one that has contributed to a refiguring of public perceptions of the role of business and has given force to the humanitarian doxa marking our contemporary moment. (84)

Considering the time period of 1990 through the present as the “moment” constituting the “present” state of CSR that DeChaine mentions, one can see that the unprecedented changes occurring during that window of time would certainly correlate with the rise in CSR interest and activity. Globalization, the advent of the Internet, the dot com crash, September 11th, notable corporate scandals, and presidential administrations and ideologies as diverse as Reagan to Bush to Clinton to Bush to Obama, have continued to rock the foundation of both the public and private sectors. The result of these occurrences, and many more, including the continued rise of neoliberalism, will continue to shape the trajectory of CSR for the coming years and even further exacerbate the exigencies of the topic.

CSR: What Is It?

Godfrey and Hatch point out that “corporate social responsibility is a tortured concept within the academic literature. Sparked by a relatively simple idea—corporations have obligations to society that extend beyond mere profit-making activities—scholars have struggled to achieve a clear paradigm, let alone a common language to guide the conversation.” (87). Because CSR is such a contested topic and attempts to define it have been fluid, my research project aims to address fundamental questions about the subject, beginning with the simple questions: what does CSR look like rhetorically and otherwise, who is the audience, and where and how is CSR
information disseminated? Due to the complexities involving CSR, I also aim to explain why rhetoric is important to the study of the subject, and how we can understand more about its stakes and exigencies.

The concept of CSR is referenced by different terms and has a number of different definitions. In general, CSR is about managing a business legally and ethically, especially in ways that have positive results for society overall. As Hopkins states, “CSR is concerned with treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner” (1), although versions of CSR prioritize stakeholder groups in different ways. Other terms used synonymously with CSR include: corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy, corporate giving, corporate community involvement, community relations, community affairs, community development, corporate responsibility, global citizenship, and corporate societal marketing (Kotler and Lee, 2). In their book, Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause, Kotler and Lee define CSR as “a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources” (3). A key to their definition is the fact that CSR activities are discretionary or voluntary and not mandated by law (3).

Borrowing from Maignan and Ferrell, Matten et al focus on the concept of “corporate citizenship” to articulate a vision for CSR. Their view of corporate citizenship is “the extent to which businesses meet the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities imposed on them by stakeholders” (113). However, as DeChaine points out, “owing to the abstraction of the
words that comprise the term, CSR can be deployed by a variety of agents in a variety of contexts to express a variety of concerns” (79).

The exigencies to bring more structure and definition to what it means to act legally and ethically are illustrated in the above examples of the variety of definitions and terminology used to explain CSR. Bringing clarity to definitions and terminology is a central issue in furthering the study and implementation of CSR. These examples also show why rhetorical analysis is critical to greater understanding and communication about the topic.

**CSR and Neoliberalism**

Saad-Filho and Johnston name neoliberalism as one of the dominant ideologies shaping our world today (5). The neoliberal ideology posits that as much as possible should be left to the market with as little as possible being subjected to political processes or involvement by the government. Critical research focused on this dominant ideology has steadily emerged (Giddens, 1998; Chomsky, 1999; Campbell and Pedersen, 2001; Touraine, 2001; Rapley, 2004; Shamir, 2004, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Midttun, 2005; Plehwe et al., 2006; Reich, 2007; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011; Mirowski & Plehwe, 2009; Sadler & Lloyd, 2009; Steurer, 2010; Davies & McGoey, 2012; Kinderman, 2012). Much like CSR, neoliberalism is a contested topic, and not surprisingly, the two concepts are frequently intertwined in research. Many critics claim that CSR is simply another neoliberal impulse, albeit cloaked in goodwill.

Dingo makes the important point that neoliberalism “refers not only to market-centric policies, free trade, and the spread of global capitalism but also to how individuals ought to act” (10). In doing so, Dingo shows how neoliberal ideologies and policies infringe on social welfare.
This is a critical point for the study of CSR and rhetoric, because CSR in many ways interweaves the ideologies of neoliberalism and social welfare, and the resulting rhetoric requires a critical perspective in order to ascertain underlying motives and meanings.

Savevska argues that “CSR is not a counter force to neoliberalism, but a rather complementary occurrence, which…co-evolved with and reinforces neoliberalism” (70). The intersection, where CSR is situated between market needs and social needs, presents an irreconcilable situation to some. When market goals and social goals compete in a neoliberal society, market goals inevitably win out. CSR is seen as turning human needs into a commodity, with everything being given monetary terms, including corporate reputation. CSR activities thereby become another input to production. According to Savevska, “CSR does not transcend the market society; instead it provides us with a false sense of satisfaction, which in turn, prevents us from transforming the system” (73).

DeChaine points out the convergence of capitalism and social responsibility in his rhetorical analysis of Ethos Water. Ethos Water was founded on the premise that by selling water to consumers money could be raised for alleviating the clean water crisis in impoverished countries, as a portion of the proceeds for each bottle is donated to NGO’s. As DeChaine notes, the company is effectively promoting consumption for a cause, engendering a feeling in buyers of Ethos Water that they are helping others and making a difference through their consumer behavior, thus falsely making consumers feel they are socially responsible human activists (87-94). In this way, DeChaine acknowledges that “it can serve as an alibi for less than humane strains of globalized venture capitalism” (94). DeChaine questions whether the rhetorical Grand
Narrative established by Ethos serves to benefit those who need water (the powerless), those who buy water (the empowered), or simply capitalism (95).

Scott also points to how CSR can be re-appropriated for neoliberal market-driven goals in the pharmaceutical industry. Scott notes that the pharmaceutical industry uses the topos of sustainability to argue for a “Triple Bottom Line” of financial, social, and economic success (354). However, Scott points out “their arguments for the interdependence of profit and corporate responsibility mask how a focus on the former (i.e., profit) can work at the expense of rather than in concert with the latter (i.e., corporate responsibility)—for example, how patent protection efforts exacerbate health care crises in developing nations” (355). Scott shows how “ideologic” works to link competing discourses that “masks the tensions between them and redirects one to serve another, usually hegemonic, set” (356). Scott points out that the fluidity of the topos of sustainability enables the pharmaceutical industry to reshape their neoliberal aims that are “less-than-citizen-like” through a redirection of “civic engagement principles” (356). As the work of Scott, Dingo, and others reveal, neoliberalist approaches to CSR invite a study of topoi as a malleable way to frame and re-frame arguments.

CSR and Marketing/Public Relations Strategy

Much research focuses on CSR as a tool for public relations, specifically reputation and risk management (Bebbington, Larrinaga and Moneva, 2008; Castello, Morsing and Schultz, 2013; Clark, 2000; Cradden, 2005; Deluca, 1999; Frankental, 2001; Hollender and Fenichell, 2004; Marconi, 2002; Morley, 1998; Neef, 2003; Oliver, 2004). Robert E. Brown in his article, “Sea Change: Santa Barbara and the Eruption of Corporate Social Responsibility” tells of the same
range of dates (1950-present) for the emergence of the CSR topic as do Frederick, Hopkins, and Banerjee, but for a different reason than previously explored. Brown attributes the rise in attention to CSR to public relations strategies and the managing of crisis.

Brown dates a major thrust for CSR beginning in the 1960’s and points to the pressures of shareholder activism, government regulation, confiscatory excess profits taxation, and popular antipathy as forces pushing corporations toward “developing, promoting, and institutionalizing their philanthropic improvisations into standard operating philosophies” (2-3). Brown stresses the importance of understanding CSR’s historical context. Otherwise “a generation of students and managers may believe in error that social responsibility, today so smoothly engineered into the genetic code of branding, has always flowed through the marketing veins of global corporations” (3).

Many other authors, like Brown, also dwell on the marketing aspects of CSR and the literature focused on that perspective seems to be growing. The focus on environmental causes as part of a CSR marketing strategy has become commonplace for many companies over the past decade. In some instances, a company’s entire CSR program is solely focused on environmental initiatives. This is to be expected since, as Rubenstein points out, “the absolute most basic element of quality of life is the environment” (91), and virtually any corporation in existence has some environmental impact. The ever-increasing focus on corporate image has company’s jumping on the bandwagon to prove themselves good citizens in relation to environmental causes. Environmental causes are numerous, but one of the most obvious for any company to address as part of their CSR initiatives is climate change, another popular, yet complex topic.
Because of the attention on climate change by the media, government, and consumers, businesses are increasingly incorporating activities relevant to the environment into their CSR programs. One of the ways that corporations publicize their CSR activities is to take up the banner of climate change, or “global warming,” in their marketing campaigns more overtly than almost any other CSR related topic.

Kotler and Lee examine the trend of CSR activity, based on companies adopting a social cause and supporting it, in six different ways: cause promotions, cause-related marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, socially responsible business practices (23-24). These types of CSR activities have similarities and a company commonly will employ several of these strategies together at the same time. However, Kotler and Lee differentiate between the six social cause initiatives to treat them each separately:

Cause promotions are distinguished by the fact that they are supporting a cause by increasing community awareness and contributions to the cause. Cause-related marketing is unique in that donations to a cause are tied to the corporation’s product sales volume. Corporate social marketing is always focused on a goal of influencing a behavior change. Community volunteering involves employee and related franchise and retail partners’ donation of their time in support of a local cause. Corporate philanthropy entails writing a check or making a direct, in-kind contribution of corporate services and resources. And corporate socially responsible business practices, as implied, relate to the adoption of discretionary business practices and investments that then contribute to improved environmental and community well-being. (46)
Many companies are leveraging their CSR activities related to climate change using the methods Kotler and Lee describe.

**Ben and Jerry’s**

An example of a “cause promotion,” as opposed to the other CSR initiatives that Kotler and Lee explain, was the Ben and Jerry’s campaign: “Lick Global Warming” (see fig. 11). The mission of the campaign, a partnership between Ben and Jerry’s, the Dave Matthews Band, and savetheenvironment.org, was simply to educate people about global warming and persuade them to take action by writing to Congress, as well as making behavioral changes. The campaign was used by Ben and Jerry’s as a marketing tool to evidence their concern about CSR and promote their environmental activism.

![Ben and Jerry’s Lick Global Warming Web Page](image)

Figure 11: Ben and Jerry’s Lick Global Warming Web Page

Clorox

As part of the launch of the Clorox Greenworks natural cleansers brand in 2008, Clorox pledged to donate a portion of the product’s proceeds to the Sierra Club (see fig. 12). An example of cause-related marketing, the partnership of Clorox and the Sierra Club signals a win-win for both parties. Clorox can carry the Sierra Club logo on the Greenworks products leading to greater brand credibility as an environmentally safe cleaning chemical, and the Sierra Club receives a portion of the profits to use toward promoting the preservation of the planet.

Figure 12: Clorox GreenWorks Web Page

Starbucks

Starbucks used their homepage as an entry point into their CSR programs (see fig. 13), such as the “Starbucks: Shared Planet” campaign (see fig. 14), signaling that CSR is an important part of their overall branding and marketing. The goal of the Shared Planet program is to serve 25 percent of the beverages made in Starbucks’ stores in reusable serveware or tumblers (instead of paper cups). To accomplish this goal, Starbucks enlisted their customers to “Take the Mug” pledge on their Web site and commit to buying a Starbucks mug and using it when they buy coffee at Starbucks. As a reward for doing so, Starbucks provides a discount on the beverage purchase. When users click the link to “Take the Mug” pledge, a “Reduce Your Carbon Footprint” mechanism rolls over and shows the number of participants who have taken the pledge. Starbucks’ implementation of the Shared Planet promotion is a prime example of “corporate social marketing” as described by Kotler and Lee. Starbucks offers incentives to customers to change their behavior and make a difference to the environment by not using paper cups for Starbucks coffee.
Figure 13: Starbucks Home Page


Figure 14: Starbucks: Shared Planet Web Page

Timberland

The Timberland brand identity centers on nature, so it is not surprising that their commitment to CSR revolves around service to the environment. As part of their CSR strategy, Timberland established the Global Stewards program promoting their employee volunteer efforts, centered on the environment, in cities around the world. Their Web site promoted this worldwide effort to save the planet citing statistics as to the number of employees, hours, and environmental services that were donated through this corporate volunteering program (see fig. 15).

Figure 15: Timberland CSR Statistics

The Hewlett Foundation

One of the largest foundations in the U.S., the Hewlett Foundation, an affiliate of Hewlett-Packard, identified climate change as one of the most pressing matters on its philanthropic agenda. Their Web site (see fig. 16) described the rationale for their corporate philanthropy to this cause, and also the partnering foundations (for example, the Packard Foundation). In 2007, the foundation partners commissioned a study regarding climate change. The result was the report *Design to Win*, which concluded that philanthropic interventions in five sectors—power, industry, buildings, transportation, and forestry—hold the potential to forestall irreversible changes in the planet's temperature.

Based on this research, the Hewlett Foundation pledged $100 million per year over five years to ClimateWorks, “a clearinghouse for coordinating and supporting an international network of regional climate foundations in each of the world's top carbon-dioxide-emitting regions—the United States, the European Union, China, India, and Latin America, as well as one to monitor the preservation of forests.” The Hewlett Foundation’s concluding remarks regarding their philanthropic efforts in support of climate change echoes many other disclaimers on other sites promoting their CSR activities: “With the launch of ClimateWorks Foundation and Network, funders of this effort and others in the philanthropic world have made a start. But we cannot carry out its ambitious agenda alone. We look forward to joining with new partners to succeed in this most crucial of fights.”
Traditionally, cultural notions of the roles of business and government have been distinct, with the state in the role of overseer, legislator, and protector of the public, and business driving the economic engine. The shifts in business, government, culture, society, politics, and technology, among other factors, have challenged these traditional cultural notions of the public and private sectors. The lines have blurred between the two sectors, and CSR points to a trend where corporations and governments are moving toward a model of shared responsibilities (Sagawa and Segal, 2000).

Porter and Kramer believe the traditional notions of the public-private sectors are becoming outdated modes of operation in a globalized, information economy. They emphasize that financial and social goals are not distinct and competing “in a world of open, knowledge-based...
competition,” but instead can be strategically integrated (32). The entire premise of Hopkins’ book, is that the next thrust in promoting CSR is through public-private partnership, where businesses and governments work together systematically toward creating goodwill and influencing legislation and regulation to solve global and local problems. He calls for people and governments to set out a possible list of expectations for transnational companies in the future. This all-encompassing list incorporates the popular tenets of CSR definitions including, profitability, governance of accounting principles, adherence to environment and safety regulations, corporate philanthropy, good working conditions and labor practices, and transfer of technology (27). Hopkins notes the imperative from the UK government for a ‘new partnership’ between the public-private sections to eliminate world poverty, and “has warned companies that they cannot afford to ignore increasing consumer interest in the production of goods” (28).

Vogel advocates for the continued separation between public and private, but stresses the need for expanded cooperation and action by both:

The important complementary relationship between civil and government regulation suggests that the definition of a responsible corporation needs to be expanded. Corporate responsibility should be about more than going “beyond compliance;” it must also include efforts to raise compliance standards. In fact, the most critical dimension of corporate responsibility may well be a company’s impact on public policy. (129)

Vogel believes public sector regulations are a necessary foundation for CSR principles to be enacted by corporations because “private enterprise cannot be an effective substitute for good governance” (130). Vogel uses climate change as an example of how private companies and
government regulations can complement each other. He explains that if corporations believe they should reduce their carbon footprint and they can do it without impacting profits, then government regulation requiring firms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions should be a complement to private policy (131).

Boyd also makes an impassioned plea for an overhaul of the terms that separate “public” and “private,” calling the distinction a “bankrupt dichotomy” (283). Boyd contends that “corporations cannot be dismissed as ‘private’ intruders on the public sphere, but should instead be embraced and studied as appropriate participants in public discourse” (280). Boyd defends corporations and their participation in matters of democracy noting that “in the age of disappearing boundaries between that which is public and that which is private, government is just as complicit in the suppression of individual voices as is industry” (284). Citing numerous examples, Boyd argues that “corporations are accountable to the public, both legally and rhetorically” and the public/private dichotomy that demonizes corporations as against society and idealizes governments as “for the people” is no longer viable (289). Both governments and corporations have public and private sides and both need to be heard in societal discourse.

However, public/private partnerships and expanding the role of corporations in public policy formation on global issues is a complex proposition. Hopkins raises the questions of the boundaries between what business and government can expect from each other when they form mutually rewarding partnerships (26). Matten et al argue that corporations should not compensate or correct for government failings (116). Further development of the opportunities and constraints inherent in such partnerships is required for the public/private sectors to work
successfully together to achieve the major, urgent changes needed for solving the world’s social ills on an expanded scale.

**CSR and Accountability**

Schultz notes, “the nature of organizational rhetoric has made it difficult to determine accountability for messages and actions” (165). This is especially true because rhetoric, as displayed on corporate Web sites, tends to decenter through the use of synecdoche. Using “we” to describe a company’s actions “diffuses individual responsibility for the action” (165). Schultz recommends a “postmodern approach to accountability” in order to reconcile rhetoric with reality in a “highly technological, turbulent marketplace” (167).

Chaudri and Wang, who studied CSR communication among the top 100 information technology companies in India, point out the “credibility challenges” (235) that businesses face when they willingly communicate CSR information beyond what is required by law. Optimistically, Chaudri and Wang posit that “CSR communication and action are interrelated functions rather than mutually exclusive. In other words, although CSR communication may or may not be an accurate representation of CSR action, there is reason to expect increasing congruence between communication and action” (235). Esrock and Leichty concur that CSR rhetoric and reality will inevitably converge because “empowered publics will increasingly demand real information while rejecting one-sided persuasive pitches” (306).

As Esrock and Leichty explain, “the era of new communications technologies has been characterized as ‘the end of organizational secrets’” (308). The increased transparency, forced by technology improvements in the postmodern world, naturally places increased pressure on
corporations to do the right thing. Therefore, Chaudri and Wang and Esrock and Leichty, along with Schultz, conclude that a company will not promote itself as a responsible citizen if the company cannot back up the claim. Based on this conclusion, the authors basically posit that if a company is promoting CSR, there is at least some truth to their claim.

The strategies described by Kotler and Lee and illustrated through the examples represent relatively new marketing approaches that incorporate CSR into brand building and profit-making. Further research is required regarding how well companies live up to what they profess in relation to CSR marketing. As Lantos contends: “Social responsibility is a balancing act: business must balance economic performance, ethical performance, and social performance, and the balance must be achieved among various stakeholders” (9). Over time, through rigorous research and monitoring of corporate public relations strategies in relation to CSR commitments and successes/failures, it should grow increasingly apparent as to how accountable companies truly are for their CSR rhetoric.

**CSR: Who Is The Audience?**

Ong termed an audience a “collectivity” (11), suggesting that though people individually read, they can function as a whole if they share interests. He suggested that the writer “construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role,” thereby enabling writers to imagine an audience around which they can shape work (12). The CSR audience is vast and diverse, making audience analysis another problematic element in the CSR sphere.

While it could be possible to conceive of the CSR audience as every consumer in the world that has interest in the topic and access to the Internet, the field can be slightly narrowed from
that broad spectrum down to those groups that are considered a corporation’s stakeholders (McPhail, 2006; Morsing and Schultz, 2006; Phillips, 2003; Roberts, 1992). Freeman’s book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, is a seminal work in defining stakeholder theory. According to Freeman, stakeholders consist of anyone who has a stake in a corporation and can influence its ability to remain in business. Freeman points out that stakeholders are any group that can affect a corporation, whether or not the corporation affects that group. As Douglas Park noted, “To learn how to systematically analyze audience in discourse…it seems best to avoid the metaphor, to replace the question, ‘who is the audience?’ with a set of more precise questions as to how the piece in question establishes or possesses the contexts that make it meaningful for readers” (252).

Drawing on his conception of stakeholders, Freeman expanded on previous notions of stakeholders and identifies them as: Owners, the Financial Community, Activist Groups, Customers, Customer Advocate Groups, Unions, Employees, Trade Associations, Competitors, Suppliers, Government, and Political Groups (1984). Some stakeholders may have overlapping membership in these groups, for instance, employees who are also customers. Freeman goes on to identify the “stakes” that exist between the corporation and each of the stakeholder groups. He notes that the challenge for developing corporate strategy, such as CSR programs, depends upon the weighting each stakeholder group receives based on how much power the stakeholder has to affect the firm.

Studies on stakeholder theory and the relationship of stakeholders to CSR strategy have expanded in recent years. These studies point out the idea that communication with stakeholders
is problematic. It is difficult for a corporation to speak only to one stakeholder group in its communications, such as through a Web site or CSR report. In most cases, corporate communications have to address all stakeholders who can have conflicting motivations and therefore differing needs for information. The arguments that may resonate with one stakeholder group, may be contrary to another, especially as influences of diverse stakeholder groups, such as consumers, publics and progressive shareholders, becomes more intense. These growing influences make a study of the topoi presented in a complex rhetorical situation even more valuable.

**CSR: Where and How Is Information Disseminated?**

CSR information can be communicated to stakeholders via traditional channels or new media (Berger, 2000; Cox, 2010; Esrock and Leichty, 1998; Frostenson, Helin and Sandstrom, 2011; Maignan and Ralston, 2002). Traditionally CSR information has been included in corporate materials such as annual reports, financial reports, press releases, speeches, and stories in major and local presses. With the rise in popularity of CSR, many companies also develop stand-alone CSR reports that go into more in-depth detail about their activities than in the annual report. Some companies now develop advertisements to communicate their CSR activities. With multiple options for new media, companies can package CSR information in numerous ways for distribution through social media and various other popular channels.

As Corbett notes, companies have the need to communicate their good works, and increasingly they are doing that through their Web sites (252). Dissemination of CSR information now primarily occurs via the Internet, where stakeholders can view corporate Web
sites, online reports, videos, photos, press releases, and social media posts. However, CSR information may also be distributed through printed annual and CSR reports mailed to shareholders, through advertisements and press releases in printed publications or on national television, and via face-to-face interactions through speeches. Some companies have printed signage or literature promoting CSR at their corporate offices or on in-store displays. For instance, a common tactic in the travel and tourism industry is for hotels to display printed material in hotel rooms promoting CSR initiatives and encouraging patrons to save water and electricity during their stay.

While the Internet is an ideal communication channel for a corporation to disseminate information quickly, easily, and cost-effectively, it is not without its complexities. Organizations are not able to control the flow of information to specific stakeholders as readily through the Internet as they are in more traditional media forms (Snider, Hill, and Martin, 176). Even so, a recent study showed that over 85 percent of the Web sites managed by Fortune 500 firms addressed at least two stakeholder groups (Snider, et. al. 177). In addition, web pages differ from printed text in that they are nonlinear, cause the user to choose a sequence of information, change regularly, and can have the added dimension of multi-media effects like sound, video, and other animation (Pollach, 279).

A CSR Illustration

The example of British Petroleum (BP) offers an illustration of CSR that incorporates several aspects mentioned in this study, such as CSR as public relations and marketing, as well as pointing out the gulf between rhetoric and reality that sometimes exists. It is this space between
rhetoric and reality that cause many critics to doubt that CSR is little more than a neoliberal enabling mechanism, or a marketing and public relations ploy. This example also illustrates one reason why CSR communication may not resonate with the public—because the reality does not align with the rhetoric, and is constantly interacting with other, sometimes conflicting rhetorics.

In a 2002 article in *Harvard Business Review* entitled “What’s a Business For?,” Handy introduced a number of practices that corporations should initiate to improve their social responsibility and responsiveness (74). Handy named several high-ranking executives who were committed to CSR initiatives, among them was John Browne, then CEO of BP, who Handy called “one person who is prepared to do some of the necessary advocacy” for CSR. Browne is quoted from a 2000 speech as saying:

> The business community is not in opposition to sustainable development but is in fact essential to delivering sustainability, because only business can produce the technological innovations and deliver the means for genuine progress on this front. And business needs a sustainable planet for its own survival, for few companies are short-term entities; they want to do business again and again, over decades. (78)

It was also in 2000 that BP launched the multi-million dollar “Beyond Petroleum” public relations campaign to position itself as a CSR leader. Banerjee notes that the company’s investment in alternative power sources between 1995-2001 was $200 million, less than the company’s annual advertising budget at the time (55). Further, BP spent $8.5 billion on fossil fuel exploration in 2001 alone and pledged another $15 billion for Gulf of Mexico exploration and drilling between 2000 and 2010 (55-56). BP’s CSR focused marketing campaign prompted
Fortune magazine to comment in 2002 that “if the world’s second largest oil company is beyond petroleum, Fortune is beyond words” (55).

Surprisingly, BP was ranked within the top 10 of Fortune’s 2004 list of “America’s Most Admired Companies.” The list was based on a survey of 10,000 executives and securities analysts. Survey respondents ranked companies on a scale of 0 to 10 according to eight criteria: innovation, financial soundness, employee talent, use of corporate assets, long-term investment value, quality of management, quality of products/services, and social responsibility. In the context of the survey, social responsibility was defined as “responsibility to the community and/or the environment” (Kotler and Lee, 14-15).

Fast forward to 2006 when a Forbes magazine article entitled, “Can Corporations Save the World,” BP was cited as “the poster child of CSR gone wrong” (Adler). At the time of the 2006 Forbes article, BP had faced a pipeline leak in Alaska, the explosion at their Texas City refinery, and an oil spill in California. In addition, BP had been caught covertly paying UK soldiers to train Colombian soldiers to secure BP pipelines in Colombia, leading them to be suspect to “dealing with private armies, paying off drug dealers, and so on” (Hopkins, 120). These incidents were enough to convince the article’s author that their CSR efforts were all talk, no action, although even as recently as 2008, Tim Sanders in Saving the World at Work, named BP as a first wave innovator, pioneer, and “fast follower” in the “responsibility revolution” he believes is underway (67).

The Forbes article explains that BP’s public relations efforts were misguided at best, stating, "BP became obsessed with image campaigns that diverted money and management attention
from its core business with tragic consequences for its workers, the environment and shareholders…BP should have put money into safety and maintenance, not glitzy PR; their real responsibility is to safely and effectively produce oil." Following the Forbes article, BP issued a statement regarding their foibles and commitment to move forward, stating, "These events are unacceptable to us, and we regret and apologize for them. We have $7 billion dedicated to our U.S. safety and integrity effort, and earlier this year announced plans to spend an additional $1 billion over the next four years to improve operational integrity and process safety in our U.S. refineries" (Adler).

Unfortunately, within four years, the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded, 11 people were killed, and what has been called the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history occurred. BP publicly apologized and vowed to learn from their mistakes so they can do better in the future. Despite the company’s promises of going “Beyond Petroleum” and investing in worthy environmental improvements, including alternative energy sources, within short order they faced one crisis after another that did not uphold the image they were attempting to convey. For numerous reasons, the BP disaster helps to illustrate why all of the tenets that Betsy Atkins describes in the article “Is Corporate Social Responsibility Responsible?” are necessary. Rather than responsibility meaning just philanthropy or adherence to laws, Atkins’ description points to CSR encompassing a broader set of responsibilities:

Be transparent in your financial reporting. Produce a quality product, and don’t misrepresent it. If you know something about the product that endangers the consumer, be forthright and let the public know. Do not use predatory practices in offshore
manufacturing, such as child labor. Do not pollute your environment or other environments, and adhere to laws and regulations. Be respectful, fair and open in your employment practices. (Atkins)

Likewise, the stakeholder theory that underlies the premise of CSR (who is a business responsible to or for?), is notable in the case of BP. The primary constituents comprising the stakeholders of the firm include “shareholders, employees, customers, and the community in which it operates” (Davidson, Knowles, & Forsythe, 45). BP betrayed each of its stakeholders in the Deepwater Horizon incident.

BP’s Deepwater Horizon incident challenges and reinforces key claims in the CSR literature. Campbell, in “Why Would Corporations Behave in Socially Responsible Ways? An Institutional Theory of Corporate Social Responsibility”, outlines two ways to measure whether a corporation is practicing CSR. First, he proposes a ‘do no harm’ philosophy. As long as a company is not intentionally doing something that could harm stakeholders, they can be said to be acting socially responsibly. Next, Campbell suggests that if actions of a corporation do cause harm to its stakeholders, “they must then rectify it whenever the harm is discovered and brought to their attention. Rectification could be done voluntarily or in response to some sort of encouragement, such as moral suasion, normative pressure, legal threats, regulatory rulings, court orders, and the like” (951). Campbell defines these two approaches to measuring the CSR efforts of a company as a “minimum behavioral standard” for the corporation’s relationship with its stakeholders.

When pondering why good companies do bad things, Schwartz and Gibb posit “that the world is a complicated place, that none of us can control every feature of our environment, and
that, as a result, accidents happen” (177). Schwartz and Gibb go on to list reasons why “good companies fail to prevent bad things from happening” (177). Among those reasons are letting their commitment to a particular project or product overwhelm all other considerations—financial, ethical, or social, considering ethical and social issues as concerns of someone other than senior management and failing to create a culture that takes nonfinancial risks seriously (177).

Since 1990, BP had a consistent history of wrongdoing ranging from the dumping of polluted waste in Alaska, mismanagement of facilities in Texas and Ohio resulting in deaths and environmental damage, to the pipeline leaks in Prudhoe Bay, and to paying millions of dollars in fines for safety violations at its facilities. Regardless of the image campaigns BP has promoted, a cycle of continuous misdeeds point to an inherent system-wide flaw (Lustgarten and Knutson, 2010).

BP is a model study for CSR rhetoric and reality, pointing to the dichotomy between what companies say they do and how they actually perform. They created an image of themselves as a good corporate citizen, while their actions continued to misalign with their message. As Schwartz and Gibb point out, good companies will sometimes do bad things, and this will most likely continue regardless of how embedded CSR becomes in society and individual companies. However, this should not cause corporations and consumers to abandon the idea of CSR, but instead further propel the study and implementation of CSR and measures of success. The concept and application of CSR is dealt a blow each time a company claiming to be a reputable citizen is proved to be less than a credible example. BP is a prime example of the power of
rhetoric considering their enormous efforts to promote themselves as good citizens and their subsequent malfeasance.

**Chapter Outline**

This chapter provides important details on the impetus for this study. By explaining my prior research within this field, I have established how and why the current study is an extension and expansion of previous findings. Explaining the purpose of the current research, research questions, and the exigencies and stakes of CSR overall, and within the travel and tourism industry specifically, established the foundation for the remainder of the study. The remaining chapters are grounded by the information provided in Chapter One.

Chapter Two focuses on methodology. First, the chapter explores rhetorical and topological theory that I use in this research for identifying topoi in CSR texts. Then, the specific methodology, including how I employ modified grounded theory and NVIVO software for coding, is included. The chapter details the samples, sites, and specific procedures of the research. The remaining chapters build on this foundation of theory and method to culminate in the identification and analysis of the CSR topoi in the travel and tourism industry and further possibilities for research.

Chapters Three and Four present the results of the research, and how the results answer the primary and secondary research questions. These chapters explain how common CSR topoi, such as Triple Bottom Line (TBL), shared value, and rhetorical theory guided the identification of textual cues and subsequent coding. The chapters provide a detailed discussion of the
interpretations and impacts of the research. The topoi discovered through the study, and new insights about topoi, are analyzed and discussed.

Chapter Five reiterates the context and results of the research, and proposes applications for the findings. The chapter highlights the benefits of the research to rhetorical studies and to corporate rhetors, while explaining the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes by proposing extensions of the study for future research and pedagogical purpose.
CHAPTER TWO

“What the writer of a rhetoric has to do is to round up the patterns that inform the coherent use of our language, to place them in some sensible order, and to discuss their logical implications”

(Bailey, 114).

This research study analyzes CSR communication through a rhetorical lens. Specifically, my purpose is to determine the topoi that are framing the arguments of CSR in the travel and tourism industry. I analyze the rhetorical topoi employed in online texts of select companies in the industry. The end result provides the narrative that corporate rhetors are using to shape the view of CSR for individual companies in the industry, and for the sector overall. The expected outcome will be greater awareness of CSR rhetoric for the industry and rhetorical studies, and guidance for corporate rhetors when working to align their discourse with their purposes. The methodology used for the study includes textual analysis through a rhetorical lens to draw out recurring themes through thematic elements, rhetorical appeals, visuals, words, phrases, and interpretations. The research questions are addressed through a blended approach using rhetorical analysis and modified grounded theory.

Theory

The terms commonplace, topos, and topoi are used in this research to note the underlying rhetorical theory employed in the study. Topos is a complex idea involving the concepts of topic, place, argument, audience awareness, common language, mediation of information, and
more. The theory of topoi has a long history, spanning the time of Aristotle to the present, and has been included in numerous studies with varying intensity throughout that time period (Dearin, 1989; Farrell, 1993; Gross and Dearin, 2003; Gross and Walzer, 2000; Jost and Olmstead, 2004; Kennedy, 2003; Killingsworth, 2005; King, 1975; Lanham, 1991; Lechner, 1962; Leff, 1983, 1993, 1996; Miller, 2000; Miller and Selzer, 1985; Miller, 1998; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Rapp and Wagner, 2013; Scott, 2009; Van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2007; Wallace, 1970, 1989; Prelli, 1989). For this reason, I provide a brief overview of the concept and then explain how the theory is interpreted and used for the purposes of this research.

The term, commonplace, originated with Aristotle’s concept of topos (topics); however, as Kennedy points out, Aristotle did not provide a clear definition of topos (33). Though ambiguous, Aristotle’s work laid the foundation for the idea of topos as a place from which arguments are developed. Aristotle established two categories for topoi: common topics and special topics. Other classical rhetoricians expanded upon Aristotle’s conceptions of topos. Quintilian noted that acknowledging familiarity with a subject can enhance argumentative effectiveness (Lechner, 36), and includes topos in exercises that prepare people to be “an adept user of language” (Murphy, 2001, 62). Cicero, Hermogenes, and Theon, among others, believed that topoi amplified arguments. They used the topos as shorthand to connect with and impassion audiences based on shared principals and narratives.

The purpose of the topoi was often to establish values, such as good or bad, through the use of praise or blame. Topoi were used in ancient Greece to persuade judges to exact punishment, prompting Theon to call commonplaces “powerful speech amplified, moved and
become effective by the use of maxims” (Lechner, 21). Lechner explains the commonplace as a “rhetorical device brought into the main speech from outside the cause being pleaded. Its primary purpose is to persuade to action, to teach, to move and to delight” (73).

The “new rhetoric” brought modern approaches to commonplaces and topoi through the works of Leff, Miller, Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman, Prelli, and others. Recent commonplace scholarship provides increased depth and detail about topoi, and therefore can serve as more effective starting ground for modern arguments. Henry St. Maurice explains that, “although it is treated as a synonym for everyday and familiar terms, the commonplace is an elusive concept, often hiding complex assumptions and contradictory positions in plain sight” (10). While they may not be readily apparent, topoi exist in almost every modern argument, and uncovering and examining their use can help to more effectively understand and construct new arguments about complex common and specific topics (Ross, 2008).

In ancient times, commonplaces and topoi were interchangeable terms, meaning the same thing essentially, as topos translates to place, hence common topos translates to common places. However, in modern times, commonplaces and topoi are related concepts and often linked when writing about topical arguments, but are not exactly the same. Although every commonplace is a topos, not every topos is a commonplace. Their differences primarily stem from the fact that there are distinctions between common and specific topoi. Common topoi are also known as commonplaces because they are universal. Special topoi only apply to certain rhetorical situations, therefore, they are not automatically considered commonplaces (Crowley and Hawhee, 2008).
As this brief description of the evolution of topos/topoi/commonplaces illustrates, the subject can encompass a number of theoretical possibilities. As Prelli notes:

To inquire into what may be said about something is to inquire into the prevailing and possible modes of connection, association, and dissociation known to a culture, a society, a community of scholars, a particular audience...In order to ‘come upon’ or to ‘find’ what can seem probable or plausible to listeners of the type given by a rhetorical situation, one needs a strategy of inquiry, a heuristic procedure. That is what exploration of topoi, or topics, is. One can canvas the general classes and types of things thought and believed about one’s subject and draw from that canvas the particular ideas that will probably seem persuasive about a particular point presented to one’s particular audience. (64-65)

I rely on the topological work of classical and modern rhetoricians to ground my research, using several of their concepts to serve as guiding principles: common and special topoi; topoi as heuristic; topoi for association and amplification; and, topoi as fluid and unfixed. Each of these guiding principles about topoi is detailed in the sections to follow.

Common and Special Topoi

King explains that Aristotle originally developed a system of common, universal topoi that accounted for ways in which information could be related to each other. Aristotle reasoned that a set of fourteen terms of common topoi (for example, “essence,” “quantity,” “quality”) was a comprehensive index of content arranged by category in memory storage. Special topoi, King notes, were also topical systems, but were specific to certain subjects. Special topoi were
categorical like common topoi, but were not universal. King writes, “when people are asked to recall a list of previously learned items (words), they tend to do so by retrieving them in ‘clusters’ of related words, and the better the clustering the better the recall” (6). Central to topological theory, both common and special, is how well information is organized into hierarchical categories, the degree of categorization possible for humans, and whether a single, higher level ‘cue’ can ignite the recall of everything in a category (King, 6).

In *The Rhetoric of Science*, Prelli provides an in-depth study of common (general) and special topoi, explaining the difference being that special topoi are “field-dependent” (75). According to Prelli, when rhetors share a “field of interest” or “community of experience” with an audience, the use of field-dependent topoi in the discourse promotes unity (75). Prelli notes that “without clusters of commonplace ideas and familiar patterns of thinking, a field of discourse would not be discernible” (76). Using field-dependent topoi builds identification between a rhetor and members of communities of experience.

Two other studies that also examine special topoi include Scott’s research on CSR rhetoric in the pharmaceutical industry, and Miller and Selzer’s review of field-dependent topoi in the engineering sector. Through topical analysis, Scott unpacks the topos of sustainability and Miller and Selzer identify systems of topoi specific to those who work as engineers. Both analyses illustrate the construction of arguments within specialized discourse, and how special topoi can work to persuade audiences according to “specific genres, institutions, or disciplines” (Miller and Selzer, 316).
Topoi as Heuristic

In “The Aristotelian Topos: Hunting for Novelty,” Miller posits that the topos is a heuristic device for generating arguments. Miller explains that topos “functions rhetorically as a conceptual place to which the arguer may go to find arguments” (2000, 132). Miller describes that “topics have been conceived alternatively as pigeonholes for locating already existing ideas and as generative patterns of thought or methods of analysis” (132). Essentially, topos functions as a conceptual building block or vantage point for viewing and developing arguments. Miller stresses the “generative potential of the familiar, the possibility of novelty within the commonplace” (134). She sees topos as a conceptual space or container where one looks to search for arguments (141).

Leff argues for the use of topoi when framing and re-framing arguments. As Leff describes:

The topics act as resources for the discovery of elements that might enter into the construction of an argument. They offer material—timbers or planks to follow a metaphor that Cicero himself uses—that may prove useful in constructing an argument and which, when combined with other resources, contribute to appropriate management of a case. (447)

Leff calls topoi “heuristic devices that encourage the innovation of ideas,” as well as “regions of experience from which one draws the substance of an argument” (23-24). Using topoi to generate arguments can rhetorically motivate the audience by swaying them with familiar, common information.
McKeon was also a proponent of using topoi as heuristic. McKeon argues that topoi are helpful in generating arguments “by which issues that have never been considered before suggest distinctions and relations to be examined in search for solutions” (53). McKeon viewed topoi as spaces where the familiar and unfamiliar can be brought into contact with each other in a way that spurs invention and discovery (35). In addition, topoi are connecting places that represent relationships between ideas that can then be used as heuristics for creating knowledge and generating discussion.

*Topoi for Association and Amplification*

Miller describes topos as “a point in semantic space that is particularly rich in connectivity to other significant or highly connected points” (140). Lechner called commonplaces “speeches-within-a-speech” that provide audiences familiar ways to understand unfamiliar arguments (21). St. Maurice considers topoi an innovative way to connect communicators with audiences because they enable rhetors to “figuratively discover common ground among diverse interests” (12). He notes that topoi allow new possibilities for solving new problems in ways that seem familiar (12). He associates commonplaces with common sense, because they are easily accessible reference points that appeal to broad audiences (23). In St. Maurice’s view, “commonplaces should be broad avenues on which various parties can find each other to take joint action, rather than dead ends that defeat interaction” (23).

In addition to being connecting points, Lanham explains that topoi are general arguments, observations, or descriptions people can memorize and use for various purposes (169). If a rhetor understands the audience, familiar themes can be placed in arguments to amplify audience
reaction and more effectively persuade them to agree with the argument. Rather than introducing new material to an audience, topoi draw on an audience’s memory and concepts they already find agreeable. As Leff illustrates, topoi “function to punctuate the speech, rendering it ‘distinguished’ or brilliant’ by refreshing the audience or rousing it emotionally at the right moment” (1996, 447). However, as Ross points out, commonplaces are not simply about emotion, but also serve “to take an audience to a predictable place (mentally) and get them thinking along a specific path. The commonplace is a recurring theme, structure or phrase which elicits or amplifies predictable patterns of emotion or thought” (2008, 25-26).

The Fluidity and Movement of Topoi

Dingo provides grounding in how rhetorical movement can affect outcomes in her book, Networking Arguments: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism, and Public Policy Writing. Dingo highlights the topos of gender mainstreaming to point out that rhetoricians must not only look at “static rhetorical occasions,” but also examine “how rhetorics travel—how rhetorics might be picked up, how rhetorics might become networked with new and different arguments, and then how rhetorical meaning might shift and change as a result of these movements” (2). In tracing how “gender mainstreaming rhetorics circulate within various policies,” Dingo argues that they are “networked with new and sometimes conflicting ideologies” (6). Based on her extensive research she shows “how rhetorical meaning is not always stable. Rhetorics can shift and thus, have drastically different material effects” (6). Dingo concludes that “although topoi like gender mainstreaming appear to have a universal definition, meaning shifts as topoi transverse
geopolitical contexts and exist within different policies” (7).

Scott provides a framework for topical analysis in his article, “Civic Engagement as Risk Management and Public Relations: What the Pharmaceutical Industry Can Teach Us about Service-Learning,” by identifying specific topoi that are inherent in CSR’s global appeal. As Scott explains, “a topos is not necessarily a fixed place or perspective pointing in a single direction but can be a mobile, malleable trajectory that shifts in response to competing and interrelated cultural forces and processes, such as ideologic” (346). This is particularly relevant to a society largely focused on neoliberal tendencies. Central to the study of CSR is intent. Many believe that the intent of corporate social responsibility is to re-appropriate rhetoric to make corporate practices more palatable as they serve the ultimate aims of neoliberalism.

St. Maurice echoes the belief that topoi are fluid, noting, “Commonplaces are not fixed entities that can be transported intact into various circumstances, but must be reconstructed each time they are used. The processes of reconstruction require full inquiry into the assumptions, circumstances, and consequences of words and deeds” (22). Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman point to the fluidity of topoi stating, “It is amazing that even when very general loci (commonplaces) are concerned, each locus (commonplace) can be confronted by one that is contrary to it: thus, to the classical locus of the superiority of the lasting, one may oppose the romantic locus of the superiority of that which is precarious and fleeting” (85). This statement is especially applicable when considering the appropriation and re-appropriation of rhetoric within a society heavily focused on neoliberal approaches. Along that line, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca go on to note that “it is accordingly possible to characterize societies not only by the
particular values they prize most but by the intensity with which they adhere to one or the other of a pair of antithetical loci” (85).

*Topoi in CSR*

In relation to CSR and rhetoric, topoi function as familiar narratives designed to motivate stakeholders to think or act in specific ways. Specific topoi are chosen and constructed to resonate with specific audiences. They act as a frame to generate arguments that resonate with the intended audience. Audiences associate with them because these topoi because are familiar and comfortable. I posit that CSR arguments are rhetorically constructed through the use of special topoi. I expect to show how common thematic elements play out in CSR argumentation in the travel and tourism industry, conduct textual analysis to determine topoi specific to CSR and the travel and tourism industry, and identify how knowledge of these topoi and how they function will contribute to rhetorical studies.

My guiding thoughts about special topoi in the travel and tourism industry’s CSR efforts are driven by both my research on the topic and my experience of participating in CSR initiatives at Disney. These guiding thoughts are centered on two concepts that I consider common CSR topoi: Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and ‘shared value.’ The TBL is a phrase initiated in 1994 by the founder of the consultancy, SustainAbility, in an effort to bring context around the aims of CSR. The categories of the TBL, people, planet and profit, function as a means to measure the financial, social, and environmental performance of a company, and have become central to CSR discourse (Elkington, 1997; Savitz and Weber, 2006; Willard, 2002). Shared value, as presented by Porter and Kramer in the *Harvard Business Review* article “Creating Shared Value,” presents
a new framework that redefines capitalism and how business, society, and government work together to solve global and local problems. Basically, shared value means that a company’s CSR efforts are balanced by the aim to provide value to both the company and the stakeholders.

Based on my Disney experience, I have seen and participated in many worthwhile projects that provided great value to a community cause, and also benefitted the company. Therefore, “shared value” is a common CSR topos that I believe Disney would employ in CSR rhetoric. One example to illustrate this special topos is the Disney alliance with the Heart of Florida United Way. Disney is the largest contributor to the United Way in the Central Florida community, so their value to the organization is clear. However, the value is shared, because Disney’s support of the United Way in such a large capacity also produces returns for the company. Many Disney employees use United Way services, there are tax breaks to the company for contributions, and there are public relations rewards for the Disney brand.

The rhetorical concept of hermeneutic depth also guides my inquiry into CSR and topoi. In “Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism,” Ceccarelli discusses the polysemy that exists in texts, and suggests that recognizing hermeneutic depth in a text with multiple meanings can enable a rhetorical critique to acknowledge that “both an interpretation and its opposite are sustained by the text” (408). Ceccarelli uses the example of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as an illustration of hermeneutic depth, because one reading of the memorial “sees the war as a just battle and the dead warriors as heroically represented by the engraved names. The other sees the war as unjust, with the names representing a body count that memorializes the victimization of our nation’s youth” (408). A rhetorical critique employing hermeneutic depth
would “perceive the contradictory messages embedded in the text and by recognizing that none of these contradictory messages are fully supported by the text, we can appreciate the larger truth it encompasses” (408). According to Ceccarelli, focusing on a ‘both-and’ polysemy in a text enables a rhetorical study to be “less concerned with explaining and judging…and more concerned with developing a unique reading of the text that encompasses and tolerates all possible readings” (409).

This study acknowledges the hermeneutic depth of CSR in the travel and tourism industry. CSR texts are polysemic, and I read them from a ‘both-and’ perspective. Ceccarelli defines ‘resistive readings’ as those that seek to critique and oppose one of the multiple readings of a text (399). I did not conduct a resistive reading of the CSR texts included in this study so that I could oppose what they contain or present counterpoints to the messaging. Instead, the scope and purpose of this study was to review and analyze existing CSR texts produced by six sample companies in the travel and tourism industry in order to determine how certain rhetorical strategies function within them. At various points in the study I mention some of the multiple meanings of CSR or CSR texts, such as the discussion of neoliberalism in Chapter Two or the fact that employee volunteerism can be read by some as an exploitation of workers. However, it is outside the scope of this study to articulate the multiple meanings and counterpoints to CSR, instead I acknowledge that multiple and inconsistent messaging occurs in CSR texts that need to be confronted, and propose implications for such a project in the Chapter Five conclusion.
Methodology

The sample for the analysis consists of six companies in the travel and tourism sector: The Walt Disney Company (Disney), Marriott International (Marriott), Hilton Worldwide (Hilton), Intercontinental Hotel Group (Intercontinental), Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide (Starwood) and Wyndham Worldwide (Wyndham). Disney, Marriott and Hilton were selected because they are large, global companies and are the only three hospitality companies named on the Reputation Institute’s CSR RepTrak Top 100 list of companies that have been rated as the best corporate citizens in the world by over 45,000 consumers across 15 countries. Intercontinental is not named on the RepTrak Top 100 list of best corporate citizens, but was selected because it is the largest and global hospitality company in the world with almost 5,000 hotels, 700,000 rooms in 100 countries around the globe. Likewise, Starwood and Wyndham were selected because they are among the top 10 largest, global hospitality companies in the world, Starwood with 1,200 hotels in 100 countries and Wyndham with 7,410 hotels and 190 timeshare resorts worldwide. Because these six companies are so large in size and scope, and three were included on the Reputation Institute’s RepTrak Top 100 list, I expected them to have robust CSR programs.

The primary sites for the research were external texts of the six sample companies that were available online: CSR Web sites, CSR reports, CSR press releases, and CSR social media posts. Available online texts dated between the years of 2010 and 2014 were included in the study. For instance, the CSR report of each company that was available online, dated between 2010 and 2014, was included in the study.
I relied on a blended methodology of grounded theory and rhetorical analysis to conduct this research. Grounded theory was introduced by Glaser and Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967), and later extended by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and others (Goulding, 2002, 2005; Hunter, Subashini, Egbu and Kelly, 2005; Pandit, 1996; Schreiber and Stern, 2001). While grounded theory was originally designed for qualitative research in the social sciences, its applicability to other disciplines is also evident. Goulding points out that grounded theory is highly applicable for qualitative studies in organizational and marketing research, especially those related to “ethical marketing, social marketing, green issues and experiential consumption” (297).

In grounded theory, an iterative process is followed, allowing comparative analysis to generate categories and hypotheses as the research progresses. As Ross explains, “grounded theory allows a highly granular approach in which found categorical associations inform secondary assumptions, which then allows for revisitation of idea and structure, necessitating constant rethinking and reproblematizing of data until categories and understandings finally gel” (98). Grounded theory is especially applicable for qualitative studies that involve large amounts of data, and this approach seems particularly fitting for teasing out the topoi from CSR rhetoric.

Grounded theory traditionally relies on a lack of preconceptions about the subject under analysis. However, due to my previous CSR studies, as well as my personal experiences with CSR while working for Disney, I enter this project with several “hunches” about the topic. For instance, I have a hunch that much of the CSR communication that exists is focused on environmental initiatives and volunteerism. Also, I am likely to look for instances of the TBL
and shared value models that I know to be common CSR topoi. Therefore, my approach was a slightly modified grounded theory method as I do carry several preconceived notions about CSR and was somewhat using the research to determine if and how those notions play out in the findings.

My choice to use grounded theory is based on Ross’ study in which he used grounded theory to identify commonplaces of environmental rhetoric based on tourist interviews about the environment. Ross’ research focuses on the rhetoric of science and technical communication and he used grounded theory methods to develop a coding system for the text of transcribed tourist interviews. Based on the coding method, Ross’ study resulted in twelve modern topoi of environmental rhetoric that he then analyzes “in relation to their topical fluidity and managerial, generative, and encapsulated utility” (91). Ross’ research on the rhetorical topoi of environmental rhetoric is valuable to technical communicators developing documents for environmental policy and communication, and also serves as a methodological model for my study of CSR topoi.

Ross used NVIVO 8 software, a qualitative data management software tool, to code and manage text. Likewise, I used NVIVO 10 for coding and organizing text for analysis. NVIVO 10 acts like a digital corkboard for the movement of information, allowing data imports of texts that can then be systematically analyzed as components and arranged into categories. Data can be linked to show relation and achieve granularity. The program is helpful for deconstruction of a whole into its smallest component pieces, as well as holistic pictures of data. NVIVO 10 enables easy access to component parts of information.
The process of coding information is central to this study. Through coding, topoi emerge as overarching topics and subtopics. The method for coding and conceptualizing topoi for this research is adapted from Corbin and Strauss’ explanation that grounded theory coding “represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data” (1990, 57). Coding, defined by Strauss and Corbin as “the analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory” (3), is further explained by Creswell as “the process of organizing the material into ‘chunks’ before bringing meaning to those ‘chunks.’ It involves taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant (called an in vivo term)” (2003, 192).

Open coding (the first iteration of coding by case) involves close and interpretive reading of the texts to analytically uncover and label words, phrases, and interpretations. The interpretation and analysis of categories and sub-categories is deepened and tested through axial coding (the second iteration of coding across cases). During axial coding, relationships between and among the categories and sub-categories are established. Open coding separates data into concepts and categories, while axial coding makes connections between a category and its sub-categories to put the data back together in new ways (Pandit, 1996).

Finally, selective coding (the third iteration of interpreting the cross-company categories) integrates all the categories to form “core” categories. Any poorly developed categories and sub-categories are noticeable during selective coding. Selective coding enables the forming of the
theoretical framework and the generation of the “story” that is occurring within the data (Pandit, 9). Creswell summarizes the coding process in grounded theory as “generating categories of information (open coding), selecting one of the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial coding), and then explicating a story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding)” (191).

The research steps begin with collecting online texts for each of the six sample companies through analysis of each company’s Web site as well as online archive searches. Each company’s texts are established as a “case” within NVIVO. Each CSR-related Web page, CSR report page, press release, etc. is individually loaded into its case, according to the attributes of Text Type (Web site, CSR report, press release, social media post.) and Year of Publication (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014).

Next, I work with one case at a time to perform a close reading of each page of text within the case. During this reading, I use a common CSR topos, TBL, to guide coding and provide structure and a starting point to the hunt for topoi. I tag items of interest in each paragraph of the page, such as words, phrases, headings, interpretations, etc. according to the high-level categories of the TBL. These tags become “nodes” within the case in NVIVO. After items of interest within all pages in the case have been tagged within the top level categories, I have a long list of “nodes” that I code into topical sub-categories to identify topoi that may be specific by industry or company relative to people, planet and profit, basically organizing and making sense of the nodes for that particular case. I then move to the next case to perform the same procedure, which continues for each of the cases.
At this point, I have six distinct cases, each with its own set of coded topical categories and sub-categories and then note topoi within the data by company. I compare the coded categories across all the cases, and combine them to build cross-company topoi. A separate set of categories is created based on the likenesses between the codes of the sample companies, establishing the set of rhetorical CSR topoi in the travel and tourism industry. It is at this point where I go back into the data of each case to “test out” possible topoi and their variations to refine categories. Doing this, I am able to note topoi that may be specific by company.

A third iteration of analysis begins as I compare the data in the rhetorical topoi sets that I have established using other features within NVIVO, such as the word frequency tool. Employing the word frequency tool to identify the most-used words in the set of cases results in identifying concepts that I missed during coding. For instance, if a word appears frequently within the cases that did not register prominently enough to be included in the set of topoi that I have established, it could signal that I need to re-examine the cases for additional categories of commonalities. In addition, I compare the topoi according to its attributes to identify whether there are features within the topoi that may be significant, such as changes in the topoi over time (differences in texts created in 2010 than those produced in 2012) or by type of text (differences in Web site rhetoric as opposed to CSR reports).

Testing and comparisons of the data establish the set of topoi that I feel is most accurate overall, and I interpret the data to form overarching topoi that are applicable across cases. That is, what does the set of topoi indicate about the larger connections that the companies are trying to make with stakeholders to persuade them, or how are they appropriating or re-appropriating
language to appeal to the audience? This involves segmenting the topoi into the larger conceptual categories that complete the textual analysis of the research. At this point, I expect to have a set of topoi indicative specifically for the travel and tourism industry, and possibly sets of topoi specific to individual companies within the industry. Using the TBL to start this process, I move from a common CSR topos into specific CSR topos within travel and tourism companies to special topoi for the industry. I then move into forming the findings of the research and what the findings indicate about CSR and rhetorical topoi.

In line with the grounded theory methodology, theoretical memos can be used during each step of the coding process to track the iterative process of identifying categories, subcategories, and emerging topoi, as well as any observations made during testing and comparing categories and resulting topoi. Upon completion of this research, a digital archive of the CSR texts and all associated memos will be stored for future reference and research. The completion of the rhetorical analysis per this method renders a list of topoi being employed by the sample companies as of this point in time. These topoi construct the story that is currently being created about CSR in the sample companies particularly and by extension in the hospitality industry universally.

Below is a step-by-step example of what this research process may look like in action:

1. Disney CSR Web site pages, CSR reports, press releases, etc., are obtained online.
3. The individual elements (pages) of the texts are loaded into the case by attribute.

4. Each page within the case is analyzed and items of interest are coded along the way as they are identified to create “nodes” for the case in NVIVO.

5. After all texts for the case have been tagged, a long list of ‘nodes’ exists for the case which are basically words or phrases, such as: giving, volunteers, partnerships, ethics, transparency, bottom-line, values, etc.

6. Nodes are then combined and a count provided. For instance, if there is a node coded as “philanthropy” occurring 28 times in the case, it becomes one node with 28 occurrences.

7. Categories are then created, named, and tested based on similarities between the nodes. For instance, if there are nodes labeled “giving” and “donations” they could be combined into an overall category called “contributing to charities”.

8. After all cases have been analyzed and categories established for each, then all categories are compared across the companies to establish the primary categories that are common to all. For instance, if “contributing to charities” appears as a category in all six cases, then “contributing to charities” will become one of the cross-company topoi, along with all the corresponding nodes from all cases that fall under that category.

9. Once a set of topoi that is common across cases is established, other NVIVO tools will be used to make comparisons or note anomalies. For instance: if a word frequency analysis is run on the texts and it is noted that the word “revenue” appears more than 10 times in the texts, but it is not included in the topoi that has been established, it may indicate that the cases need to be reviewed again to investigate this concept. Also, the topoi will be
examined by attribute and it may be noticed that though “contributing to charities” is an established topoi, it did not appear in any texts in 2010. I could then address this anomaly to determine the cause and meaning for this occurrence.

10. After I have exhausted testing and comparisons of the established topoi and made adjustments and observations, I then interpret what the topoi indicates overall and potentially group topoi again that signal a framework for the topoi of CSR rhetoric. For instance, if two of the discovered topoi include “contributing to charities” and “return on investment”, perhaps this could be interpreted to mean that the larger commonplace at play is “shared value” where the companies see CSR as a two-way street where they are committed to doing things to benefit society and feel that it is appropriate to receive a reward for doing so.

Following this method of analysis, the topoi are used as conceptual building blocks. Instead of starting with larger concepts and attempting to search the texts to find evidence that support them, I am beginning from the bottom and building up to the conceptual framework. The story of CSR in the travel and tourism industry is analyzed by identifying the actual topoi within texts of the sample cases, and from those discoveries the larger framework of CSR topoi in the industry can be interpreted. Chapters Three and Four explain the results of the method, adjustments made in execution, and an analysis and discussion of the topoi and implications.
CHAPTER THREE

“There are clearly recognized patterns in time, and fictional techniques utilize them commonly. There are also clearly recognized patterns in space, and descriptive writers use them. . . . Then there are logical patterns. From the logical conventions of induction we derive the pattern of 'details' and of 'illustration.' A modern rhetoric would concentrate on the sorts of logical connections between facts, things, events—whatever we call the stuff of our thought. And its primary tasks would be to consider those connections in a systematic way and to explain their logical assumptions with some thoroughness.” (Bailey, 115).

The primary aim of this research was to understand how corporate rhetors are using topoi to frame arguments and values about CSR in the travel and tourism industry. In doing so, a secondary aim was to identify how the industry is attempting to relate to and persuade stakeholders. Through this, I hoped to uncover new knowledge about industry, CSR, and rhetoric. Chapter Three explains how these aims were accomplished through a detailed analysis of the unique topoi identified for each of the companies studied. Chapter Four furthers the analysis with the results and discussion of what was discovered holistically in relation to topoi, CSR, and rhetoric for the overall industry.

I began the study by downloading a sample set of 162 online CSR texts from the Web sites of the six sample companies: Disney, Hilton, Intercontinental, Marriott, Starwood and Wyndham. The texts included CSR reports, Web site pages, social media posts, and press releases that spanned the period of 2010-2014. The texts were loaded into NVIVO 10 for coding.
and analysis, rendering 334 categories out of 1,021 coded references. The three overarching headings of the CSR Triple Bottom Line—People, Planet, Profit—served as a starting point for organizing categories. However, as coding progressed and refinements were made, it became clear that many thematic elements within the texts did not neatly fit into one of these main categories, and some were variations of this idea. Therefore, I created “Other” as a fourth category to account for situations where significant words or phrases did not align under People, Planet, or Profit, or crossed several of the categories. For example, in the Disney texts, a frequently occurring phrase that had particular significance was “creating a brighter tomorrow.” The phrase, while important to capture, did not fit logically into the existing main categories and was coded under the Other category.

During the coding process for each company, I followed a standard procedure of analyzing the oldest available CSR report first, followed by any associated texts from the same year. Next, I analyzed the available CSR report from the following year and any associated texts from that same year. For example, I analyzed the Intercontinental CSR report from 2010 first and then other available texts from 2010. Next, I analyzed their 2011 CSR report and then other available texts from 2011. In doing so, I established the CSR report as the foundation for the company’s CSR messaging, and then determined if associated texts from the same year were consistent with that messaging. Likewise, I was able to determine if message strategies changed from one year to the next.

I also followed a standard procedure of coding all texts of each sample company separately. For instance, I did a complete analysis of all of the Disney CSR texts and established
a set of Disney CSR categories before looking at any texts for any of the other companies. I then
analyzed all the texts for Hilton and established a set of Hilton CSR categories before looking at
texts for any of the other companies. I followed this process as I analyzed the texts for
Intercontinental, Marriott, Starwood, and Wyndham, in that order. Setting up separate sets of
categories in this way enabled me to identify a unique topos, that was specific to the company’s
discourse. Subsequently, I was able to cross-categorize the results of each individual company to
refine a final set of topoi that were shared across all the companies. The cross-categorization of
individual company categories resulted in what I consider to be topoi for the travel and tourism
industry.

During the coding process, I went through five steps using the texts and certain guiding
principles. The first three steps were focused exclusively on each company. The final two steps
were performed comprehensively combining across all the data for all the companies. The
coding process followed the overall method explained in Chapter Two, but I incorporated
adjustments as needed during the tactical execution of the process in order to glean as much
meaning from the collected data and interpretation of the data as possible. A summation of the
process and coding guides is explained in the narrative below and summarized in table 1.
Table 1
Coding Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Guides</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Company Specific CSR Reports</td>
<td>Triple-Bottom Line: People, Planet, Profit, Other</td>
<td>Close reading to code words, phrases, interpretations according to Guides</td>
<td>Partial List of company-specific codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rhetorical appeal, Heuristic use, Amplification, Association, Fluidity, Conceptual Vantage Point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Company Specific Associated CSR Documents</td>
<td>Same as Step 1, plus the words, phrases and interpretations coded in Step 1</td>
<td>Close reading to code words, phrases, interpretations according to Guides</td>
<td>Fall list of company-specific codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All Company Specific CSR Documents</td>
<td>Similar codes by company</td>
<td>Group related codes into sub-categories</td>
<td>Company-specific sub-categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All CSR Documents for all companies</td>
<td>Similar sub-categories for all companies</td>
<td>Group into related sub-categories</td>
<td>Unique topoi by company, Overall industry sub-categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Industry sub-categories</td>
<td>Same as step 1</td>
<td>Interpret sub-categories to determine commonplaces</td>
<td>Special topoi by industry, Characteristics of the special topoi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, I did a close reading of the company’s CSR reports. Throughout this close reading, I was guided by the high-level categories of People, Planet, Profit, and Other. In addition, I used the concepts about topoi that were explained in Chapter Two as guides, including the generative potential of phrases, the use of words for amplification and association, and CSR messages that appeared in the text with different conceptual vantage points.

As I read, I also noticed words and phrases that were repetitious or that had particular rhetorical appeal. In addition to coding words and phrases from the actual text, I also created
codes labeled with my interpretation of what was in the text. For instance, after reading a passage from the 2013 Disney Citizenship report, I created a code entitled “Act responsibly and business will prosper.” These words were not literally written in the text in this way, but it was my interpretation and summation of a passage or section of the document. I placed the codes within the high-level category where they were most relevant. For instance, I placed the code “Act responsibly and business will prosper” into the Profit category. When a word or phrase did not fit neatly into People, Planet, or Profit because it was unrelated to one of the three, or it crossed more than one of those categories, I coded it in the Other category.

Second, I did a close reading of the associated CSR texts for the company, such as press releases or Web pages. At this point, I had the high-level categories as a guide, as well as the codes I had created during the reading of the CSR reports. Therefore, I continued to code words, phrases, and my interpretations, and also used the codes created from the CSR reports as a guide. Using the codes from the CSR reports assisted me in looking for repeated messages in the associated CSR texts.

Third, I reviewed all codes created for the company and grouped them into sub-categories according to their relevancy. For example, I created a sub-category entitled “Awards and ratings” that allowed me to combine 51 codes relating to CSR accolades that had been mentioned in the Wyndham texts. This resulted in a final set of sub-categories by company that encompassed all data collected for that company.

Next, I compiled the list of sub-categories that had been created for each company into one set of company-specific categories. I then combed through the long list of sub-categories to
identify likenesses between them. I was able to condense the number of sub-categories by combining them across the list, without regard to company. The resulting list of sub-categories grouped all data together into related groups except for six sub-categories. The six sub-categories that did not fit together with the other identified groupings became the unique topoi for each company that is discussed in this chapter.

During the last step in the process, I analyzed the grouped sub-categories that were common across all the companies. For instance, all six of the sample companies had sub-categories relative to CSR awards and ratings. When all the similar codes and sub-categories relevant to awards and ratings were reviewed and analyzed, they were grouped together as “Accomplishments and Accolades.” I then analyzed and interpreted all the groups to create the list seven topoi that were common across the industry. The seven resulting topoi and the implications are discussed in Chapter Four. Figure 17 provides a sample illustration of the coding process that resulted in the special industry topos of sustainment to show the iterative nature of moving from granular details to high-level topical concepts.
The process described above is an example of how rhetorical analysis and grounded theory can be blended to result in new knowledge. Throughout the process, my review and analysis of data included guidance by rhetorical concepts, enabled through the procedural mechanism of grounded theory that moves between high-level categorizations and granular level details. As I went through the research procedure, I was simultaneously making rhetorical assumptions and decisions and operating within the coding mechanics of grounded theory. My analysis included detailed level analysis of words and codes, at the same time employing high-level concepts and categories. Using grounded theory, my study and resulting findings did not...
move linearly high-level to detail-level analysis, but instead moved between high and detail levels of analysis at various intervals.

I began the analysis with the high-level categories of the Triple Bottom Line and guiding principles about topoi to direct my coding. The first and second steps in the process resulted in granular level codes, known in grounded theory as open coding. The third step resulted in a combining of codes to create sub-categories by company using axial coding per grounded theory. The fourth step resulted in a combining of company sub-categories to create both a granular level of unique topoi by company, and the higher level sub-categories common across all companies, requiring the use of axial and selective coding per grounded theory. Finally, in step five, the grounded theory method of selective coding was employed to figure out core variables common across all the data to identify the special industry topoi and associated characteristic topoi. A summation of how the coding procedure shifted back and forth between open, axial, and selective coding, granular, and high-levels, and the resulting outputs is displayed in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Grounded Theory Coding Type</th>
<th>Analysis Levels</th>
<th>Guides</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>High-Level</td>
<td>Triple-Bottom Line Categories</td>
<td>partial list of Company-specific codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Granular-level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Granular level</td>
<td>partial list of company-specific codes</td>
<td>Company-specific sub-categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>high-level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Axial</td>
<td>granular</td>
<td>full list of company codes</td>
<td>company specific sub-categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>high-level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Axial and Selective</td>
<td>Granular-level</td>
<td>Company-specific sub-categories</td>
<td>Unique Topoi</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>High-level</td>
<td>Cross-company sub-category groupings</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>High-level</td>
<td>cross-company sub-category groupings</td>
<td>special industry topoi</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Granular level</td>
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<td>characteristic topoi</td>
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Using NVIVO 10 proved to be helpful and efficient for conducting the research for this study. The tool allows for online storage, organization, and coding of different types of texts thereby eliminating the need to print the hundreds of pages of documents that would have been required otherwise. I was able to easily create categories as I coded words and phrases. When I went back into each category, I was able to click on the codes that I created and automatically be linked to them in the document where they originated. Additional features of NVIVO 10 tabulated the number of coded references by category, source, and date, saving time as I progressed through the research. Other features enabled me to quickly create word frequency lists as I refined codes and categories across companies, and cross-reference related categories for different sources. Due to creating all of the research within NVIVO 10, I now have an online archive of this study that can be used for easy reference.

The research resulted in a set of CSR topoi that were unique to each company, and a set that was common across all the companies. In addition, the research generated new insights into the subject of topoi overall. This chapter details the analysis of each individual company and the resulting CSR topos that identified it. Chapter Four details the topoi that were identified as being shared across all companies, and the resulting insights about topoi for rhetorical studies.

Strategic Ambiguity

One result of this study was a topos employed by each company that was unique to the company, and not shared across the sample set. The unique topoi for the sample companies is shown in table 3. As mentioned above, the unique topos of each company was a result of coding repetitious words, phrases, themes, rhetorical appeals, and my interpretation of textual cues. The
topoi identified for each sample company function as topoi primarily because of one of the guiding principles described in Chapter Two: they help the audience to make associations and amplify the familiar. However, they are also somewhat ambiguous. Borrowing from Ceccarelli, I invoke her description of “strategic ambiguity” (404) to explain why this is the case.

Table 3
Unique Topoi by Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Unique Topoi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disney</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilton</td>
<td>Higher Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercontinental</td>
<td>Collaborative Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriott</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starwood</td>
<td>The Age of Great Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyndham</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Ceccarelli contends that strategic ambiguity is a form of polysemy that is planned by an author and results in “otherwise conflicting groups of readers converging in praise of a text” (404). She uses the example of Madonna music videos and the multiple meanings interpreted by differing groups, including men who see her as a “sex kitten,” and young girls who see her as a strong woman asserting herself over the dominant patriarchy (405). According to Ceccarelli, strategic ambiguity can be considered as an Aesopian form when “the skilled rhetor gives hope to an oppressed audience through the insertion of a hidden, subversive subtext” (405). Another type of strategic ambiguity is used as a tool by dominant regimes to appeal “to the powerful
while placating the marginal just enough to keep them from openly rebelling against the discourse and the system it supports” (405). Lastly, strategic ambiguity can be an author’s way of simply “increasing the popularity of a text” (405). The main point about strategic ambiguity is that it enables a rhetor to employ one message to appeal to diverse and conflicting groups “each of which has its own reasons for favorably receiving the text. If that text has a larger message that is undisturbed by the alternative interpretations, then the popularity of the text may serve to promote that larger message” (405).

It is difficult to ascertain which form of strategic ambiguity the six sample companies are employing, because all three of the forms described by Ceccarelli could apply to the unique topos of each sample company. For instance, Hilton’s unique topos of Higher Purpose invokes positive and aspirational thoughts. It could give hope to an oppressed audience and placate the marginal with the vision of having a higher purpose beyond the squalid life they may be enduring. Simultaneously, it could be appealing to the powerful that might believe that they are where they are due to their higher purpose. Likewise, having a higher purpose is a popular mindset in modern self-help and self-improvement vernaculars, so its use as a Hilton topos could simply leverage that popularity.

As mentioned above, Higher Purpose also functions as a topos because it associates and amplifies. As described later in this chapter, it connects the reader with the Hilton brand, particularly because the audience for the Hilton CSR message is the stakeholders who would have a connection to the brand. It also amplifies a connection with Hilton’s purported aims for their CSR involvement, which are to move beyond the walls of hotels to help the world be a
better place through good works, a purpose higher than just making money by putting heads in beds. Understanding the concept of strategic ambiguity provides an added dimension to the resulting CSR topoi of this study, particularly the unique topos of each individual sample company.

**Disney Results**

The analysis of Disney CSR was based on 42 texts obtained online covering the years of 2010 through the present (Appendix 1). Disney refers to its CSR efforts as Citizenship. Disney’s approach to Citizenship and messaging remained consistent throughout the time period covered. In addition, their messaging remains consistent across multiple communication channels. As suspected, the Citizenship report sets the messaging strategy and all other Citizenship communication, such as Web sites, brochures and social media posts, expand on that strategy. For example, the Citizenship report establishes that “Strengthen Communities by bringing hope, happiness, and comfort to friends in need” (The Walt Disney Company) is a tenet of the company’s Citizenship initiative. The Citizenship Web site then has a section with the same title, and the site is frequently updated with examples of how the company is executing on that objective. Likewise, a Twitter posts promotes: “A BIG thanks to all the ESPN employees who contributed to the 4 tons of food & 4,000 toys donated over the holidays!” (The Walt Disney Company).

Therefore, the Disney Citizenship reports were instrumental in establishing the unique topos of Disney Citizenship. Based on the analysis of the reports during the period, the topos unique to Disney Citizenship messaging was: *Inspiration*. Throughout Disney’s Citizenship
messaging, inspiration underpins both the reason they seek to be a good citizen and what they strive to provide to others who are seeking to make the world a better place. Disney seeks to persuade the audience through overt messages about inspiration, such as the tagline and logo for their overall Citizenship branding: “Be Inspired.” Additionally, the message of inspiration is woven throughout all Citizenship communication through frequent uses of the word, and frequent uses of associated words, imagery, stories, and examples that support the notion that people are inspired to be good citizens (see fig. 18). The key persuasive message from Disney is that company actions are taken to inspire both Disney employees and stakeholders to be good citizens so that the world can enjoy a brighter tomorrow.
Disney establishes that the company is inspired to good citizenship based on the legacy of the company’s founder, Walt Disney. Walt Disney is widely known as an inspirational figure and leader. Through his vision, Disney Citizenship messaging makes use of this connection to persuade the audience as to the reasons the company is inspired to be a good citizen through direct references, such as, “Walt Disney himself planted the first seeds of the company’s commitment to nature over 60 years ago. It is amazing what’s blossomed since. From the story of Bambi to the latest Disneynature film, conservation and the environment are a rich part of our history and a key focus of our present and future” (The Walt Disney Company). Numerous
indirect references are also made to the company’s founder and his legacy of good citizenship, such as:

Giving back to the communities where we work, live and play has been an essential part of The Walt Disney Company since day one.

There’s a fundamental reason for this <commitment to citizenship>, one that’s been core to our company since its founding: we firmly believe that our financial performance is inseparable from our performance as a corporate citizen.

We’ve built on a long tradition of Disney corporate citizenship efforts through wide-ranging programs and policies designed to further enhance our business. (The Walt Disney Company)

The programs and policies that Disney has enacted as part of their Citizenship commitments are explained in detail throughout their CSR texts, from the main Citizenship report to press releases and Web site messaging. Such programs range across the spectrum of protecting the environment to providing diverse and inclusive workplaces for employees to offering healthy food and beverage choices to kids and families in theme parks and resorts. In all of the Citizenship efforts that Disney promotes, a shared value model is evident. Noting the earlier quote that Disney’s efforts are “designed to further enhance our business” (The Walt Disney Company), it is clear that while a program or policy might be protecting the environment, for example, it is also in Disney’s best business interest to enact the program or policy in order to further their aims of maintaining costs, increasing profits, managing risks, or strengthening public relations.
Disney Citizenship messaging also uses inspiration as a connector for the audience with the company’s brand and products. The Disney brand and its products are heavily related to inspiration as well as associated notions such as dreams, hope, magic, imagination, and creativity. These brand associations are also used abundantly throughout the Citizenship messaging for amplification. For example, the association of Citizenship, inspiration, and Disney products is evident in the statement, “At Disney, we believe that there are no limits to where creativity and imagination can take us. In our stories, we find the inspiration to envision a brighter tomorrow and the aspiration to make that dream come true” (The Walt Disney Company). In this sentiment, Disney seeks to persuade that being inspired to good citizenship leads to a brighter tomorrow.

A brighter future is also a theme in Disney’s brand and products, as is their relationship to kids and families. The association of inspiration, kids, families, and a bright future is underscored in the 2013 Citizenship report that states, “We conduct our business and create our products in an ethical manner and promote the happiness and well-being of kids and families by inspiring them to join us in creating a brighter tomorrow” (The Walt Disney Company). The brighter tomorrow that Disney envisions is for all its stakeholders, which is basically the world of consumers and producers. Due to their CSR efforts, they also envision a brighter tomorrow for the company itself, and for those who make profits from it, which again highlights the shared value model.

The previous quote also introduces another element of inspiration into the Disney Citizenship message by pointing out that it is not only Disney employees that are inspired to be
good citizens, but Disney wants to inspire other stakeholders to do so as well. By inspiring others, Citizenship is multiplied exponentially, as reflected in the message, “The example we set as a company of more than 180,000 employees is nothing compared to the impact we can have when we inspire the millions of kids and families we reach every day to take action and make a difference” (The Walt Disney Company). It is not uncommon for large corporations to make employee citizenship efforts the face of their CSR programs in this way. Highlighting employee efforts and goodwill, such as showing images of employees making a difference in the lives of a community by volunteering to assist with distributing food or school supplies, can aid pathetic appeals and act as effective advertising and public relations messages that help to potentially distract the public from larger, more undesirable corporate problems, such as non-compliance with regulatory policies.

Disney explicitly states that they have a unique opportunity to inspire and “this opportunity to inspire guides our work across citizenship” (The Walt Disney Company). The goal to connect the core Disney audience with the brand and its products to inspire Citizenship is echoed throughout all of the Disney Citizenship texts with phrases such as:

Our goal is to motivate generations of young people to harness the power of creativity to help improve their communities.

We can make an even bigger impact when we inspire children to embrace a healthier lifestyle because it’s fun and easy.
Our environmental impact is that much greater when Disney inspires kids and families to connect with nature, and develop a lifelong passion for stewardship.

Inspiring others to think creatively, live healthier, conserve nature, and strengthen our communities is a Citizenship strategy that represents who we are as a company and where we can make the biggest difference.

We inspire audiences everywhere to join us in taking action and caring for the world we share.

By inspiring creativity in young people today, we hope to ignite the spark of innovation that will lead us all to a brighter tomorrow.

We recognize our unique ability to help parents and kids make positive lifestyle choices. We partner with parents and engage kids in ways only Disney can.

It <citizenship> also creates new opportunities to associate our brands and characters with positive social messages, especially those that inspire kids and families to create a positive and lasting change in their communities.

We hope you will be inspired to join us in creating a brighter tomorrow.

(The Walt Disney Company)

Disney uses the topos of inspiration as common ground for the audience to associate Citizenship back to the founder, the brand, and the products. They further the association to persuade the audience that it takes everyone working together to enable positive changes for
people, communities, and the environment. They lean to the neoliberal tendency that all people have a personal responsibility to enact change. One of the most prominent examples of using this topos is Disney’s “Friends for Change” program (see fig. 19). Through this program, using Web sites, television advertisements, and other forms of promotion, Disney disseminates information to kids and families to encourage them to become involved in helping the environment and local communities by carrying out personal commitments, such as recycling and organizing community volunteer events.

![Finding Friends for Change](image)

**Figure 19: Disney’s Friends For Change**


Disney seeks to persuade the audience to join them in doing good deeds so that all people in societies around the world can realize a brighter tomorrow through joint citizenship.
Hilton Results

The analysis of Hilton CSR was based on 22 texts obtained online covering the years of 2011 through the present (Appendix 2). Hilton refers to its CSR efforts as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Hilton’s CSR approach and messaging remained consistent throughout the time period covered. The Hilton online CSR texts included annual CSR reports, a CSR Web site, and press releases. As with Disney, the CSR report sets the messaging strategy and all other CSR communication expands on the strategy. For example, the CSR report establishes that the Hilton CSR vision is “To fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality” (Hilton Worldwide). The CSR Web site then has a section with the title, “Filling Your Community with the Light and Warmth of Hospitality” (Hilton Worldwide). The section details a resource that Hilton provides called Hospitality + Service, “a tailored training program that leverages Hilton's internal Team Member trainings to infuse hospitality into the daily practices of nonprofit and social sector organizations to develop a strong culture of hospitality over time, fulfilling that vision in specific communities” (Hilton Worldwide). In mentioning communities, Hilton is pointing out the local areas where the company has hotels. Their materials clearly identify that they target CSR efforts toward initiatives that align with their business, and in communities where the company has a presence.

The Hilton CSR reports were instrumental in establishing the unique topos of Hilton CSR. Based on the analysis of the reports during the period, the topos unique to Hilton citizenship messaging was: Higher Purpose. Higher Purpose functions as a topos by helping the audience associate Hilton with something beyond being a business. Through the Hilton CSR
materials, readers are persuaded that the Hilton company is more than a business and employees do not just complete tasks. Hilton attempts to amplify the need that most humans have to do something beyond work. Hilton connects to the audience by attempting to show that Hilton employees fulfill the human drive of having a higher purpose by being good citizens and contributing to society.

Much like Disney connects their founder, Walt Disney, to the topos of inspiration, Hilton connects the topos of having a higher purpose to their founder, Conrad Hilton. In the first CSR report that Hilton produced in 2011, and then in all reports that follow, Conrad Hilton is featured prominently as someone for whom travel and hospitality was more than a business or a job, but a transformative vehicle and a way to change the world for the better. This philosophy is central to Hilton’s CSR approach, as they state, “At Hilton Worldwide, we are guided by the vision of our founder, Conrad N. Hilton, who saw travel as a powerful tool to improve the world. With every new hotel he opened, Conrad N. Hilton experienced firsthand the transformative impact a Hilton hotel has on the economy of a local community. With every trip he took, he recognized the power of travel to open minds and the important role it has in building a more peaceful world” (Hilton Worldwide).

The Hilton discourse highlights that Conrad Hilton believed that “the travel and tourism industry is a powerful engine of progress” (Hilton Worldwide) and had a vision of “filling the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality” (Hilton Worldwide). While Conrad Hilton’s original vision was most likely related to filling the earth with the warmth of hospitality by treating people to an enjoyable stay at a Hilton hotel, the message is used in CSR materials to
transcend the hotel product. Hilton now not only extends hospitality to its patrons, but also to
the communities throughout the world where the Hilton brand has a presence. It does so by
offering hospitable kindness to local communities near Hilton hotels, through projects such as
one described in the 2011 CSR report. Entitled “Celebrating Cultures,” the report explains that
the employees of the DoubleTree Wuxi extended the warmth of hospitality into their community
by partnering with Wuxi Big Bridge Experimental Primary School to preserve a traditional art
form and its cultural heritage. Through the contributions of the hotel and its employees students
are now educated and trained in the traditional craft of clay arts through specially designed
workshops.

The tagline for Hilton’s CSR program aligns with the higher purpose topos and is
entitled, “Travel With Purpose” (see fig. 20). However, their messaging is not geared toward
persuading travellers, or those who consume Hilton’s product, with pursuing a higher purpose.
Instead, the message is focused on those who work for the Hilton company. It is the employees
of the company who are encouraged to realize that their service not only encompasses taking
care of those who stay in Hilton hotels, but also is larger than that. The employees of Hilton are
called to serve their communities and the world, and they are enabled to do so through Hilton’s
CSR initiatives. To illustrate the Hilton employees living out their higher purpose, the 2012
CSR report opens with a section of profiles on four individual corporate employees entitled: “My
Purpose.” Each profile shows a photo of the employee dressed in their work attire, such as a
chef in chef’s garb, telling a story about how they are fulfilling their higher purpose in their
corner of the world.
Throughout the CSR reports, there are additional profiles of individual hotels throughout the world, called “change makers.” The employees at the profiled locations are shown living their higher purpose along with a description of their service. For instance, employees at the Conrad Seoul Hotel in South Korea “used their skills to serve a ‘Dream Restaurant’ experience
to low-income families at local shelters. The team decorated the shelter, cooked special nutritious dishes for the children and brought the warmth of hospitality to the families” (Hilton Worldwide). The change maker profiles aim to show that “regardless of where you work or what position you hold, there are opportunities for you to ‘Travel with Purpose’” (Hilton Worldwide). The illustrations are summarized with a message from the CEO reemphasizing the higher purpose topos, stating, “An inherent part of being a global leader is tackling challenges and seizing opportunities that are bigger than you are. As you’ve read on the preceding pages, many of our Hilton Worldwide Team Members find ways to extend their daily work toward a higher purpose. In doing so, they inevitably create shared value both for our business and society” (Hilton Worldwide). Hilton is connecting in this statement to the common CSR topos of shared value, whereby the company’s good works in citizenship also provide benefits to the bottom line.

Higher purpose serves to associate the audience to CSR at Hilton through identification with employees. Employees at Hilton are not just making beds or delivering room service, they are “welcoming guests from around the world, creating experiences that enrich people’s lives and delivering economic and social benefits to our local communities” (Hilton Worldwide). In this statement, Hilton associates its employees with the good works that they do in their local communities where Hilton has hotels, not with the work that is done for customers as part of their jobs. Hilton stresses that by having hotels placed in local communities they add to the economic benefits of that community, and through CSR efforts they help to strengthen local societies around the globe.
Hilton’s CSR discourse seeks to persuade they are not just a corporate entity, but “a business of people serving people, and our Team Members and franchise partners extend their passion for hospitality beyond our hotel walls every day” (Hilton Worldwide). Because most people work, or have at some point worked, in their lives, it is easy to associate with other people who work. People who work, especially in manual labor jobs, can also find it appealing to believe that they are doing something that matters beyond pushing a broom or cooking eggs. Therefore, the appeal of having a higher purpose could be a very persuasive connector to the Hilton CSR story. Research has suggested that having a robust CSR program can aid in employee retention and recruiting (Raub and Blunschi, 2014). Hilton promoting work with a Higher Purpose could prove an appealing prospect to job seekers.

**Intercontinental Results**

The analysis of Intercontinental CSR was based on 27 texts obtained online covering the years of 2010 through the present (Appendix 3). Intercontinental refers to its CSR efforts as Corporate Responsibility (CR). Intercontinental’s CR approach and messaging remained consistent throughout the time period covered. In addition, their messaging remains consistent across multiple communication channels. As with Disney and Hilton, the CR report sets the messaging strategy and all other CR communication, such as Web sites and social media posts expand on the strategy. For example, the CR report establishes that the “Shelter In A Storm” program is one of the cornerstones of the company’s CR efforts. The Intercontinental Planet CR Facebook page regularly posts reports and reminders about Shelter In A Storm, such as the post on January 29, 2015 with a photo of employees wearing Intercontinental t-shirts in front of the
Taj Mahal stating: “Throwback Thursday to last year when over 63,000 IHG colleagues from 71 different countries worked hard to raise funds for IHG Shelter in a Storm. An incredible achievement!” (Intercontinental Hotel Group).

Therefore, the Intercontinental CR reports were instrumental in establishing the unique topos of Intercontinental CR. Based on the analysis of the reports during the period, the topos unique to Intercontinental CR messaging was: *Collaborative Innovation*. On the cover of all the CR reports from 2010-2013, there are four words: Collaboration, Innovation, Environment, and Community (see fig. 21). Within the CR report, the relationship between these four concepts is explained. Numerous times in the CR report, and associated materials, Intercontinental expresses that: “our approach to CR is based on innovation and collaboration” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). The company highlights collaborative partners that include employees, guests, franchisees, government entities, NGO’s, educational institutions, suppliers, community partners in local areas where their hotels operate, industry associations, and more. For instance, the CSR materials highlight Intercontinental’s global partnership with CARE, one of the world’s three biggest disaster relief aid agencies. Intercontinental collaborates with CARE to develop and deliver the Intercontinental’s Shelter in a Storm Program. Intercontinental draws on CARE’s expertise in humanitarian assistance to direct money and people to help when disaster strikes a local area where the company has a hotel.
Intercontinental goes on to explain that Environment and Community are the two pillars of their approach because, “We focus our innovation and collaboration activities on the areas that make most sense to our business, and where we believe we can make most difference in our communities, creating shared value” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). Collaborative innovation
is then the topos of the company’s CR rhetoric and the way that initiatives are executed for the environment and within communities. Collaborative innovation is a topos that attempts to make a brand connection between Intercontinental and CR in the minds of the company’s stakeholders.

Unlike Disney and Hilton, Intercontinental does not have a famous founder to which they can connect their brand and CR efforts. Instead, Intercontinental connects the reader to the brand by leveraging a topos in CR messaging that is inherent to its brand in other ways. First, it connects through association with the travel and tourism industry overall. As the Intercontinental CR report points out:

> We acknowledge there is a tension between tourism and the environment but we believe this can be a creative one, providing an opportunity to find innovative solutions to the environmental, social, and economic effects of our business. With over 4,600 hotels worldwide and more than 1,000 in the pipeline, we have a big responsibility and a real opportunity to make a positive difference.

> (Intercontinental Hotel Group)

Intercontinental’s CSR discourse explains that the tension between tourism and the environment exists due to the size and scale of the industry. The tourism industry is one of the largest in the world, and is also one of the largest consumers of natural resources. However, Intercontinental believes “the tension between tourism and sustainability creates a space for innovation” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). The discourse goes on to explain:

> We respond to the social and environment challenges we face by developing innovative improvements to the way we work. We lead by example, our global
headquarters in England incorporates sustainable design features for instance – but also recognise that head office does not have all the answers. For that reason we work closely with our partners to arrive at sensible and sustainable business-led solutions. (Intercontinental Hotel Group)

Other examples of connecting the brand, CR and the industry through the topos of collaborative innovation include the Intercontinental Corporate Responsibility Innovation Fund and Innovation Hotel. As Intercontinental explains:

The Intercontinental Corporate Responsibility Innovation Fund is a pioneering programme designed to bring together our CR strategy themes of innovation, collaboration, environment, and community. Through it we aim to identify businesses to collaborate with to come up with innovative environmental and/or societal solutions for the hotel industry, running an ongoing series of Calls for Collaboration that focus on the key challenges we face. (Intercontinental Hotel Group)

The CR report and messages included in social media posts and press releases also reiterate the recipient activities of groups who have benefitted from the Fund. Likewise, the Innovation Hotel is a model of collaboration, highlighting the hospitality industry, CR, and Intercontinental. The Innovation Hotel is explained in the CR report this way:

Consumer research confirms that most of our customers want to make choices that are better for the environment and for communities. This makes us
even more determined to find innovative ways to act responsibly throughout our brands and services.

The Innovation Hotel is an online example of what future hotels might look like if they used green technologies. We created it so that our guests can tell us what they like and share their ideas with us. It also provides us with a place to set out our latest thinking. We use the site to consider these ideas as we evolve the way we design, build and operate more responsible hotels. It also feeds into the ongoing development of our Green Engage programme. Giving online guests and members of the public a chance to contribute ideas to the site has brought about a step-change in our relationship with these important stakeholders.

The Innovation Hotel is more interactive than before; guests and the public can explore the hotel, room by room, and leave comments on each idea. The comments can then be shared through Facebook or Twitter. Ideas contributed by guests, the public and colleagues could then inform the way we design, build and operate more responsible hotels through Green Engage. The site also includes real-life case studies that show how our hotels are already using sustainable ideas.

We are currently working to make the Innovation Hotel more interactive through the use of social media and we will look to test more ideas through Green Engage and use feedback from visitors to inform current and new product and service development. (Intercontinental Hotel Group)
The other way that Intercontinental associates collaborative innovation with the reader and CR is through connection with their own brand attributes. Intercontinental is the largest hospitality chain in the world by number of rooms (676,000), operating over 5,000 hotels under nine brands in 100 countries, but Intercontinental corporately owns only 10 hotels. The company is built on a model whereby 99% of the hotels are owned through franchise. According to this business model, an extraordinary amount of collaboration and innovation is required for the corporation to operate successfully. To illustrate, the CR report notes, “The Intercontinental model is based on partnership, so collaboration with key stakeholders is a natural corporate behaviour within the Group” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). The same concepts flow into the topos of collaborative innovation that Intercontinental employs for CR. As they state regarding CR, “We develop innovative concepts and technologies, and we work closely with our partners to find creative solutions to the challenges we face” (Intercontinental Hotel Group).

The words collaboration and innovation occur frequently throughout all of Intercontinental’s CR texts. Associated words such as pioneering and partnerships are also frequently occurring, helping to further establish the topos of collaborative innovation. The topos of collaborative innovation is most evident in the three flagship programs that Intercontinental promotes throughout all CR messaging as a way to “translate our aims into action: Green Engage, IHG Academy, and IHG Shelter In A Storm Programme” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). The company also touts the IHG CR Innovation Fund and the Innovation Hotel as premium examples of its commitment to collaborative innovation.
Green Engage is a “pioneering” online, interactive environmental management system that Intercontinental developed in collaboration with the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, U.S. Green Building Council, and LEED. The system enables more than 5,000 hotels within the Intercontinental portfolio to measure, manage, and report their key environmental impacts, and identify the most appropriate solutions to their local environmental risks specific to type of hotel and the climate of the hotel’s location. Stressing the core of the system as collaborative innovation, the CR report states, “IHG Green Engage proves the value of our commitment to innovation and collaboration. We look for better ways to manage our carbon footprint than merely offsetting emissions and we engage with our partners to create a 'green' culture where owners actively explore solutions that enhance their businesses” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). To note the successes of Green Engage, the CSR report includes stories of “Innovation in Action”. Each Innovation in Action story highlights a hotel that employed Green Engage to use natural resources more efficiently or to reduce their carbon footprint.

The IHG Academy is a collaborative effort between Intercontinental and educational institutions in local communities. Through this collaboration, people in the local communities where Intercontinental has a hotel are able to get educational benefits that include training in the hospitality industry. The program is innovative because it aims to help people improve their employment opportunities while also providing new, trained employees for the company. It is also innovative because it is customized by locale instead of being an off-the-shelf training program. As explained by Intercontinental, “Within a global framework, each IHG Academy is
unique. This ensures that the training meets the needs of local communities as well as hotels around the world” (Intercontinental Hotel Group).

For instance, Western China is an area of rapid growth for the hospitality industry. Intercontinental collaborated with Chengdu Vocational and Technical College to develop an IHG Academy customized for potential students that were not culturally diverse, but were new to the industry. The result was a three-year diploma that included guest lecturers from Intercontinental, on-the-job training in the hotel, internships, and hospitality classes. In contrast, an IHG Academy was started in collaboration with Newham College in a London borough that was considered one of the most culturally diverse communities in the country, with one of the highest levels of unemployment. However, the hospitality industry was not a new concept for the potential students. The custom-designed program provided a six-month certified training course and practical work experience in hospitality. Graduates in Chengdu and London are eligible to apply for employment with Intercontinental upon graduation, offering employment opportunities to students and skilled labor to Intercontinental, another example of the common CSR topos of shared value.

Collaborative innovation is also the heart of the company’s Shelter In A Storm program. Through this program, Intercontinental collaborates with CARE to plan and manage assistance for areas around the world that are affected by disasters. The program enables disaster relief through financial donations, resource donations, and Intercontinental employee volunteer efforts. Fundraising and volunteer training is conducted throughout the year at various hotels within the IHG network. In this way, funds and resources are readily available to assist areas immediately
when disaster strikes. The CSR report highlights numerous disasters that have received aid through the collaboration of CARE and Intercontinental.

**Marriott Results**

The analysis of Marriott CSR was based on 22 texts obtained online covering the years of 2010 through the present (Appendix 4). Marriott refers to its CSR efforts as Sustainability. Marriott’s Sustainability approach and messaging remained consistent throughout the time period covered. In addition, their messaging remains consistent across multiple communication channels. As with Disney, Hilton, and Intercontinental, the Sustainability report sets the messaging strategy and all other Sustainability communication, such as Web sites and press releases expand on the strategy. For example, the Sustainability report establishes “Serve the World” as a slogan of the company’s commitment to Sustainability. The Sustainability Web site then has a section about “succeeding through service”, highlighting how individual employees are serving the world. In addition, a press release headline was “Marriott International’s Family of Brands ‘Serve the World’ Everyday,” and the article reported that 3,000 hotel managers attended a conference to learn about opportunities to serve and participate in a day of service in the community where the conference occurred (Marriott International).

Therefore, the Marriott Sustainability reports were instrumental in establishing the unique topos of Marriott Sustainability. Based on the analysis of the reports during the period, the topos unique to Marriott sustainability messaging was: *Leadership*. The word leadership is frequently used in the Marriott Sustainability texts, but is equally evident indirectly through the imagery in
the material and the angle that is used to explain the company’s involvement and effort throughout the materials.

Leadership is easy to detect as a key theme in the company’s vision statement, stating, “To be the #1 hospitality company in the world” (Marriott International). This theme is echoed in the company’s vision for Sustainability that notes, “We aspire to be the global hospitality leader that demonstrates how responsible hotel management can create economic opportunities and be a positive force for the environment” (Marriott International). Through this vision of Sustainability, Marriott also states their aim to create shared value by both creating economic opportunities while maintaining the environment. The leadership topos is reiterated within the second sentence of the 2014 Sustainability report that states, “Innovation and growth strategies drive good companies. But to be a great company—the leader in an industry—a company must also have a set of core values that inform every decision the company makes” (Marriott International).

Throughout the report, the words lead, leading, leaders, and leadership continue to permeate, such as in the statement:

We are a leading voice for policies that support growth within the travel and tourism industry at all levels in numerous markets around the world. In the U.S., where we maintain a robust public policy agenda, we engage leaders on a wide range of issues including visa and entry policies that facilitate travel, immigration reform, equal rights measures for our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees, and transportation policy. (Marriott International)
However, the direct references to leadership in the Marriott texts are not as overt as the indirect messages that were detected through a close reading and analysis. In particular, references to Marriott leaders, and leaders outside of Marriott play heavily into their messaging, as do images and topics that clearly point to the fact that leadership is commonplace for Marriott.

Like Disney and Hilton, Marriott benefits from having a recognized leader with the same name as the company. In Marriott’s case, they are able to leverage the reputation and recognition of their founding leader, J.W. Marriott, and their current Executive Chairman, J.W. Marriott, Jr., to establish leadership as a topos. The Sustainability report makes use of the Marriott name to establish the association of leadership in the mind of the reader using statements like, “The Marriott name is on more than 4,000 hotels in 80 countries around the world” (Marriott International). The Marriott texts refer frequently to their “heritage,” “founding principles and core values,” “rich legacy of CSR,” and “long-standing commitment” to tie to their founding leader, J.W. Marriott and his son, J.W., Jr. Marriott. The men are also mentioned frequently in references to their leadership skills and advice, such as:

Marriott’s reputation for superior customer service dates back to founder J. Willard Marriott’s original goal for his business: good food and good service at a fair price.

Marriott International’s Executive Chairman, J.W. Marriott, Jr., believes that ‘how we do business is as important as the business we do’ describes our pledge to maintain an ethical workplace and the commitment of our associates to do the right thing.
Marriott International’s founder J. Willard Marriott as well as his son, Executive Chairman, J.W. Marriott, Jr., have coached managers to ‘take care of your associates and they’ll take care of your customers and the customers will come back.’ This philosophy is the cornerstone of our culture and the foundation of our company’s global growth and success.

The foundation of Marriott International’s success lies in our core value to ‘Put People First.’ The company’s long-standing philosophy as expressed by both J. Willard Marriott and our current Executive Chairman, J.W. Marriott, Jr. has been, ‘Take care of your associates and they’ll take care of your customers and the customers will come back.’

We have come a long way from the day in 1927 when J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott established their A&W root beer stand in Washington, DC. Little did they know their small business would develop into a leading global lodging company, expanding rapidly across North America into Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America and Africa, and the Middle East.

Marriott International was founded on the principle that quality service is at the core of how we do business. Our ‘spirit to serve’ our customers, associates, environment, and communities makes our culture more vibrant, our business stronger, and the world a better place.

Our success depends on being true to this purpose: to provide the opportunity for rewarding travel experiences for our guests, the opportunity for
personal and professional growth for our associates, and the opportunity for a better and more sustainable future in the communities where we live and work. (Marriott International)

In addition to the references to the J.W. Marriotts, the topos of leadership can readily be identified in the imagery and rhetorical positioning of topics in the Marriott Sustainability materials. Images of leaders, references to leaders, and noting that the company is leading many things in the industry are plentiful in the texts. For instance, current CEO, Arne Sorensen, is mentioned throughout the texts, including through called out quotes highlighted in the documents for maximum exposure. Sorensen is pictured throughout all Sustainability reports, most notably with references to Marriott’s position as a leader in promoting public policy. In the 2014 Sustainability report, Sorensen is prominently pictured sitting in a meeting with President Obama, with a caption reading, “Right: President Barack Obama gathered CEOs from the travel industry, including Arne Sorenson, to discuss how to best harness the travel and tourism industry’s potential for creating economic growth and jobs in the U.S.” (Marriott International) (see fig. 22). A picture is also shown of Sorensen and others onstage standing beneath a large Clinton Global Foundation banner with a caption reading, “Marriott International, Inc. President and CEO Arne Sorenson (pictured, center) recently joined a Clinton Global Initiative commitment to support women-owned businesses in our procurement process” (Marriott International).
Figure 22: Marriott CSR Report: Obama Photo


Another example is the use of stylized highlighting of a quote from General Colin Powell, the Founding Chairman of America’s Promise Alliance, acknowledging Marriott’s and Sorensen’s leadership, stating, “We thank you so much because you’re not only investing in
kids, you are investing in the future of our country and the other countries where you are located” (Marriott International). The Sustainability report reiterates the Marriott leadership role, noting, “Marriott executives engage broadly with our stakeholders as part of their management responsibilities, including political leaders, shareholders, and the media. Our CEO and our government affairs team meet regularly with administration officials and the U.S. Congress to promote the power of tourism in furthering the country’s continued economic recovery” (Marriott International). Other examples of the indirect references to leadership include:

In 2012, *Ethisphere* magazine recognized Marriott as one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies for the fifth consecutive year.

Marriott is the leading national employer partner for Back on My Feet—a nonprofit organization that helps members of the homeless community literally get ‘back on their feet’ and prepare themselves for employment through the discipline of running.

Climate Counts, a nonprofit organization that rates corporations on their sustainability and climate strategies, creates an annual “Climate Counts Company Scorecard.” Marriott received the highest ranking within the hotel sector from 2008-2012.

Marriott continues to be the number one hotel chain in the Clean the World portfolio in terms of the number of hotel rooms with the program implemented. (Marriott International)
Starwood Results

The analysis of Starwood CSR was based on 15 texts obtained online covering the years of 2014 through the present (Appendix 5). Starwood refers to its CSR efforts as Global Citizenship. Starwood’s first Global Citizenship report was published in 2014, although they had been pursuing Global Citizenship initiatives prior to that year. For this reason, it was difficult to evaluate Starwood’s Global Citizenship messaging prior to the 2014 report. The other Global Citizenship material that was available online for Starwood besides the 2014 inaugural report included their Global Citizenship Web site. Messaging was consistent between the Web site and the report, although the Global Citizenship report was much more robust. The Global Citizenship report had a tone and messaging strategy, whereas the Web site was simply a listing of programs that the company supports, such as the Starwood Associate Relief Fund.

In Starwood’s case, the Global Citizenship report was especially instrumental in establishing the unique topos of Starwood Global Citizenship. Based on the analysis of the report, the topos unique to Starwood global citizenship messaging was: The Age of Great Change. Unlike Disney, Hilton, and Marriott, Starwood does not have strong name recognition and a renowned founder that could be used to make a connection with the reader. Unlike all the other sample companies, Starwood as a corporation has very little brand recognition since none of their products (hotels) include the Starwood name. Therefore, Starwood is at somewhat of a disadvantage when it comes to connecting to readers with the brand and the company’s Global Citizenship efforts. Starwood uses the concept of great change as a topos that would most likely feel familiar to readers. Starwood uses great change as a topos in the 2014 report to make
associations in three ways: connecting what is happening in the world (great change, globally),
to what people wish to experience when they travel (a great change, personally), to the changes
the company is making around the world relative to Global Citizenship (great change, for the
company).

Starwood sets up the concept of great change in the context of something familiar: global
change. They connect the two by stating, “We are living in a time of unprecedented global
change. A time that we have dubbed the Age of Great Change” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts
Worldwide). Starwood ties this time of change to happenings across the world and the
connection to Global Citizenship stating, “Globalization, middle-class growth, and the
acceleration of digital connectivity around the world are remaking society in dynamic and
exciting ways. At the same time, these forces of change are bringing with them new challenges
for the global ecosystem” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Starwood connects the
changes in the world with their impact. The impact will be how the reader experiences the world
in the future. Starwood wants to help ensure that the reader will “experience a better world”
(Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide), therefore, they are responding to global changes and
making great changes to be a better global citizen. As explained in the Global Citizenship
Report, “At Starwood, we have a shared belief that people want a better way to experience the
world. We view our work in sustainability and social responsibility as our commitment to
making sure there is a better world to experience. This first-ever Global Citizenship Report is our
way of sharing with you some of the many things that we’ve been working on” (Starwood Hotels
and Resorts Worldwide) (see fig. 23).
Figure 23: Starwood CSR Report


According to Starwood, they are poised to thrive in the Age of Great Change because they are “a culture that thrives on change and innovation, so we’re always interested in new, different, and better ways to do things” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). The company notes that “it takes time for society to change in response to a new worldview. It also requires a bold start with a vision toward the future” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Starwood’s global citizenship report lays out the vision that they have for the future so that readers have a better world to experience, including their CSR accomplishments thus far and new goals for the coming years. One of Starwood’s goals is to fight climate change because “in the Age of Great Change, sustainability is no longer about ‘doing good’ but rather about ‘doing
what is urgently needed’” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Key to meeting their goals and ensuring a better world are the Starwood associates who are “a force for change” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide).

To reiterate the force and commitment of the Starwood associates, the global citizenship report contains numerous testimonials by associates about the changes they plan to make, changes currently occurring in the company related to CSR, and changes that are planned. Starwood sees change as a call to action, and “in an age of global change, Starwood is resilient, bringing fresh ideas and innovation to the hotel industry” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Starwood is no stranger to change, because “reinvention is in our DNA” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). CSR is also apparently being woven into their DNA.

**Wyndham Results**

The analysis of Wyndham CSR was based on 34 texts obtained online covering the years of 2010 through the present (Appendix 6). Wyndham refers to its CSR efforts as Sustainability. Wyndham is the only company in the sample set whose Sustainability messaging did not remain consistent throughout the time period covered. Their approach to Sustainability and messages evolved over time. For instance, unlike the other sample companies, the Wyndham Sustainability report changed its design and layout each year between 2010 and 2014 (see fig. 24). Items in the report, such as the opening executive message also changed each year. Like the other sample companies, the Sustainability report set the messaging strategy and all other Sustainability messaging, such as Web sites and press releases, expanded on the strategy. For example, the Sustainability Report establishes that “with a sustainability focus to deliver ‘triple
bottom line’ results for our people, planet and profits, Wyndham Green works to drive leadership in the industry, encourage engagement among all our key stakeholders and provide the mechanism to turn innovative ideas into achievable results” (Wyndham Worldwide). The Web site then extends on this program and offers the opportunity to “Learn more about how the Wyndham Green program delivers ‘triple bottom line’ results for its people, the planet and profits” (Wyndham Worldwide).

Figure 24: Wyndham CSR Reports

Beginning in 2006, Wyndham began focusing on Sustainability by implementing the corporate-wide CSR initiative: “Wyndham Green.” One topic that remained consistent throughout the Wyndham Sustainability messaging, and was instrumental in establishing the topos of Wyndham Sustainability, was the phrase, Wyndham Green. Based on this, and the analysis of the reports during the period, the topos unique to Wyndham sustainability messaging was: Green.

It is clear that environmental sustainability was the primary aim of the program at the start, which explains the use of the word ‘green’ in the moniker “Wyndham Green,” but by 2010 it had expanded to encompass all Sustainability efforts as acknowledged in the statement, “Combined with diversity, philanthropy, human rights, and supporting a healthy workplace, we view Wyndham Green as part of our overall corporate social responsibility efforts as we continue growing in communities around the world” (Wyndham Worldwide).

The programs encompassed under the Wyndham Green header include all the CSR initiatives designed to drive Triple Bottom Line results. The connection of green with the triple bottom line is mentioned repeatedly in the company’s Sustainability texts, such as:

With a sustainability focus to deliver ‘triple bottom line’ results for our people, planet and profits, Wyndham Green works to drive leadership in the industry, encourage engagement among all our key stakeholders and provide the mechanism to turn innovative ideas into achievable results.
Through their innovative spirit, every associate has a voice and a role in Wyndham Green and our corporate social responsibility programs to create value for our people, planet and profits.

The connection of green, sustainability, and the triple bottom line is most evident in the Wyndham Green Sustainability Policy that states:

Wyndham Worldwide is committed to sustainability, which by definition means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We understand the impact our Company has on the natural resources of the earth. The strategic focus at Wyndham Worldwide includes our commitment to conserve natural resources, preserve natural habitats, and prevent pollution, act with integrity and improve our customers’ lives, and support the communities around the world in which we work, live and play.

Wyndham Green supports those values by delivering Triple Bottom Line benefits by focusing on the following:

People (Human Capital): Treating our associates and communities fairly, as well as saving the environment and improving health with clean air and water.

Profits (Financial Capital): Implementing innovative programs and practices that reduce energy and in turn expenses, or generate new revenues from sustainable products and services.
Planet (Natural Capital): Conserving the earth’s resources and our natural environment by recycling, reusing and reducing the consumption of resources. (Wyndham Worldwide)

The structure of the Wyndham Sustainability Report is organized around the topics of ‘capital’ based on this policy. There are three sections in the texts: Human Capital, Financial Capital, and Natural Capital. As Wyndham explains, “This report illustrates our alignment of driving financial capital and how we do business, driving natural capital in improving our environment, and driving human capital to benefit our stakeholders and communities” (Wyndham Worldwide). All of these aims are pursued under the banner of “Wyndham Green.”

When considering the Triple Bottom Line as synonymous with Wyndham Green, the connection of green to the ‘planet’ is evident. However, the symbolic use of green is extended in the Wyndham texts in other ways as well. The emphasis on ‘green’ also aligns with the Triple Bottom Line in that green is the color of money (as in profit), and green symbolizes health and growth (of people). The language in the Wyndham reports also makes use of language indirectly related to ‘green’, such as in the description of the Sustainability program as one that began as a “grassroots” initiative and has “grown” into an industry-leading global policy and program. Readers may also connect the green topos in the Sustainability texts with the idea of progress or moving ahead, since green can also mean “go”. References to the idea of green as moving forward when it comes to Sustainability include:

This approach continues to enable us to advance as a responsible corporate citizen, while delivering strong performance consistently across our businesses.
Our progress earned us the distinction of being the only North American hospitality company to be listed in the 2013 Dow Jones Sustainability North America Index—a great recognition of the value we aim to create for both our shareholders and our environment. (Wyndham Worldwide)

The green topos is highly evident in the imagery used in the Wyndham Sustainability texts. Although the standard brand colors for the Wyndham company are muted blues, the visuals supporting Wyndham Green stand out in sharp contrast in that they are a bright green against the blue background of the company’s primary color palette. The green imagery is consistent throughout all of Wyndham’s Sustainability texts as headline bars, sidebars, as well as in photographs. The Wyndham Sustainability Web site is headed with a close-up photograph of green blades of grass and the Wyndham Green title.

**Conclusion**

When combined into one topical set, the topos unique each individual company are: Inspiration, Higher Purpose, Collaborative Innovation, Leadership, The Age of Great Change, and Green. These topoi were included in the sub-categories of topoi for the travel and tourism industry overall, but none of them alone rose to the level of being a consistent topos in the industry. Instead, they contributed to the higher categorical levels of topoi that were found to be more consistent for the industry when refined holistically. The unique topos for each company also included numerous references to the common CSR topoi of Triple Bottom Line and shared value multiple times throughout their texts. In particular, Wyndham Green used people, planet, and profit as the basis for their entire CSR strategic framework. The results and discussion of the
overarching topoi for the industry, along with a discussion about how the findings impact the study of topoi, is detailed in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER FOUR

“To write, to engage in any communication, is to engage in a community: to write well is to understand the conditions of one’s own participation—the concepts, values, traditions, and style which permit identification with that community and determine the success or failure of communication” (Miller, 1979, 617).

The following topoi are the result of coding 162 texts across six sample companies, resulting in 1,021 coded references that rolled up into 334 categories. To develop the topoi, the categories that had been established for each company were examined as one large set for similar category types and descriptions. I combined similar categories, then combed through the data again to combine similar categories a second time, or to create sub-categories. I also looked for ideas by performing word frequency analyses and cluster analyses to look for new insights into the data that I may have missed.

In the final analysis, I assigned overarching topic names to seven sets of categories that represent the topoi of CSR in the travel and tourism industry based on defining characteristics that were identified in the coding process, as described in Chapter Three. Whereas Chapter Three examined topoi that were unique to each sample company, the topoi in this chapter are common across all the companies. In assigning the topoi, I was informed by three of the guiding principles about topoi that were discussed in Chapter Two: common and special topoi; topoi as heuristic; topoi for association and amplification; and, topoi as fluid and unfixed. The seven topoi of CSR in the travel and tourism industry and their characteristics are shown in table 4.
Table 4
Special Industry Topoi and Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topoi</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Executive Commitment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate Commitment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employee Commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enduring Commitment</td>
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<td>Management</td>
<td>Governance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reporting</td>
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<td>Compliance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Metrics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>CSR Framework</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategic Priorities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shared Value</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Triple Bottom Line</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workplace Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Internal Stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Accolades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainment</td>
<td>Sustaining the CSR Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle of Continuous CSR Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remainder of this chapter details these special industry topoi, characteristic topoi and their variations, and concludes with a discussion of overall insights about topoi.
Commitment

One of the most evident topoi across the sample companies is the repetition of the word commitment, and the focus each company places on persuading readers that they are committed to CSR. Every CSR report that was reviewed begins with a letter or statement from the highest ranking executives in the company stressing how important CSR is to the company and how committed everyone is to CSR efforts, beginning with the CEO and other high-ranking company executives. The companies seek to convince readers that it is an enduring belief in being ethical that drives a deep personal commitment to acting with integrity and forms the guiding thrust for their extensive CSR programs. Because of the commitment to CSR, the companies point out that they embed CSR into their decisions and actions. The overarching topos was based on each sample company stressing their overall commitment to CSR, but each also stressed commitment to specific programs, such as diversity and inclusion, human rights, local communities, and environmental sustainability. Table 5 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.
### Table 5
Commitment Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Executive Commitment</td>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>CSR journey</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>Doing the right thing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate Commitment</td>
<td>The</td>
<td>Ethical business</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee Commitment</td>
<td>corporation</td>
<td>practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enduring Commitment</td>
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<td>Improving the world</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Doing my part</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shared value</td>
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<td>Making CSR a way of life</td>
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<td>Protecting the environment</td>
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<td>Engaging with stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diversity and inclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Human rights</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local communities</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>where we have a presence</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>This is just the beginning</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enduring beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disney stresses in their CSR brochure that, “Disney Citizenship is our continuing commitment to be among the most admired companies in the world – equally admired for the integrity of our people, as we are for the quality of our exceptional entertainment experiences."
This guides our actions as a company and our efforts to promote the happiness and wellbeing of kids and families” (The Walt Disney Company). Disney points out that Walt Disney himself was committed to acting ethically and making the world a better place, and that tradition continues in the company today. Bob Iger, Disney’s CEO, opens the 2013 Citizenship report noting, “Our relentless commitment to act ethically and responsibly in our endeavors has been integral to our success” (The Walt Disney Company). Disney stresses commitment to CSR throughout their reports, as well as other CSR materials including Web sites, press releases, and social media posts.

The first page in the 2013 Starwood Global Citizenship report is a message from CEO and President, Frits van Paasschert, proposing that Starwood believes people want a better way to experience the world, therefore Starwood “views our work in sustainability and social responsibility as our commitment to making sure there is a better world to experience” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Starwood seeks to persuade readers that they are committed to giving them what they want: a better world. Van Paasschert, in the same message, stresses commitment again when he notes that Starwood is working diligently toward goals to reduce their environmental impact and offer sustainable products and services. He points out that these goals “represent our commitment to doing the right thing around the world” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Just a few sentences down in the same message, van Paasschert seeks to persuade readers that it is not just him or the company that is committed, but the 181,400 Starwood associates who also “possess an enduring commitment to, and pride in, our Global Citizenship efforts” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide).
The commitment topos is stressed in the executive CSR messages of all the companies, and is repeated in regard to various components within each companies’ CSR program. Hilton’s CSR materials headline a “Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion” and state that “Hilton Worldwide is committed to an inclusive workforce that fully represents many different cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints” (Hilton Worldwide). Intercontinental touts a commitment to employing collaboration and innovation to ensure sustainability and posits that they are “committed to designing, building and operating more sustainable hotels through innovation” (Intercontinental Hotel Group).

Wyndham repeats its commitment to CSR, especially in the area of Human Rights, pointing out that their view on human rights “reflects the Company’s commitment to conduct its business in a manner consistent with these principles and to protect human rights within the Company’s sphere of influence” (Wyndham Worldwide). Wyndham is also “committed to sustainability” and their strategic focus includes their “commitment to conserve natural resources, preserve natural habitats, prevent pollution, act with integrity and improve customers’ lives, and support the communities around the world in which we work, live and play” (Wyndham Worldwide). Marriott, on their CSR Web site, highlights their “decades-long commitment to the environment” and how “Marriott’s ‘Spirit to Serve Our Communities’ social responsibility and community engagement commitment blends financial contributions, in-kind giving, and associate volunteerism around the world” (Marriott International).

The commitment topos works to persuade readers that the six sample companies are serious and passionate about CSR. Each company also stresses that they are committed to the
common CSR topoi of providing shared value for all stakeholders through triple bottom line results. From the CEO of the company, down to the lowest level employee in the company, the repetition of this topos seeks to convince readers that CSR is at the heart of every company endeavor. All CSR texts produced by the sample companies illustrate that their commitment to CSR is evident in many ways, from corporate financial donations to charities, to the physical effort that the employees exert as volunteers in the community. In addition, the companies’ commitment to CSR is highlighted as evident by the fact that the corporations expend a great deal of time and resources to managing CSR, making management another topos in the CSR texts.

Management

Combining the six primary subcategories of governance, reporting, compliance, metrics, and organizational structure identified the management topos. A great deal of space within the texts of each sample company is devoted to explaining the extent of the company’s CSR management efforts. Through the management topos, the companies clearly seek to persuade readers that CSR has become institutionalized within the corporation. Each company stresses that management is focused on triple bottom line results and ensuring shared value for all stakeholders, reiterating the common CSR topoi. Table 6 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.
Table 6
Management Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Departments</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>Initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>The</td>
<td>Teams/Task forces</td>
<td>CSR reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metrics</td>
<td>corporation</td>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>and Web sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Targets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutionalize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Business processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Related to the management topos is also the idea of integration. Each sample company went into great detail about the systematic integration of CSR into organizational structure and business processes. The management topos speaks to the institutionalization of CSR by the way that it has been integrated into the management of people, places, and processes throughout each corporation.

To stress the fact that CSR is well managed within the company, early in the annual CSR report from each company is a section on governance. Each company seeks to persuade readers that a governing body of directors oversees corporate operations and ensures that CSR is integral to the business. As part of that governance, each company has also created an organizational
structure that includes executives, managers and staff members who are solely focused on managing the CSR activities of the corporation.

At Disney, the Corporate Citizenship division reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer, and subsequently the CEO. A Senior Vice President of Corporate Citizenship manages all citizenship initiatives (see fig. 25).

Figure 25: Disney CSR Management Structure


At Hilton, corporate responsibility starts at the top of the organization with the President and Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for the development of global business strategy and the execution of strategy throughout the organization. The Vice President of Corporate Responsibility is tasked with developing the CSR strategy and specific programs and initiatives
across the company in partnership with senior leadership team and functional experts. This position also works across business functions, collaborating closely with General Counsel, Chief Human Resources Officer and the Vice President of Sustainability.

Intercontinental manages CSR through a CR Board Committee. As Intercontinental explains in the 2013 annual report:

Responsibility for helping to deliver our purpose of creating Great Hotels Guests Love through responsible business practices, and determining the overall shape of our Corporate Responsibility strategy lies with our CR Board Committee. This formalises our approach of making CR a fully integrated part of our business with a focus on creating shared value for IHG, our owners, the environment and the local community.

The Committee makes sure we have the right policies, management and measurement systems in place to deliver against our strategy. It met four times in 2013, focusing on the global expansion of the IHG Academy, the implementation of the IHG Shelter in a Storm Programme, the ongoing rollout of IHG Green Engage and our stakeholder engagement channels, such as our online CR Report. Our CR Board Committee was also kept up to date on the process to agree and implement IHG's CR targets for 2013-2017. In 2010 the CR Committee was subject to performance evaluation, in accordance with the process adopted for all the main Committees of the Board.
The Committee reports to the Board and is chaired by Jennifer Laing, a Non-Executive Director. Non-Executive Directors Dale Morrison, Luke Mayhew and Ying Yeh are also members. To reflect the high priority we place on CR, our Chief Executive Officer Richard Solomons also sits on the committee and Non-Executive Chairman Patrick Cescau regularly attends meetings. (Intercontinental Hotel Group)

Marriott has a similar CSR management structure, employing a formal infrastructure of a range of councils comprised of executives and associates (assisted by external experts) that guide everyday decisions that affect the work environment, sustainability practices, and business strategy, including the CEO-led Committee for Excellence, the executive-level Global Green Council and Human Rights Task Force, and management-level Business Councils that participate in implementing community partnerships and social responsibility initiatives within regional zones.

Starwood’s CSR management structure is based on a team/committee approach. The Global Citizenship team is responsible for establishing and implementing Starwood’s sustainability and social responsibility strategies worldwide and is led by the Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel. The Global Citizenship team regularly monitors and reports on progress to the senior leadership team and stakeholders more broadly. The high-level Global Citizenship Steering Committee represents three geographic operating divisions as well as several functions centralized at the corporate headquarters. The steering committee convenes monthly with the Global Citizenship team to discuss ongoing efforts, goals, challenges,
and best practices. It ensures the regional relevance and feasibility of all Global Citizenship initiatives and facilitates the development, execution, and communication of these programs. The Global Citizenship team also works closely with the Global Initiatives team, which builds effective cross-brand processes that enable implementation of global projects across the entire hotel portfolio (see fig. 26).

Figure 26: Starwood CSR Management Structure


Wyndham employs a hybrid approach to CSR management. The Board of Directors, through the Corporate Governance Committee, oversees and is updated on the performance and compliance of the Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility programs, with the CEO
serving on the Corporate Governance committee and providing input into the strategy and direction of the Corporate Responsibility program. Wyndham also employs a Senior Vice Presidents of Sustainability and Innovation who oversees Wyndham Green initiatives and reports to the Corporate Governance committee. Within the Board’s Corporate Governance committee, areas of focus include annual goals related to social and environmental performance, associate development and compliance (see fig. 27).

Figure 27: Wyndham CSR Management Structure


The topos of management is also clear through the focus on CSR compliance, reporting and metrics. Outside of a company’s commitment to CSR as a good way to do business,
companies are also required by law to be compliant in certain areas. Each of the sample companies provides extensive reporting on the areas where compliance is required, as well as areas where it is not required. Metrics are highly managed by each sample company, including financial metrics surrounding costs for CSR compliance, both voluntary and required. Metrics involving donation amounts by each company to charities, causes, or disaster relief projects are also extensively reported.

**Alignment**

As Intercontinental explains, “We focus our CR activities in the areas that make most sense to our business, and where we believe we can make most difference, the environment and the local community, and in turn create shared value” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). Combining several subcategories including shared value, strategic framework, core values, principles, and triple bottom line identified the alignment topos. The topos of alignment enables companies to persuade readers that the values of the corporation are aligned with the principles of CSR and that CSR principles are embedded in the corporation, ultimately affecting corporate decisions and actions. The topos of alignment helps a company argue that their decisions and actions are based on shared values with readers, and that the company’s actions are in alignment with what is best for the triple bottom line: people (stakeholders), the planet (environment), and profit (company). Table 7 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.
Table 7
Alignment Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>CSR Framework</td>
<td>The corporation</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>CSR reports and Web sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Priorities</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared Value</td>
<td>Corporate strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triple Bottom Line</td>
<td>Corporate brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CSR principles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Areas of corporate focus/competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiatives related to the business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Core values, principles, mission, vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned previously, each company had a specific topos that was unique to the company. The unique topos was aligned with the company’s brand, product, founder, values, corporate vision, strategic initiatives, or core competencies. Alignment as a topos has many facets, as it is not only the company aligning with CSR principles, but also aligning CSR actions with the strategic priorities of the business. As the Hilton CEO notes in the 2013 CSR report:

As I travel around the world, I have the privilege to witness our commitment and impact first-hand. We are a business of people serving people, and our Team Members and franchise partners extend their passion for hospitality beyond our hotel walls every day. It has been immensely gratifying to see how hotel teams drive local solutions that result in new opportunities for youth, the development of responsible supply chains, conservation of scarce natural resources, as well as
greater cultural understanding and encouragement of human rights to name a few.

Each of these examples demonstrates shared value not only for our business but also for society. (Hilton Worldwide)

In this quote, the Hilton CEO is purporting that aligning all facets of the business around CSR is the best way to create shared value for business and society.

To ensure alignment with CSR within the organization, each sample company has established a CSR framework, or governing set of CSR principles, strategies and/or tactics. Hilton explains that:

Over the last seven years, we have focused on aligning our widespread organization and culture around a shared vision, mission, values and set of key strategic priorities. These foundational elements have enabled our success and ensure that we have a common sense of who we are, where we’re going and what we stand for as a company. Travel with Purpose, our corporate responsibility strategy is embedded in our culture and throughout our business. It allows us to take advantage of our global footprint and scale while also realizing the need for local solutions. (Hilton Worldwide)

Hilton’s CSR framework shows that they align around shared value (see fig. 28).
In relation to alignment, Intercontinental notes that:

Corporate responsibility (CR) is a key part of our responsible business practices. At IHG, the notion of acting responsibly is at the heart of everything we do. It means doing the right things in the right way and thinking longer term so that we conduct our business in ways that are mutually beneficial for our business, our stakeholders and society, and which champion and protect the trusted reputation of IHG and our brands. For that reason we treat CR as a strategic business issue, believing it only makes sense if it aligns to our purpose of creating Great Hotels Guests Love. (Intercontinental Hotel Group)

Intercontinental aligns their CR activities “in the areas that make most sense to our business, and where we believe we can make most difference – the environment and the local
Likewise, Starwood expounds that Global Citizenship:

Has expanded to encompass a broader sustainability and social responsibility agenda while remaining closely aligned with our corporate strategy. Through this lens, we address critical global issues such as human rights, water risk, climate change, conservation, and community development. In some areas, such as energy and water, we have set bold goals and made great progress. In other areas, including our supply chain, we are just beginning to lay the foundation. (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide)

Wyndham’s CSR framework centers on alignment with the Triple Bottom Line, and their CSR messaging is structured accordingly (see fig. 29).

Figure 29: Wyndham Triple Bottom Line Alignment

Disney’s Citizenship Framework (see fig. 30) is another example of how alignment is a prominent topos in the CSR texts. Disney’s aim is to create shared value for the company, stakeholders, the community, and the world at large. Disney aligns the core competencies, strategic priorities, values, and brand promises with the CSR objectives to create a framework that supports delivering shared value.
Figure 30: Disney’s Citizenship Framework Alignment

Environment

The topos of environment in the CSR texts of the sample companies can be considered from several conceptual vantage points. During the coding process, there were more references related to the physical environment than any other topic. The planet is one of the three elements of the Triple Bottom Line, and planet and physical environment were synonymous in the sample texts. The environment topos in the CSR texts of the sample companies is definitely established in relation to the physical environment and related topics including carbon footprint, conservation, water, waste management, and climate change. However, the topos of environment within the CSR texts also includes other dimensions outside of the traditional concept of nature and the physical environment. Table 8 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.
Table 8
Environment Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>Industry leaders&lt;br&gt;Corporate leaders&lt;br&gt;Government leaders&lt;br&gt;Community leaders&lt;br&gt;Employees&lt;br&gt;Stakeholders</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>CSR reports and Web sites, press releases, social media posts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The CSR initiatives in relation to the physical environment are extensive for each of the sample companies. Each company has environmental policies and goals focused on reducing their carbon footprint. The CSR reports of all the sample companies include reports to the Carbon Disclosure Project, and detailed metrics about their progress toward natural resource conservation.

One of Disney’s core tenets for Citizenship is to “conserve nature” (The Walt Disney Company). They dedicate much of their CSR messaging in reports, press releases, and social media posts to promoting their efforts to manage natural resources, and encourage others to do the same. Marriott reported in 2014 that they are making progress toward their goal to achieve a 20 percent reduction in energy and water intensity by 2020. Likewise, Hilton issued a press release in 2013 to promote their progress toward environmental goals through the use of an infographic (see fig. 31).
Intercontinental’s top four CSR priorities revolve around environmental improvements: climate change, energy efficiency, carbon costs/opportunities, and water efficiency. One of the three central focuses of their CSR program is “Green Engage,” the company’s proprietary online environmental management system that enables hotels to measure, manage and report their environmental impacts. Wyndham has also invested heavily in a similar proprietary system,
“Wyndham Green Toolbox”, that allows the company owned and affiliated resorts to track, measure, and report on environmental initiatives. Starwood focuses heavily on sustainability at local levels and vows to “actively work to reduce the environmental and negative social impact of our business activities related to food and beverage sourcing, production, consumption and disposal and to continually improve and innovate on practices aimed at increasing procurement of food and beverage grown and produced locally within the communities where our properties are located” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide).

It is not unusual that environment would be a CSR topos with so much focus of CSR programs placed on improving the planet. However, the environment topos of the sample companies also had different meanings from different conceptual vantage points. The environment also figures into CSR topoi due to the importance placed on other types of environments in addition to the physical. Much emphasis is placed on the workplace environment, the environment of the local community, and the travel and tourism industry environment throughout the CSR messages of the sample companies.

All six of the sample companies stressed the CSR focus on the workplace environment. An aim of each company’s CSR program centered on the creation of a more inclusive, diverse, engaging workplace environment. Wyndham explains that they aim to “recruit and develop associates to build an environment where multi-generational individuals from a wide array of backgrounds, with different experiences and viewpoints, are valued” (Wyndham Worldwide). Hilton seeks to create an environment where employees learn, grow, and develop, and state one of their priorities as “strengthening our unified global culture of Team Members in our managed
properties and corporate offices in 93 countries.” Disney promotes a healthy environment not only for the workplace, but also for children in general, by promoting healthy eating in the theme parks and hotels, and by highlighting these messages in their cable programming.

The sample companies also emphasize their goals to improve the environments for those who live in the local communities where they operate. Starwood explains that their “innovation and investment in Global Citizenship shapes the communities in which we operate around the world. We work hard to ensure that our presence helps boost local economies while preserving the local culture” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Intercontinental operates the IHG Academy that partners with local education providers and/or community organizations to help create local economic opportunity and improve the community environment of the areas where they operate. Disney’s VoluntEARS donate their time throughout the world to improve the environments of communities through building and improvement projects.

Each sample company also notes the overall business environment in which they operate and in which CSR is an important component. In particular, each company notes the general environment of the travel and tourism industry and the impact that CSR in the industry. For instance, Intercontinental notes that:

Tourism plays a large role in the world economy and is an important source of wealth for many countries, particularly developing countries where tourism may be the main source of economic prosperity. We know from our own research that the economic impact of hospitality is far reaching. The supply chain of our industry has a knock-on effect, creating business activity in nearly all other
economic sectors. Hotel guests spend money in the retail, recreation, transportation and restaurant sectors. And hotels provide a forum for business meetings, trade shows and conventions that in turn generate economic growth. It makes sense to put responsible tourism at the heart of our CR program. It will play a major role in the long-term viability of our business and of the travel and tourism sector. (Intercontinental Hotel Group)

All of the sample companies note similar facts about the travel and tourism industry environment and the effects that their CSR programs can produce within the environment.

**Engagement**

The topos of engagement is pervasive throughout the sample companies. Each company stresses that the success of CSR hinges on the successful engagement of all stakeholders. The CSR reports of all sample companies dedicate full sections to stakeholder engagement to explain how their CSR programs include open lines of communication with stakeholders, and invite input from all stakeholders. Employee engagement also commands a great deal of attention in the CSR texts. The CSR efforts of the sample companies include many initiatives to engage employees to be socially responsible in their professional and personal lives, and many programs are geared toward creating workplace environments that are engaging to employees. All sample companies include robust volunteer programs as part of their CSR initiatives to engage employees in improvement efforts (see fig. 32). Likewise, all the companies researched also include sections about supply chain management, detailing their efforts to engage with related suppliers and other vendors to coordinate CSR initiatives. All companies also provide numerous
listings of external organizations that they engage with to further their CSR goals, such as academic institutions, industry associations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, community partners, and non-profit charities. Table 9 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.

Table 9
Engagement Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Internal Stakeholders</td>
<td>Employees, Shareholders, Government leaders, Industry associations, Academic institutions, CSR associations, Community associations, NGO’s, Supply chain vendors, Franchisees</td>
<td>Encouraging involvement, Communication, Feedback from Local partnerships, Global partnerships, Volunteering, Philanthropy, Alliances, Supply chain management</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 32: Wyndham Stakeholder Engagement Model


Intercontinental, whose unique topos is “Collaborative Innovation” is an example of the extensive use of the engagement topos that is evident in all the sample companies.

Intercontinental explains that:

Stakeholders play a key role in helping us identify and tackle our priorities. They include guests and corporate clients, our hotel owners and franchise holders, local communities, employees, shareholders, suppliers, academic institutions, non-government organisations, governments and industry-specific institutions. We
engage with them through forums, meetings, individual interviews, surveys, and through our online channels. We also work in collaboration with expert partners to support our CR ambition and the expansion of our flagship programs.

(Intercontinental Hotel Group)

Intercontinental then goes on to detail the specific channels they employ to engage with each of the stakeholders, and highlight certain programs that are in progress with other organizations that further CSR goals.

Engagement is at the heart of Disney’s Citizenship program. Throughout the company’s CSR texts, all stakeholders are urged to actively engage in CSR activities. Disney’s special topos of “Be Inspired” itself speaks to encouraging stakeholder engagement in CSR. Disney seeks to inspire employees, shareholders, partners, vendors, and the world at large to engage in socially responsible behaviors. One example of this is Disney’s extensive “Disney VoluntEARS” program through which they mobilize employees to donate their time and resources to community service. Disney also seeks to “partner with parents and engage kids in ways only Disney can. From healthy lifestyle messages woven into kids’ programming to the Mickey Check, a tool that makes it easier to identify nutritious choices, and ‘TRYathlons’ that encourage kids to try healthy new things— we empower kids and families to enjoy healthier lifestyles” (The Walt Disney Company). In each of the areas where Disney focuses their CSR efforts, they not only describe how the company participates, but how they engage others to do the same, such as conserving nature where they explain that “it is our hope that our actions will
inspire others to be positive environmental stewards, ensuring the health of our planet for generations to come” (The Walt Disney Company).

While Marriott, like the other companies, focuses heavily on all of their engagement activities with all stakeholders, they pay special attention to their engagement with the government and policy makers in relation to CSR. They explain that “Marriott executives engage broadly with our stakeholders as part of their management responsibilities, including political leaders, shareholders and the media. Our overarching public affairs strategy is to educate and communicate with key influencers to create an environment conducive for growth and understanding of our business” (Marriott International). The Marriott CSR texts also expound on how their executives “continually engage with allied trade associations and NGOs through leadership roles on boards and executive committees” (Marriott International).

Starwood, like the other sample companies, focuses heavily on engaging their entire supply chain in their socially responsible practices. Their CSR texts detail extensive processes used to evaluate and select vendors based on CSR criteria. As they explain, “using this information, we can more actively integrate sustainability and social responsibility into our vendor choices and supplier-engagement activities” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Starwood seeks to engage suppliers and vendors that already have good CSR practices in place, as well as to help suppliers and vendors make changes to change their businesses into CSR-compliant ones.

Hilton and Wyndham promoted their employee engagement activities via press releases. Hilton promoted a Global Week of Service that occurred in 86 countries, engaging thousands of
employee volunteers to complete more than 3,500 community projects during the week.

Wyndham hosted their first-ever Global Corporate Social Responsibility Week at locations throughout the world to engage employees in CSR activities and events. The goal of the week was to engage employees in their role in CSR and educate them “why it’s important for people, planet, and profits” (Wyndham Worldwide), leveraging a reference to the common CSR topos of Triple Bottom Line.

Achievement

The topos of achievement was identified for the sample companies’ through the expansive use of metrics throughout all CSR texts promoting what has been accomplished through CSR programs. These metrics included a range of types of CSR achievements relative to goals and measurement to goals, including financial reports such as cost savings, investments, donations, and statistical reports of how much energy or water has been conserved, how much each companies’ carbon footprint has been reduced, and total numbers of how many people’s lives have been impacted through CSR successes. The achievement topos is also evident in each company’s promotion of the accolades that they have received from external sources recognizing the success of their CSR initiatives, such as being named to the list of the world’s best employers or the list of the world’s most responsible companies. Table 10 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.
Table 10
Achievement Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Accolades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accomplishments</td>
<td>The corporation, leaders, employees, industry associations, CSR associations, government leaders, CSR associations, community associations, NGO’s, supply chain vendors, franchisees</td>
<td>Meeting goals and targets, employee awards and actions, industry ratings and awards, association ratings and awards, community ratings and awards, corporate leader recognition, certifications</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While each company’s CSR texts promote their accomplishments and accolades, they each do it in different ways. While some are overt in promoting their success, for instance, through the use of highlighted call-outs within the CSR reports, others are more indirect in promoting their achievements. Disney uses a subtle approach with the achievement topos. For instance, within the 2013 Citizenship report, achievements are described within the overall flow of messaging in paragraph form without significant highlighting. Within the course of the report, it is noted that in 2006, “Disney became the first major media company to establish nutrition
guidelines to associate our brands and characters with more nutritionally balanced foods” (The Walt Disney Company), and that in 2012, the company became the first major media company to set industry-leading food advertising standards in the United States. Again, embedded within a paragraph, Disney notes that since 2012 their efforts have accounted for over 8.8 million actions to help people, communities and the planet.

Hilton begins their 2013 CSR report with the CEO touting their achievements through the opening executive letter. The CEO recognizes a list of CSR achievements, such as “reducing energy use by 13.6 percent, carbon output by 20.2 percent, waste output by 26.8 percent and water use by 13.1 percent since 2009” (Hilton Worldwide). Intercontinental intersperses achievement lists throughout their CSR reports, expounding on successes by topic, such as in the environmental sustainability section where they list, “Achieved a 4.6% reduction in water use per occupied room in water-stressed areas between 2012 and 2013 and on track to achieve our 12% target by 2017” (Intercontinental Hotel Group). Starwood employed a similar approach and provides listings of accomplishments throughout their report, such as “through corporate matching of associate donations we contributed $200,000 to SARF” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide).

Marriott and Wyndham similarly promote their accolades in CSR texts more overtly than the other sample companies. Marriott prominently promotes that they were named a 2014 World’s Most Ethical Company by the Ethisphere Institute, and was named among America’s top corporations for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality by earning a perfect 100 percent score on the Human Rights Campaign’s 2014 Corporate Equality Index. Marriott also
highlights that in 2013, for the fifth consecutive year, they scored the highest among hospitality companies on the Climate Counts Company Scorecard, and were the only hospitality company featured as a sustainable company in Climate Counts’ first ever science-based ranking of corporate carbon emissions (Marriott International). Wyndham places graphical call-outs throughout their CSR materials that make achievements hard to miss in the document. For instance, in the midst of a textual paragraph in their CSR report, they place a large, colored circle noting that they were named to FORTUNE Magazine’s Most Admired Companies list, and were selected by the Working Mother 100 Best Companies initiative as one of the nation’s top companies for family-friendly benefits (Wyndham Worldwide).

Sustainment

A great deal of the CSR messaging throughout the sample companies focuses on sustainability, especially environmental sustainability. However, the topos of sustainment was identified from a different conceptual vantage point. The sustainment topos refers to the exceptional amount of mentions in the CSR texts of all the companies regarding their efforts to sustain their own CSR programs. Coming out of the listing of achievements that each company highlights, they all mention that they are far from completing their efforts to achieve CSR, and devote a noticeable amount of space in their texts detailing next steps for their initiatives. The mention of the fact that CSR programs require large investments of time and resources, even in the face of numerous accomplishments, prompted a coded subcategory entitled “come so far, have so far to go” and another entitled “it’s hard, but we’ll keep working on it.” All of the sample companies refer to CSR as a journey, and they all note that they are far from finishing the
journey. Table 11 illustrates the variations that figured into the final analysis of the topoi, and how often and where the topoi were referenced in the sample texts.

Table 11
Sustainment Analysis Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Industry Topos</th>
<th>Characteristic Topoi</th>
<th>Variations</th>
<th>Total Related Codes</th>
<th>Texts Where Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainment</td>
<td>Sustaining the CSR Journey Cycle of Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Who is spoken about: The corporation, Corporate leaders, Employees, The industry CSR associations</td>
<td>What is spoken about: New targets and goals/Next steps, Goal setting, CSR is a journey, not a destination, There is so much more to do, Come so far, got so far to go, CSR is difficult, but we’ll keep working at it, Improved communication, Improved policies, Improved actions, Embedding CSR into our DNA, Integrating CSR into all we do</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The opening executive letters of the 2013 CSR report from the Disney CEO and CFO both point to the sustainment topos when the CFO points out that “Walt Disney famously remarked that Disneyland would never be finished so long as there is imagination left in the world. We view our approach to Citizenship in the same way: Even though we will never be finished, we must always do more, and inspire others to join us along the way. I am excited to continue this journey with all of you in 2014” (The Walt Disney Company). This message is repeated later in the report with the mention that “we continue to work diligently toward our citizenship goals. We regularly set new challenges for Disney in the form of publicly available targets. Targets are vitally important in helping Disney set a path and focus priorities. We believe that citizenship is a long-term investment that not only benefits us today but has the potential for an even greater impact in the decades to come” (The Walt Disney Company).

Hilton’s CEO ends the executive letter of the CSR report by stating, “As we celebrate our success over the last seven years, we are also looking to the future, and which issues will have the most impact on our business. We will release our Travel with Purpose strategy and next set of goals in early 2015 and look forward to sharing our ongoing journey with you” (Hilton Worldwide). Starwood’s CEO notes that in the 2014 Global Citizenship report that the information represents “our efforts to date in what is a multiyear transformation of how we do business. We’re on a journey, and we want our stakeholders to come with us, to challenge us,
and to help us go further” (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide). Wyndham’s CEO similarly points out:

As we look to the future, I am incredibly proud of what Wyndham Worldwide has achieved in just eight short years. Our CSR efforts are consistently honored and ranked alongside organizations with much longer legacies and years of development. And while I am proud of how quickly we have matured our CSR and sustainability programs, I am more excited of what we will achieve in the future. For, I strongly believe we have even greater opportunities in the years ahead. Wyndham Worldwide is just getting started. And with the energy, commitment, and ingenuity of our teams in collaboration with our partners, we will continue to raise the bar for ourselves, and deliver even greater results for our shareholders, our customers, our people, and our community. (Wyndham Worldwide)

These statements, as well as many others in the sample CSR texts, point to the characteristics mentioned earlier about the sustainment topos with CSR being referred to as a journey that is far from finished. It also points to the similarity between all the companies to expound on great achievements while simultaneously noting that the achievements pale in comparison to all the work that is yet to be done. Sustainment of CSR programs within the sample companies serves as a disclaimer so that readers know that the company has not reached its full socially responsible potential. It also serves to remind readers that CSR is a major
investment for the company, but through commitment, management, alignment, environment, engagement and achievement the company will persevere to make the world a better place.
Rhetorical Synergy

The format of CSR reports was different for all six sample companies. Information was not presented in the same order or through the use of the same topic titles between any of the companies. However, by identifying the overarching topoi between the companies’ texts, a certain rhetorical synergy is realized. Through the synergy of the topoi, a story is generated that can be told by using the topoi. In this way, the topoi identified in the CSR texts support the generative potential of topoi. By using the identified topoi, a company could generate their CSR story. The identified topoi provide the structure in which supporting arguments and information could be assembled to create a newly constructed CSR message.

By assembling the topoi in the order that I have placed them, the topics create a flow and synergy for telling a CSR story. Commitment is required to create and sustain a CSR program. The CSR program requires management by the organization, and needs alignment with the organization’s strategic brand and priorities. The CSR program requires creation and support of various environments and the engagement of all stakeholders in order to be successful. Achievement of goals is necessary to move the program forward, and the sustainment of goal setting, commitment, management, alignment, environment, engagement, and achievement is necessary for the CSR journey to continue within the organization.

This rhetorical synergy also creates the opportunity to integrate rhetorical appeals throughout the texts. The identified topoi allow for the introduction of logos, pathos, and ethos to create a CSR story that appeals to logic, emotion and ethical character and credibility at numerous junctures. The CSR messaging of the sample companies provide examples of how
these rhetorical appeals can be interspersed throughout all the topoi. At times, all three rhetorical appeals can be integrated within one topos. For instance, the topos of management and achievement may primarily appeal to logos or ethos. However, engagement has the potential to appeal to logos, pathos, and ethos. CSR programs such as diversity and inclusion and employee benefits appeals to ethos. Facts and figures supporting the success of stakeholder engagement appeal to logos. Stories and photos of employees engaging with the local community, such as Disney VoluntEARS working at Give Kids the World to help sick kids, appeals to pathos. Through this topical and rhetorical fluidity, a CSR story can be told that is synergistically structured to persuade readers by leading them through a series of connected topics enhanced and supported with rhetorical appeals (see fig. 33).

Figure 33: Rhetorical Synergy

Source: Connie Culler
The figure illustrating rhetorical synergy involves a circular direction to signify the circulation and movement of the topoi between and through each other. The topoi are not static and do not always function in a specific order. They all simultaneously interacted throughout the CSR texts, along with the rhetorical appeals. I placed them into the order shown in the figure because it is the way I combined them to create the narrative as I read it.

The concept of rhetorical synergy likens to what Walker calls a “body of persuasion” in his discussion of enthymemes (48). The body of persuasion is created through expert knowledge of audience, rhetoric, and subject in order to combine various and appropriate rhetorical devices and strategies at the opportune time in order to effectively motivate an audience. As Walker explains:

One must know well enough the topoi of a discursive field…to select ‘what should be used’ for the particular case in hand; one must know the various discourse-level gambits, schemes, and strategies by which a discourse using and combining those topoi can be plotted as an argumentative progress (as opposed to merely ‘arranged’ according to some static outline); one must be able to analyze one’s rhetorical situation as well as recognize the shifting demands and possibilities of the immediate discursive moment (arguments arise in response to preceding arguments, or in anticipation of arguments to come or audience responses); and one must have a fluent command of the stylistic resources of the language in which one writes or speaks. (62)
Walker likens the body of persuasion to a “cluster” or “web” of “emotively significant ideas” combined with rhetorical stylistics that “generate in its audience a passional identification with or adherence to a particular stance, and that (ideally) will strike the audience as an ‘abrupt’ flash of insight…to intensify its impact and enhance its presence and memorability in the audience’s psyche” (53).

Rhetorical synergy differs from Walker’s theory in that the body of persuasion includes pointing to both agreements and oppositions in order to prove an argument. In the rhetorical synergy of CSR discourse analyzed in this study, opposing viewpoints are not mentioned. The synergistic movement of topoi and rhetorical appeals through CSR messaging connects the audience to pleasing and familiar notions of CSR that help to elide critical examinations of the people, places, and processes involved. Through the circulation of the story, told by the use of the topoi, and enhanced by effective use of rhetorical appeals, audiences see only one side of the CSR tale. As mentioned previously, there are multiple ways to read the subject of CSR. The corporate materials present only one interpretation of the story. While each company directly addresses the fact that they are interested in providing shared value for the company and stakeholders, by employing rhetorical synergy, the nature and magnitude of possible disjunctures, motives, unintended consequences, and effects of CSR can easily be missed without intentional critical examination and additional in-depth research on alternative readings of the discourse as it is presented by the corporations themselves. Chapter Five calls for extended inquiry on ways that commonplace notions may help to elide critical examination of CSR.
**Topological Levels**

The concept of rhetorical synergy extends into the interplay between common and special topoi and reveals several topological levels. Through the course of this study, four levels of topoi have been examined that work synergistically with and through each other. First, the common CSR topos of Triple Bottom Line was established to mark a starting point for coding, and the common CSR topos of shared value serves as an overarching commonplace throughout all the texts. These common topoi are standards in CSR vernacular across all industries (see fig. 34).

![Figure 34: Topological Levels](source: Connie Culler)
As coding progressed, unique CSR topoi were noted that were specific to each company and included: Disney: Inspiration; Hilton: Higher Purpose; Intercontinental: Collaborative Innovation; Marriott: Leadership; Starwood: The Age of Great Change; and, Wyndham: Green. These topoi helped each company to establish a commonplace that was unique to its CSR program, therefore, I labelled them as unique topoi. While this level of special topoi was not consistent across companies, they contributed to the categories of topoi that were found to be more consistent for the industry when refined holistically. This layer of special topoi can be related to the common topoi of Triple Bottom Line and shared value when those topoi are considered from the perspective of the individual company. For instance, focusing on the topos of inspiration is how Disney frames its execution of improving people, planet and profit. Disney is inspired and inspires stakeholders to achieve the Triple Bottom Line.

A final set of topoi was then identified across all the sample companies to comprise special industry topoi. The special industry topoi include: Commitment, Management, Alignment, Environment, Engagement, Achievement, and Sustainment. The special industry topoi work synergistically with the common topoi of Triple Bottom Line and shared value, and the unique company topoi. Extending on the previous Disney example, Disney employs the topos of Inspiration to execute on the Triple Bottom Line and explain the concept of shared value. Disney then infuses the Inspiration topos throughout the special industry topoi. Disney’s CSR messaging thereby combines their core topos of Inspiration with the special industry topoi of Commitment, Management, Alignment, Environment, Engagement,
Achievement and Sustainment to justify and explain their program and to persuade readers of their intent and success.

An additional level of special topoi also emerges from the special industry topoi. This additional level is special topoi within special topoi. Another way to label this additional level is to call it characteristic topoi. These topoi were those topoi that were characteristic of each of the special industry topoi. For instance, within the topos of Environment, there were four separate, special (characteristic) topoi: the physical environment topos, the workplace environment topos, the community environment topos, and the industry environment topos. Using this additional level of special topoi, each company extends their ability to persuade readers. For example, Disney has the opportunity to infuse Inspiration into their discussion of the community environment topos. At this topological level, rhetorical appeals can be employed. For example, Disney can appeal to pathos through their description of Disney VoluntEARS working in the community to inspire kids who are terminally ill.

Conclusion

The unique topoi of the sample companies speak to the values that the company ascribes to their brand and their CSR program. The unique topoi of the companies act as extensions of brand identity, and they use these topoi to help the reader make associations between the company and its approach to CSR. Through these associations, readers connect with what they already value about the brand, and extend that connection to the companies’ CSR values. For instance, people connect to the Disney brand through the topos of inspiration. The company was founded on the sparks of inspiration that guided Walt Disney to create iconic characters and
theme parks. Leveraging this connection, inspiration is the hallmark of Disney’s CSR programming, thereby connecting readers and seeking to persuade them with familiar thoughts and emotions.

The special and characteristic topoi of the travel and tourism industry, identified through an analysis of topoi across the six sample companies, provide insight into what the companies are trying to persuade readers to think and do. The rhetorical synergy of the seven topoi work to create a story that persuades readers the companies are committed to making the world a better place through CSR. The management topos persuades readers that due to the overwhelming commitment to improving the world, people, structures, policies and procedures have been established to turn the commitment into reality. The alignment topos seeks to persuade readers that the companies’ CSR practices are aligned to ensure shared value is created for stakeholders and the business. The environment and engagement topoi persuades readers that the business seeks to create and sustain environments that are healthy and that the people involved in those environments are engaged in efforts to further the aims of CSR to improve the world. The achievement topos persuades readers that the company is making progress toward improving people, planet and profit. The sustainment topos persuades readers that the company is planning ahead to achieve more good works and continue the journey toward creating a better world.
CHAPTER FIVE

As the world, its organizations, and those organizations’ voices have evolved, so must the study of organizational rhetoric. It is no surprise that scholarship has begun and needs to continue toward a more critical explanation of organizational rhetoric. What does scholarship in the field ignore? What does it hide? How does it (mis)represent the multiple voices that compose an organization and the society where they operate, and what chance do external audiences have to respond effectively to or engage in dialogue with an organizational voice? How can it be used to assist society in making enlightened choices, or how can it be used more effectively to help make society a better place to live? Scholars of organizational rhetoric need to take a skeptical stance that identifies the multiple interests involved and unpacks hidden ideographs and assumptions.

[There is] a general uneasiness about the role of organizational rhetoric in public dialogue: whose interests does it really serve? (Boyd and Waymer, 475)

This study yields the identification of topoi for CSR in the travel and tourism industry using a sample set of six companies. Topoi are identified through a blended method of research that employed rhetorical analysis, modified grounded theory, and content management technology (NVIVO). The findings illustrate the guiding principles set out at the start of the study: topoi can be classified in different levels of common and special; topoi can be used as a heuristic and for association and amplification; and topoi as fluid and movable. During the course of this research, rhetorical synergy and topological levels are identified that can inform other studies about the generative potential of topoi and its fluidity when viewed from different
conceptual vantage points. For instance, other corporations, stakeholders of corporations, critical NGO’s, corporate consulting firms, or counterpublics could benefit from these findings when building new arguments for or against CSR programs. The results of this study provide new frames for generating arguments when evaluating CSR as an overall practice as well.

**Limitations of the Research**

The topoi identified through this research likely do not represent all of the topoi of CSR rhetoric for the travel and tourism industry. They do, however, represent the most commonly referred to components of CSR rhetoric as indicated by my sample set, analysis method, and current understanding of rhetoric, topoi, and CSR. No doubt, more and differing ones exist that could be interpreted differently through different means, and further research can help to develop and critically examine more elaborate explanations of those described as well as increase the list of ideas for rhetors to employ for audience persuasion. The vague way that the topoi are articulated by the sample set of this research is a limitation in and of itself, but one that could be solved or further explained through an expanded analysis that perhaps includes additional texts, sample companies, or adjusted methods.

The intent of this study was to survey, examine, and analyze a large and complex topic through a limited set of data, during a set period of time, to perform a rhetorical analysis more than a cultural critique. Although, while the intent of the study was not to be a broad or in-depth critique of the CSR subject or the sample companies, some critical commentary has been included at certain points. An aim for the future expansion of this research is to perform a
rhetorical critique of this nature, by delving more deeply into CSR counterpublics and their arguments.

For instance, I would like to expand the research in the future by making a more critical examination of CSR rhetoric in the travel and tourism industry to explore motives, unintended consequences, disjunctures, and effects. I envision doing this in several ways, such as using the lens of strategic ambiguity and hermeneutic depth in CSR rhetoric. For instance, I might explore the relationship of marketing slogans and topoi to create strategic ambiguity, or perform a resistive reading of the texts to explore additional dynamics of hermeneutic depth. Another option is to select one company from the sample set and perform a rhetorical critique of that company’s CSR discourse in relation to their actions and effects. A study of this kind would explore the space between the rhetoric of CSR and how it interacts with other, sometimes conflicting, rhetorics. A study of this kind might also look at CSR rhetoric in the travel and tourism industry holistically, instead of one specific company or set of companies.

For a more critical approach to future studies, I could also invoke Dingo’s notion of “interarticulation” to research how the rhetorics of CSR travel and how “networks and shifting contexts inform an isolated rhetorical act and thus affect our reception and understanding of it” (109). By doing this, as Dingo points out for the rhetorics of empowerment, I could analyze CSR rhetorics “in relation to other rhetorical acts and within varying contexts in order to show its instability of meaning” (109-110). As the rhetorical concept of interarticulation helped Dingo to account for shifting meanings of empowerment, it could also help to account for ways that CSR arguments “become composed of elements derived from different things that are distinctly joined
or marked” and may work against the very aims that CSR rhetoric purports. For instance, using interarticulation, I could examine ways that CSR rhetoric might further neoliberal aims or policies that are as harmful as they are helpful.

Leveraging DeChaine’s notion of “humanitarian doxa” could be one other way to cast a critical eye on the CSR topoi. DeChaine notes that the rhetoric of responsibility and humanitarian discourse “have contributed to a formidable doxastic shift regarding the function, place, and power of the corporation in human social life” (79). Extensions of my present study could explore the results of this doxastic shift in relation to one or more of the special industry topoi or characteristic topoi, especially when they are used as DeChaine explains to serve as “window dressing to greenwash the image of its purveyors, and in cases of its worst abuses, that it functions strategically as an alibi for less than humanitarian-motivated commercial undertakings” (77).

To expand on the findings of this study and focus on a more critical rhetorical analysis, a different evaluative framework would be necessary. One proposed method for accomplishing such an expanded study would be to consider the two additional aspects of policy and power, in relation to the existing TBL of people, planet, and profit. Each of the seven special topoi discussed in this current study could be viewed through the lenses of motivations and effects, using an evaluative framework of people, planet, profit, policy, and power. A line of inquiry designed to uncover why the sample companies are motivated to pursue the seven topoi could be considered. Likewise, a line of inquiry designed to uncover the effects that come as a result of the seven topoi within the travel and tourism industry could be pursued. Figure 35 illustrates an
evaluative framework that could be used to research possible motivations, and Figure 36 illustrates an evaluative framework that could be used to research possible effects.

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<th>Special Industry Topoi</th>
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Figure 35: Evaluative Framework: Motivations
Source: Connie Culler

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<th>Special Industry Topoi</th>
<th>EFFECTS</th>
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Figure 36: Evaluative Framework: Effects
Source: Connie Culler
To expand the study of the motivations and effects of the special industry topoi, additional data collection and analysis would be necessary. For instance, a broader and deeper investigation into the travel and tourism industry overall would be required in order to understand policy and power implications that could be driving decisions regarding CSR by companies in the industry. A broader and deeper investigation into each sample company would also be required to understand possible motivations and effects driven by their individual corporate agendas.

Another limitation to the study involved the coding process, which was complicated in two ways. First, I did not use an existing, standardized model for textual coding. Instead, I created a coding process using a modified grounded theory approach that begins with a bottom up approach where theories emerge as analysis progresses. Following the modified grounded theory approach, I began with open coding at a granular level, and as concepts began to fit together at higher levels as I progressed through the analysis I went back into the texts to trace strands of meaning, and continued this fluctuation between granular detail to higher level concepts until a final set of topoi became evident based on my interpretation.

Second, the complexities of the coding process were heightened because I was using a technology tool to assist with content management and coding whose capabilities outweighed my mastery for using it. This is not to say that the tool was not helpful, because it was immensely helpful. Instead, I did not explore all this tool has to offer due to my level of training for using it and the time constraints that I was under to complete the project. In the future, this limitation can
be overcome through additional training in the NVIVO 10 software to deepen its use in and value to content and textual analysis.

To solve for the coding process limitations, further expansion on this research could focus more intently on the method for identifying topoi. Using the preliminary work done in this study to “hunt for topoi,” I envision creating and testing a tool that is robust and elaborate, yet tactically efficient to use, to identify, code, categorize, and interpret topoi within corporate texts. A tool of this kind has many extensions for use, as it could be customized for various types of texts, and arranged in a way that involved the use of technology or could for manual use.

**Implications for Future Research**

There are numerous implications for further academic research based on this study. One of the most obvious ways to extend this research is to replicate the study to determine if the findings are consistent with further investigation. A database of content sources for each sample company has been created that would assist with easier replication of the analysis. Similarly, the study could be replicated, but with the addition of more sample companies in the industry to increase the corpus. The method of this study could also be used to overlay for companies from another industry. Results of the research performed for a different industry could then be used to do a comparison study to determine if CSR topoi vary by industry or remain the same.

A deeper analysis of the CSR topoi identified in this study could also be the subject of future research. While a study of this sort may prove challenging due to the vagueness of some of the unique topoi, a more comprehensive analysis of one of the topoi could possibly better explain the reasons for their strategic ambiguity. Any of the special industry topoi identified by
the six sample companies could also be explored on their own to create a study. For instance, the commitment topos could be leveraged for a study to investigate the rhetorical implications of using commitment as a persuasive strategy in relation to CSR. Likewise, just one of the sample companies could be the focus of additional research into how that specific company employs their unique topos and the special industry topoi. Along this same line of inquiry, I could select one of the seven topoi identified for the industry, and perform a rhetorical critique about that one topic across the entire travel and tourism industry, or another industry like retail merchandise chains.

For instance, further research could focus on one of the sample companies to analyze just the special industry topos of environment for that corporation. A study of this sort could compare CSR actions in relation to the environment topos with the effects of those actions. The study could indicate whether the company’s actions actually work for or against their rhetoric in relation to the environment topos.

Expanded rhetorical research could be conducted to extend the concepts of rhetorical synergy or topological levels. Viewing topoi as a synergistic system of argument generation could be used in studies of subjects other than CSR, and a study leveraging Walker’s theory of bodies of persuasion could be extended through deeper inquiry with rhetorical synergy. Likewise, topological levels could be investigated further to extend the notion that topoi are fluid and movable, there are variations between and among common or special categories, and how strategic ambiguity may be related to this fluidity.
Additionally, I would like to extend this research by essentially “turning the project inside out.” In this study I analyzed completed products created by an unknown rhetor and released to an unknown audience, and made my own interpretations. In the future, I would like to turn the project around and look at the process from both the producers’ (rhetors’) perspective and the consumers’, or stakeholders’ (audiences’) perspective. I imagine doing this by interviewing rhetors that create the corporate CSR texts to gain insight into their motives, methods, and means. Likewise, I imagine interviewing audience members who receive CSR messages to better understand how the actual effectiveness of the messaging based on audience levels of perception, persuasion, and participation.

One of the most promising extensions for this research that I would like to pursue is its pedagogical potential. I believe this study could be used to create new academic courses related to CSR. In the essay “From the Margins to the Mainstream: Corporate Responsibility and the Challenge Facing Business and Business Schools,” Peter Lacy and Charlotte Salazar examine the current state of education relative to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Their findings reveal that while corporations are increasingly focused on CSR, expecting managers to be both socially and economically responsible, university business schools are not meeting the challenge of preparing business leaders with the knowledge and skills to live up to this expectation. Lacy and Salazar point out that pressure is being exerted on business schools to integrate CSR into the curriculum by both businesses and students, and they advocate for the integration of CSR into the core, mainstream curriculum of university business programs. The authors acknowledge the interdisciplinary nature of CSR and call for collaboration with multiple disciplines and
stakeholders in the development of the CSR curriculum, such as cultural, sociological, and philosophical studies.

As a point of pressure from below for integrating CSR into the core curriculum, the authors mention the student group, Net Impact, which has gained momentum through their development of global CSR movements and “have used this momentum to demand that societal issues be treated seriously in business school curricula” (239). As a point of pressure from above for CSR integration into the mainstream curriculum, the article notes the development of the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS), a forum created in Europe between the deans of top business schools and the CEOs of multinational companies. The goal of the forum is to “address the current ‘disconnect’ between business education and the needs of the corporate world in creating knowledge and skills on corporate responsibility” (242). EABIS funded the ‘CSR Platform,’ a three-year project to create a centralized research point for CSR among educators “across geographies, disciplines, and generations” (242). Another project, ‘RESPONSE,’ researches how multinational companies “frame and enact” CSR across a spectrum of their business practices.

Although Lacy and Salazar do not mention the specific universities in their article, it is interesting to note that they do mention two European institutions that are leading the charge for taking CSR mainstream (EABIS and RESPONSE). The authors do not mention any U.S. universities or organizations that promote CSR academic study. Among the U.S. academic institutions with a specific focus on CSR, most notable are: the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Boston College Center for Corporate
Citizenship, Institute for Corporate Responsibility at George Washington University, Center for Leadership and Social Responsibility at the University of Washington Milgard School of Business. Although these are notable names, I do not believe they constitute enough of a critical mass of CSR focused programs in the U.S. to warrant saying CSR has been integrated into curriculums adequately.

Based on the acknowledged need for better CSR training, and the subject’s potential for rhetorical analysis, adding more CSR courses to the academic curriculum could be a timely and natural endeavor. CSR is a topic that raises many of the multidisciplinary lines of inquiry involving cultural, social, technical, and rhetorical implications to name a few. In addition, CSR offers numerous extensions of study for the T&T student, because of the multidisciplinary nature of both the program and the topic.

Further, as Lacy and Salazar point out, courses related to ethics or CSR have been given fringe status in business schools, and CSR curriculum has not yet extended far beyond the business school. Where CSR business courses do exist, such as at Harvard Business School, they tend to focus primarily on cost/benefit/value of CSR programs to companies, the components of a CSR program in organizations, and how to implement CSR programs. Marketing or PR courses may mention the value of CSR programs to the brand, or how to leverage CSR. There are many other approaches to CSR in the curriculum besides that of the business school that could be focused on a much broader range of dimensions. These dimensions could include the historical, cultural, sociological, philosophical, rhetorical and political factors that accompany CSR, as well as encourage a rhetorical critique. In addition, a
CSR course could delve into the relationship between CSR and technology, globalization, and the visual and written texts that communicate the topic to various constituencies.

In fact, including CSR in the curriculum is not untried at UCF. I was a student in J. Blake Scott’s Special Topics course on Globalization that incorporated CSR, and Patrick Murphy’s Special Topics course on Climate Change that also included CSR components. Also, I developed and taught an undergraduate course in the English Department at UCF in 2011 entitled “Greedy and Green: Literary and Digital Critiques of Corporate Social Responsibility.” The course focused on representations of corporate social responsibility as represented in literary works, movies, television, and on corporate and nonprofit Web sites. It made use of literary analysis and critical technology studies to analyze how the concept of CSR was represented both by practitioners and critics. All three of these examples of incorporating CSR into coursework were enlightening and well received by students. However, there is much ground still to be covered pedagogically on the topic. In the article, “How You Gonna Save Y/our Soul? Tempering Corporate Identity in a Global Age”, C. Michael Elavsky discusses setting up and teaching an undergraduate course about global awareness, engagement, and corporate behavior. It provides valuable pedagogical insights for approaching the CSR topic in the university classroom. Course content could be developed using guidance from the article combined with content from this dissertation.

Beyond extensions of the research for academic inquiry, there are several implications for industry in this research. The research could be used by corporate rhetors, those who direct CSR programs and those who write about them, to evaluate and examine their approach to CSR
messaging. Using the unique topoi, corporate rhetors could be informed as to how they can assist readers with making connections to the company’s brand and core values by eliminating the vagueness of the messaging and focusing on more effective means of persuasion. Using the special and characteristic topoi, corporate rhetors could find opportunities to restructure information for CSR reports and associated texts to better amplify their messaging and persuasive opportunities. Employing the special and characteristic topoi in new ways could assist a corporate rhetor with making their CSR messaging more creative and compelling. By structuring message according to the architecture of the special and characteristic topoi, corporate rhetors could change the way that messaging is distributed throughout various communication channels. Using this study, a corporate rhetor could also be encouraged to view their products with a more critical perspective.

I also believe there is an unmet, and possibly as yet unidentified, need for more CSR corporate training programs. There is momentum for CSR as a business practice and it is still building. As companies, such as those in the travel and tourism industry, continue to evolve organizational structures to manage CSR and embed it into the fabric of the organization’s culture, the greater the need to integrate the topic into the company’s core training curriculum. I argue that CSR needs to be expanded into a full curriculum in mid- to large-companies that begins at new hire orientation programs, and continues with CSR programs offered as part of corporate-wide revitalization campaigns that cascade the training to existing employees at all levels throughout the company.
Supporting my point that companies could benefit from more structured CSR training, Raub and Blunschi report in the article, “The Power of Meaningful Work: How Awareness of CSR Initiatives Fosters Task Significance and Positive Work Outcomes in Service Employees,” on an intensive study they completed in the hospitality industry relative to CSR. Their findings showed marked improvements in employee performance and satisfaction when the employees had a greater awareness and understanding of their employer’s CSR programs. Raub and Blunschi concluded that:

> Awareness of CSR initiatives is positively related to discretionary work behaviors (including OCB and personal initiative) and negatively related to emotional exhaustion is of particular relevance to the service industries in general, and the hospitality industry in particular, given the importance of these work behaviors in a service context and the frequent strain put on employees’ emotional resources that are characteristic for the industry. (15)

Lacy and Salazar mention in their article that not only does CSR get pushed to the margins in schools, but it can also get marginalized in businesses—instead of being part of the mainstream. To mainstream an idea in the corporation would take a comprehensive strategy for training, and would have to tie to the major drivers of the business. Because corporate training differs from academic training in many ways, a different approach is required for the structure and content of a CSR training course for employees. In some ways, a corporate training course of this kind would be similar to an internal corporate communication campaign. The content of this
dissertation could be used in many ways to launch such a campaign, or as a structure for a company that is setting up a comprehensive, integrated CSR program for the first time.

Overall, the results of this research underscores the generative potential of topoi and its unfixed nature. The findings of this study provide new insights into the rhetorical concept of topoi that can be extended in several diverse directions. Likewise, using the unique, special, and characteristic topoi found in this study, numerous future studies could be conducted to increase knowledge about CSR in both analytical and critical ways to better understand the rhetoric and reality of corporate good works.
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