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MYTHIC VISION, RHETORICAL DETERMINACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

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Drawing upon the theories of rhetorical criticism used to study leadership in organizations, this essay develops two new concepts: mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy. Mythic vision is the idiosyncratic schema of the founder, demonstrating a distinctly rhetorical dimension for the creation of organizational culture. The concept of rhetorical determinacy is shown to limit the ability of management to respond to environmental changes inconsistent with the mythic vision. These terms are used to explain the organizational culture the Selective Service System. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy for management theory and research.

INTRODUCTION

Recent trends in management studies suggest a growing interest in the application of theories of rhetoric and rhetorical criticism for exploring issues affecting organizations. Current topics of interest for researchers utilizing the tools of rhetorical criticism are the use of narrative storytelling to advocate new approaches to business practice (e.g., Clark & Salaman, 1998; Grint & Case, 1998; Jackson, 1999), the influence of values on corporate culture and decision making (Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Pant & Lachman, 1998), and strategy decision making (Hendry, 2000). For these researchers, the application of rhetorical criticism has revealed the rich, imaginative and creative power of language in the practice of management and organizational leadership.

Jackson suggests that the "sophisticated and proven" tools of the rhetorical critic are uniquely suited to the study of management (1999: 356). Jackson applies Bormann's (1972) rhetorical theory of fantasy theme analysis to explain the essentially rhetorical appeal of management gurus, because it provides both descriptive and explanatory frameworks that account for phenomena largely unexamined with traditional methods of management research. Similarly, Clark and Salaman (1998) assert that the popularity and success of management "gurus," such as Tom Peters, stems solely from their ability to create persuasive narrative arguments. They contend that these "public performances" serve no utilitarian value in supporting the advice offered. Rather, the "gurus" construct a rhetorical view of the manager's self-image that is perceived as attractive and self-fulfilling. Similarly, Clark and Greatbatch (2003) report many best-selling management "how to" books are fabricated products for mass consumption that are not based upon sound management theory or research, and, in some cases, that some of the data and theories are invented and all together fictional. The success of these popular books is due to the author/gurus' rhetorical skill and/or the publisher's questionable sales and marketing practices (e.g., having employees place orders in the tens of thousands to get the book on best-seller lists, which in turn generates "buzz" and stimulates latent demand based upon perceived popularity).

Case (1999) draws on the literary and rhetorical theories of Kenneth Burke (1969, 1970) to explain the attraction of

Business Process Reengineering (BPR) to theorists and practitioners alike, despite limited empirical evidence that BPR was effective. Grint and Case (1998) note the essentially militaristic, aggressive, and violent nature of the rhetoric used by the proponents of BPR. They maintain that this violent rhetoric is systemic, generated from a worldview that sees "Man" (the authors are specific in relating these actions to the male gender) as choosing language for self-consciously colonizing and dominating goals. They declare that management by BPR is rhetorical aggression, intended to be a violent career-destroying process of eliminating a whole class of "enemies" (i.e., middle managers). Consequently, we are well advised to employ the methods of rhetorical criticism to better understand and explain these popular and celebrated practices.

Other researchers note the systemic influence of language on the organization, making a rhetorical approach to studying organizations almost mandatory, if we are to understand how individuals and groups forge a common identity as an organization. Cunliffe (2001) suggests that all managerial communication, especially conversation, is essentially formative, creating organizational structures through a dynamic process of social exchange, which many researchers perceive as objective or fixed. Similarly, Morgan et al (2004) argue that organizational identification and commitment are complex processes influenced by numerous interacting variables, including self-constructed narratives that both define the organization in personal terms and self-reflexively become a source of organizational identification for the storyteller. Again, the tools of rhetorical criticism are ideally suited for exploring these phenomena.

While the efficacy of rhetorical criticism for the study of management practices is demonstrated in the literature, its utility for explaining the complex interaction of personalities, structures, and creative endeavors that comprise the organization has by no means been exhausted. For example, as noted above, Jackson (1999) applies the rhetorical theories of Bormann (1972) regarding fantasy theme analysis to explain the essentially rhetorical appeal of management gurus. For Jackson, fantasy theme analysis is useful because it provides both descriptive and explanatory frameworks (1999: 354) for the researcher. Accordingly, this paper develops a new

theoretical construct, termed mythic vision, using Bormann's (1972) formative work to establish the theoretical framework this model. Subsequently, the paper addresses many of the criticisms of fantasy theme analysis, offering two new concepts to enlarge the model where others contend to it to be insufficient (Gunn, 2003). Such an approach is warranted, when existing concepts are insufficient to explain the phenomenon under study (Beyer, Hannah, and Milton, 2000). It is suggested believe these new concepts, which we term mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy, respond to the limitations of the original model and enhance Bormann's ideas by accounting for more sublime, unconscious and individual influences on organization creation, maintenance, and change.

Mythic Vision and Fantasy Theme Analysis

In 1972, Ernst Bormann's seminal essay, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," first considered the rhetorical dimensions of group imaginative processes. By exploring the communicative acts through which group psychological processes became manifest, Bormann extended the explanatory power of rhetorical criticism beyond the static descriptions of historical events into the realm of anticipating how shared symbol-systems generate group identity and motivation (Bormann, 1972).

Since the initial publication of Bormann's theory there have been numerous responses to fantasy theme analysis, culminating in sharp criticism from some quarters, and further refinement of the theory (Bormann, 1982; Mohrmann, 1982). Perhaps the most virulent criticism of fantasy theme analysis comes from G. P. Mohrmann (1982: 110), who finds Bormann's initial theory to inaccurately extend Bales' work on small group processes, and rely upon tautological arguments, which "tend toward circularity in applying the Dramatism that is the hallmark of the approach" (1970: 110; see also Bales, 1970). In Bormann's earlier work, he defines fantasy theme as a "recollection of something that happened" or a "dream of what... the future could be" that have the as yet unrealized potential to be collectively shared by a group (1972: 397). His (Bormann, 1982) response to Mohrmann asserts the validity of the concept of fantasy theme analysis by more carefully defining the terms used by fantasy theme critics. He contends that rhetorical vision is a highly abstract synthesizing effort that integrates all of a group's fantasy themes into a coherent whole, a concept similar to what Hatch (2000) describes as a "decentering" process of innovation that is diffused and accepted among the organization membership. Continuing, Borman further delineates the theory identifying fantasy type as a term of middle range abstraction between fantasy themes and rhetorical visions, the fantasy type consisting of generic headings that identify as similar yet unsynthesized fantasy themes, with rhetorical visions as wholly integrated concepts shared collectively by the organization or movement.

More recently, Bormann's theory of fantasy theme analysis has been criticized by Gunn (2003), whose difficulties with Bormann's theory are many, but rest in part on what Gunn believes is the failure of fantasy theme analysis to encompass

different individual interpretations of a shared group experience, the ability of an individual to subsume collective experiences on an unconscious level, and a lack of power for predicting future group action (Gunn, 2003: 50-54). Later during the discussion of mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy, these concerns are addressed in greater detail, providing a new terminology that incorporates Gunn's criticisms and strengthens Bormann's fantasy theme in both description and prediction of how organizations develop. As background for that discussion, the following sections examine how researchers in both management and rhetorical theory have used Bormann's ideas as a heuristic for describing the interplay of myth, rhetoric, and organizational culture.

Fantasy theme analysis has become part of the lexicon of contemporary rhetorical theory, providing rhetorical critics with concepts such as fantasy theme, fantasy type, and rhetorical vision; concepts that posit myth as a powerful influence upon individual and group behavior. It is the power of myth to both suggest strategies for rhetorical discourse and to bind people together into organizations that enact rhetorical visions, which is the focus of the present study. Expanding on Bormann's concept, the approach offered here argues that mythic rhetoric is similar yet distinct from rhetorical vision, a distinction termed mythic vision, -- a rhetorical construct that provides an organizing principle at the individual level for the interpretation of social reality that Gunn (2003) finds missing from Bormann's original theory. This paper suggests that the concept mythic vision subsumes the arguments levied against fantasy theme analysis and Bormann's responses to those arguments by creating a unifying conceptual ground that extends and expands our understanding of how individuals and groups, symbols and myths, and conscious and unconscious influences commingle in creating and sustaining organizations.

Mythic visions are different from rhetorical visions in that the latter are shared fantasy themes capable of uniting many people toward a common action. On the other hand, mythic visions are interpretative schema individuals use to assess the nature of reality. While other researchers have identified the ready-made templates individuals use for extending the organizational culture into their personal decision making situations (Harris, 1994), few have examined the essentially rhetorical nature of this process. As a contribution to the fantasy theme literature, this paper argues that mythic visions precede the development of group identities from which rhetorical visions and fantasy themes emerge.

To further explain how mythic visions, rhetorical visions, and fantasy themes interact, we turn to Kenneth Burke, who promotes a concept similar to mythic vision in his development of "terministic screens" - or the capacity of a given nomenclature to reveal some relationships and obscure others (1966: 45-46). According to Burke, language constrains not only how we describe the world, but how we respond to the world around us. In other words, how we linguistically construct our understanding of the world largely determines the reality we experience and enact. Burke's concept and mythic vision are similar, though not precisely interchangeable. Burke's

idea of terministic screens is much broader in its scope, applying to all persons across all situations. Yet, mythic visions are terministic screens of individual sense-making. While mythic visions certainly function as terministic screens, they are specific examples of individual sense-making. From here, the conceptual step to Bormann is more clear: When many people adhere to an individual's mythic vision, it becomes a rhetorical vision of collective construction. Hence, our concept of mythic vision provides a missing link between the generative power of the individual (not truly addressed by Bormann) to the generative power of the social group, which is the primary focus of his writing. Mythic vision is the unique creation of the individual, reflecting his or her distinctive terministic screens. The rhetorical vision is the shared creation of the group, imbued with a generalized terministic screen and becomes the basis of Bormann's fantasy theme analysis.

The concept of mythic vision bridges another gap in Bormann's theory: it provides a theoretical nexus for conceptualizing how social influences reflexively operate in the genesis of the individual mind. A mythic vision is the coalescence and synthesis of personal experiences as they are derived from the cumulative socialization of the individual. The values, dreams, and thoughts of "what might be" commingle in the developmental crucible of the forming mind, influencing our perceptions and operating beyond our conscious control or awareness. Bormann's theory does not account for many such influences. Gunn (2003: 54) notes this deficiency in Bormann's theory, calling for a new theory of rhetoric that embraces the contribution of largely unconscious, so-called "imaginary" elements of human symbolic activity in our actions and organizations. Mythic vision, like Gunn's "ideology", frees symbolic convergence from conscious control. Our view is that mythic vision transcends the differences between Gunn and Bormann, allowing for both the creative power of the conscious and the unconscious, the group and the individual, to become manifest in a personal interpretation of experience that forms the essential organizing schema for an organization that we typically call the founder effect on organizational culture.

That myths have the power to subsume experience is widely recognized by philosophers and rhetoricians (e.g., Burke, 1970; Cassirer, 1972; Frye 1973, 1982; Hostadler, 1955; Langer, 1980; Sykes, 1965, 1970; Woodward, 1975). For example, Balthrop observes that "each myth has a tendency to absorb more and more meanings into itself and that which is the most powerful will incorporate the rest into an all-consuming, all-explaining image" (1984: 341). It then follows that such an image, as developed in the individual psyche, can become a mythic vision, a schema for interpreting the world and acting upon those interpretations. Inevitably, the individual who founds an organization will put the stamp of his/her personality of the developing organizational culture. The founder's mythic vision becomes the driving force behind the development of basic assumptions for the entire organization. Deal & Kennedy describe these pivotal figures as the "heroes" of the organization, who "personify those values and epitomize the strength of the organization" (2000: 37). They are the

"visionary heroes, the people whose influence lasts for generations" (2000: 43).

The interest in the rhetorical dimensions of myth is hardly new. Braden (1975) suggests that myths function as the organizing principle in the construction of rhetorical discourse. Though Braden relegates myth to a supportive position in an orator's or writer's construction of proof, he recognizes the power of myth to engage the imagination of both its creator and its believers toward a common purpose or identification. Other theorists argue that myths are more than rhetorical devices, they are the primary means by which individuals and groups act rhetorically. For example, Fulmer notes that the transformation of ordinary experience "may occur within rhetorical acts. This rhetoric makes use of particular recurring images found in the various narratives and traditions of the culture. These mythic images provide the rhetoric with an invention founded upon mystical justifications" (1986: 144). For Fulmer, the "mythic interpretations of events" provide people with the means for transforming the mundane occurrences of everyday life into symbols of national honor and thus motivation for group action. Balthrop extends the rhetorical dimensions of myth even further. He asserts that to understand a distinct cultural identity requires a thorough "examination of the relations between culture, myth, ideology, and the arguments which express and shape each of them" (1984: 340).

Recently, management theorists have capitalized upon these trends in rhetorical research, exploring how myth, vision, and organizations are intertwined. Alvesson observes that social identity is in part created by management by the use of effective symbolism, including the use of stories and myths to create and sustain a vision of the company and a sense of belonging for a loyal employee (2000: 1112, 2002: 145-147). Similarly, Deal & Kennedy (2000) examine the individual identities organizations cultivate through stories that shape the values, create the heroes, support the rites and rituals and enforce the networks of their cultural life. Ogbor (2000) draws on theories of deconstruction in the study of discourse on entrepreneurship, identifying discriminatory and contradictory trends in that body of literature. Extending these discussions, we propose a synthesis of these parallel trends in rhetorical and management research to explicate how myths affect the individual founder of the organization, who then creates the organizational cultures that become the wellspring for socialization to the organization and the ideological framework for its strategic decision making.

Rhetoric, Founders, and Organizational Culture: The Case of the Selective Service System

It is within this interaction of myth, culture, and rhetorical action that the concept of mythic vision helps explain how organization founders establish organizational cultures. The following case study of the United States Selective Service System, the governmental bureaucracy of military conscription, demonstrates how a particularly strong mythic vision may so dominate an organizational culture that the organization may lose the ability to respond to changes in its environment. This inability to adapt may become manifest in rhetorical acts of the

founder or organization leader that are prescribed by their dominant mythic vision. This phenomenon is called rhetorical determinacy.

Tracing the development of the Selective Service System (i.e., the Draft), we identify how the mythic vision of the Draft's founder, General Lewis B. Hershey, dominated the creation of that system's organizational culture. We also demonstrate how this mythic vision and the resulting culture of the Draft System sustained and supported each other to the extent that a rigid set of responses to environmental constraints developed. It is this sustained rigidity in the face of a clear rhetorical exigency to change that constitutes rhetorical determinacy.

In applying Burke's rhetoric of identification to the study of organizational communication, George Cheney observes that, "one finds relatively little attention to the workings of identification as the symbolic process underlying basic tendencies in social relations" (1983: 143). As Cheney suggests, the concept of identification provides a natural link between rhetorical theory and the study of the variety of persuasive strategies used by modern organizations to induce employee allegiance. Later, Cheney asserts that "[w]hat is desired by modern corporations, however, is something more: the internal motivation that arises when the two voices [i.e., the "voice" of the corporation and the value/belief system of the individual employee] speak in unison" (1983: 157).

It is this shared system of beliefs that guides our interpretation of events which comprises organizational culture. Edgar Schein provides an often-cited definition of organizational culture. For Schein, organizational culture is:

A pattern of basic assumptions -- invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems or external adaptation and internal integration-that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (1985: 9).

That these basic assumptions must be communicated and accepted by members of the organization underscores the suitability of rhetorical theory for the study of organizational communication. Just as Cheney notes that the inherent focus in corporate communication is a matter of identification, so too can the creation of organizational culture be shown to address essentially mythic concerns.

As Braden, Fulmer, and Balthrop observe, the Rhetor makes use of myths to either organize her/his rhetorical discourse, or to provide an over-arching framework to rally the audience toward a common purpose. Moreover, myths provide an opportunity to make-sense of the non-empirical world in which belief functions as the anchor for action, when definitive knowledge cannot be obtained. In a similar application of this concept, Conrad (1983) argues that this characteristic of myth comprises part of what he calls the romantic form, which binds together evangelical religious organizations.

To understand how organizational cultures incorporate mythic elements, it is necessary to examine the relationship between organization founders and the cultures they establish. Schein notes that "the analysis of culture can illuminate the study of leadership" and that "organizations begin to create cultures through the actions of founders" (1985: 221). Indeed, the effects of founders and leaders upon the culture of an organization have provided the focus of numerous studies on organizations (e.g., Deal and Kennedy, 2000; Jackofsky, Slocum & McQuaid, 1988; Schien, 1985; Thayer, 1967). Of particular interest in the case of the Draft System are the influences that initially move founders to establish a culture that is derived from their personal experience of the world and often lead to the imposition of that vision upon the organizations they found. We suggest that the accumulated experience of the individual develops into their mythic vision of the world that then serves as the symbolic bedrock upon which the founder builds the organization.

For anyone of a certain age that remembers the pervasive preoccupation Americans held for the Draft during the Vietnam War, the perception of General Hershey single-handedly making policy decisions affecting the lives of millions of young draft-age men still looms large in the heritage of the 1960s. Yet the General's history with the draft is longer still. As director of the Selective Service System, Hershey served under six presidents. Throughout his thirty-year tenure of the Draft, the General came to symbolize the system itself. Hershey's biographer George Flynn notes that to college students in the United States especially, the General was "the arch symbol of the government's criminal adventure in Vietnam" (1985: xii). More importantly, the organization of the system itself was not only personally designed by the General, but explicitly based upon his perception of American society.

Growing up in rural Indiana, Hershey lived the existence of the independent, self-reliant farmer that "used to be the common heritage of most Americans" (Flynn, 1985: 5). Farming held little appeal for Hershey, who left the farm life upon becoming an adult. Yet the values and beliefs of this background stayed with him. These values and beliefs can be identified as the basis for his mythic vision of America, in the sense that they not only described the world of experience for Hershey, but prescribed his responses to it as well (e.g., Goodpaster, 1983; Peterson & Smith, 2000). After extensive travel, years of military service between wars, and study in the psychology of leadership, Hershey's emergent mythic vision perceived the salvation of American society as grounded in three mythic views of American values: (1) The rigorous development of individual self-reliance, (2) the decentralization of authority to check inherent abuses of power, and, (3) faith in local leadership to decide how best to implement national policy (Flynn, 1985: 59-61). When appointed to the Pentagon in 1936 to work on plans for manpower mobilization in the event of war, Hershey's mythic vision of America provided the over-arching framework for the tactical development of the Draft (Flynn, 1985: 61-73).

To understand the power of mythic vision in establishing organizational culture, it is important to realize that the idea of myth functions in two ways. First, mythic vision serves as a means for organizing information, blending various strains of experience into a coherent whole. Concurrently, mythic vision serves to delimit experience, imposing upon our subjective reality an interpretation of events that may differ from the actual conditions of that experience (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). In the case of the Draft, Hershey's mythic vision was dominated by this second characteristic. As Flynn observes:

The system was built upon the myth of rural America, of small towns where everyone knew everyone else and where defense was the responsibility of the citizen-soldier. Hershey believed in the patriotic community, where loyalty was a paramount virtue and where the most honored citizen was the veteran. He was committed to an egalitarian community, where class and race tensions did not exist and everyone worked for the general good (1985: 305).

That this vision of the world was consistent with Hershey's childhood experience on the farm there is little doubt. As he moved into a larger and more complex world, this vision continued to serve as Hershey's referent for the organization of experience. When setting up the Selective Service System, this focus on a farm-based mythos of individual responsibility permeated Hershey's structure of the Draft. While such an organizing metaphor may seem quaint, it is one of the key metaphors of some organization theory "gurus." For example, Jackson (1999) identifies the farm metaphor as one of three central "fantasy themes" of Stephen Covey's work. It is this use of universally accessible metaphors that enables the founders' mythic vision to become externalized into the culture of the organization (Hatch, 2000), or in Bormann's terminology, part of their rhetorical vision.

Ironically, Hershey's vision of the preeminent value of individual responsibility was a paradox in the emergent organizational culture of the Draft. As members of the state and local boards implementing the draft policies became more and more enamored by Hershey's vision, they deferred to the General's opinion on how the Draft should be run. Faith in the mythic vision of the General was so strong that "local boards tried to do what Hershey wanted without being asked" (Flynn, 1985: 305). The irony is that while Hershey's mythic vision led him to construct a decentralized federal system that embodied the ideals of local control, the de facto operation of the Draft resulted in a highly centralized locus of control in the General himself. While Hershey lacked the statutory power to impose his will upon the Draft boards, his interpretation of how to implement policy was nevertheless enacted by state and local authorities that sought to divine his will. Flynn notes that the Selective Service System embodied the ideals of individual responsibility in the organization, symbolized by Hershey's conscious intent to know the personnel of the system on a first-name basis. His hands-on management of people at the local boards resulted in the perception of the Draft as a "family"

(Flynn, 1985: 304), which Martin (2002) describes as an integrated culture. The family metaphor plays a significant role in what Smith and Eisenberg (1987) and Morgan (2004) describe as important considerations when confronting organizational change. Accordingly, the "family" culture of the Draft followed the wishes of its patriarch and founder.

As founder and leader of the Draft, Hershey imposed his mythic vision upon how the organizational culture of the Selective Service System should function. The following section, discusses how the interaction of culture and mythic vision constrain the persuasive strategies the organization develops in response to the challenges inherent in its environment (e.g., Bitzer, 1968; Conrad, 1985; Pant & Lachman, 1998; Starkey, 1998). It is the dependency on the mythic vision for the formulation of persuasive strategies that comprises rhetorical determinacy.

Mythic Vision, Culture, and Rhetorical Determinacy

As both Cheney and Conrad observe, organizations have rhetorical dimensions. In addition to convincing members to embody the goals of the organization, organizational survival depends, in part, upon adapting to the external constraints imposed by the environment. For the Draft, these external constraints included not only the tactical difficulties of procuring manpower for the armed forces but also persuading both government officials and the American people of the necessity of even having a Selective Service System. Embodying the mythic vision that helped him organize the Draft, Hershey engaged in communicative practices that Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo identify as "cultural performances" (1983: 127, 134). For Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, organizations are "not to be seen as computer-like machines, but rather more like tribes". Within the tribal organization, individuals enact organizational "performances" which are "loosely scripted" by the culture of the organization that "directs" the individual actor to "explore the uniqueness and variability of these performances" (1983: 127, 134). These performances support the rites and rituals of the corporate tribe, which Deal & Kennedy describe as "dramatizations of the company's basic cultural values. Behind each ritual is a myth that symbolizes a belief central to the culture" (2000: 62). Not unlike the work of management gurus noted elsewhere (Clark & Greatbatch, 2003; Clark & Salaman, 1998; Collins, 2003; Jackson, 1999), Hershey's performance of effective persuasion became a significant feature of his role as Director of the Draft, since the survival of the Draft System was contingent upon the continuous review of the Congress and the President. These persuasive performances became increasingly important, as the controversy over US involvement in the Vietnam War escalated.

With his Congressional audience, Hershey drew upon his mythic vision as fuel for adopting persuasive strategies for continuing the Draft. The simplest persuasive device was the ethical appeal of his personality. As Flynn notes, the General was "a man of physical and intellectual vigor, to which he added a remarkable integrity, which stood the test of

journalistic scrutiny for almost thirty years" (1985: 304). Hershey adopted a remarkably successful interpersonal style in delivering his arguments to the Congress that embodied his mythic vision. He believed that the conscription of men into the armed forces could succeed only through a system that reflected the values of the communities from which the conscripts would come, a position mirrored in the academic literature (e.g., Deal and Kennedy, 2000; see esp. 21-36). Hershey's arguments were often made in the form of parable storytelling, with many of the stories set on hypothetical farms seen by both Hershey and his Congressional audience as the locus of strong values and simple wisdom. As Deal & Kennedy contend, the storyteller is a crucial character of power and influence in an organization's cultural network:

Storytellers are in a powerful position because they can change reality. Storytellers simply interpret what goes on in the company - but to suit their own perceptions. And what is power anyway but the ability to influence people's perceptions - without their realizing it, of course... For the corporation, storytellers maintain cohesion and provide guidelines for everyone to follow... Storytellers preserve institutions and their values by imparting legends of the company... (2000: 87).

The values of Hershey's mythic vision were unchanging: reliance on the individual, decentralization of authority, and faith in local leadership to properly implement policy with a minimum of direction from above. Using a self-effacing style noted for an arcane wit, Hershey succeeded in developing excellent professional relationships with government officials, especially Congressmen and Senators. Flynn describes Hershey presentation style before Congressional committees as "homespun" (1985: 73). While Hershey's style is best known for its success in maintaining working relationships with Congress, he also gave public speeches to various organizations, such as the Boy Scouts and veterans groups, in which he used the same self-deprecating style (Seiverling, 1970). While the members of Congress were entertained by Hershey's use of homespun philosophy, sense of humor, and an almost eagerness to downplay his own role in the draft, it was the combination of this style with his demonstrated organizational expertise and the articulated values derived from his mythic vision that ultimately persuaded.

According to Deal & Kennedy, "The best storytellers are typically found in positions that give them access to a great deal of information. They are usually in the epicenter of activity and free to be as eccentric as they choose. A storyteller needs imagination, insight, and a sense of detail - a story can't be abstract." (2000:88). As an exemplar of these qualities, it is not surprising that the values of an organization's founder find their way into that organization's culture. Nor is the fact that members of the organization, strongly affected by the strength of the leader's personality and vision, are moved to anticipate his/her desires in determining their own course of action. (See for example, Deal and Kennedy's discussion of Symbolic

Leaders; (2000: 141-156)). Yet, this anticipatory behavior does testify to the exceptional talent of this homespun storyteller, since the vast majority of the members of the local boards of the Selective Service System were unpaid volunteers for whom there were no financial rewards.

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo argue that an "analysis of any particular organization would require the researcher to focus on communication as performance" (1983: 146. In analyzing Hershey's performance, it is interesting to note how his rhetorical strategy before Congress reflects the mythic vision that continued to sustain the Draft's organizational members. Trujillo recognizes the importance of organizational culture in relation to the development of rhetorical strategy: "... if organizational researchers are to bring to fruition the potentially rich notions of organizational symbolism, storytelling, and culture, then we may wish to make some tentative rhetorical assessments" (1985: 221). For Hershey, a product not only of a rural (if mythic) past, but also of the complex bureaucracy of the US Army and a thorough student of human motivation, it seems no coincidence that storytelling was a major element in his communicative style (Flynn, 1985, see esp. 69, and 73).

Unfortunately, Hershey's persuasive strategy for communicating his mythic vision, and founding the organizational culture of the Selective Service System, ultimately lead to its failure. The rhetoric of his stories became embedded in the culture through a legacy of corporate rituals that in effect trained people in a specific mode of behavior. While these rituals served to communicate and unite members to a common vision and purpose, Deal & Kennedy caution that "managers need to be fully aware of the ritualistic element of their own culture and not allow themselves to be captured by the magic of what they do..." (2000:83). The power of Hershey's stories to continuously reinforce these cultural rites and rituals resulted in the members of the corporate tribe failing to respond and adapt to the demands of a changing environment. The paradox that this transformative "performance" became an obstacle to perceiving and adapting to constraints, illustrates the intimate relationship between rhetoric and organizational communication. The power of rhetorical determinacy is seen in this paradox, and the failure of the Draft and its founder to respond successfully to the changing environmental constraints of the late 1960's serves as a case in point.

America's involvement in the Vietnam War placed new demands upon the Draft. Faced for the first time with a war that lacked popular support, the Draft system found itself at odds with the values of the society it was designed to serve. Even so, the Draft enjoyed wide-based support from both houses of Congress and the American public up thorough late 1967. Flynn reports that President Johnson "never changed his mind" about Hershey's handling of the Draft and wrote letters in support of the Director as late as November 1967 (1985: 224). Though the Tet Offensive of 1968 would erode support for the Draft and its Director from liberal Senators, even Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts began the decade in full support of

the system (Flynn, 1985: 241).

Nevertheless the seeds of change that would continue to assail the Draft were evident. Cities such as New York and Chicago had draft rolls that were predominantly black and impoverished, while the local boards remained all-white and middle class. As such, the local boards no longer mirrored the pool of conscripts upon which part of Hershey's organization rested. The resulting protest movements are well-documented and a matter of public record. What remains unexplained, however, is why the General, who was aware of the changing demographics, had a history of successful adaptation to shifting political alliances, and was faced with increasing evidence that his system was not responsive to the needs of the community values upon which it was based, continued to argue before Congress for using the Draft status quo as an instrument of social and military policy.

To understand this paradox we need to recognize that Hershey's organizing principle was a mythic vision of America; an interpretation of how the country ought to be, not a true reflection of American values and demographics. His essentially rhetorically constructed view of the American culture and value system allowed the assimilation of apparent contradictions into his sense-making mythic vision. (Fisher, 1984, 1985)

Because the organizing principles of the Draft were grounded in a mythic vision, the rhetorical demands of any given situation were derived from the myth, and not from the needs of the temporal situation itself. Hershey's response to critics of the Draft always returned to the set of assumptions he held about the way things ought to be, not to the issues those critics raised about the way things were. Eventually, Hershey became a political liability to the Congress and the President, and was forced to step down.

It is a premise of this study that Hershey's mythic vision of America so powerfully influenced the culture of the Selective Service system that the rhetoric used to defend and explain that system was essentially determined by the mythic vision/organizational culture interaction. Though this study is not exhaustive, such a relationship does explain why Hershey was able to accommodate policy changes in how the Selective Service was run across several presidencies, while remaining inflexible to demands for change in how the Draft was structured. If Hershey were simply the career bureaucrat without an ideological commitment, it seems likely that he would have responded readily to public demands for structural changes in the Draft (e. g. national random lottery, an end to all deferments) to preserve his position as Director. But the commitment that Hershey held to the status quo demonstrates that myth is a powerful symbolic force and suggests that mythic vision and organizational culture have powerful rhetorical implications. This interpretation is supported by the work of Pant and Lachman (1998) linking values to organization adaptation and change. In their terms, Hershey's failure, or inability, to change the strategy of the Selective Service System to better reflect the political realities of the late 1960s is consistent with their Proposition 1: "Organizations will be

unlikely to adopt strategies with implicit core value assumptions that conflict with the core values held by the organizations" (1998: 203). The requisite changes in the Draft System reflected value assumptions that stood in direct conflict with the core values of the Draft organization as embodied in Hershey's mythic vision of America. Such a view is also consistent with the work of Berthon, Pitt, and Ewing (2001) on the importance of developing a strong mechanism for organizational memory to create adaptive organizational cultures.

Implications for Management Theory and Practice

This essay has attempted to build upon a rich research stream that connects the tools of rhetorical criticism to the study of organizational culture and organizational behavior. To this ongoing conversation, two new terms have been offered: mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy to explain with greater precision how founder effects, fantasy themes and rhetorical visions interact to translate one person's view of the world into a pervasive organizational culture. This paper has differentiated mythic vision from Bormann's rhetorical vision by noting the individual generative nature of the former versus the ad hoc collective nature of the later. In noting how successful organizations may fail to adapt to changing environmental realities, this essay has developed the concept of rhetorical determinacy as a new tool for describing how organizational culture can constrain the perceptions of managers when faced with difficult strategic decision-making.

The implications for future study suggest applying the tools of mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy to other organizations to discover whether these new theoretical tools prove valid and reliable across the study of many organizations. While useful for explaining the historical nature of organizational decision making in the case of the Draft, it is hoped that these tools and this approach can be applied to current and ongoing organizational research.

For example, might the tools of mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy be helpful to understand current organization problems, such as Wal-Mart's charges of systemic discriminatory practices against female employees? The parallels between the Draft and Wal-Mart are more striking than their differences as government and for-profit enterprises suggest. Both organizations were forged by one founder's vision of how things ought to be. Both organizations developed strong organizational cultures based upon individualism within a collective. Both organizations were founded by men of rural backgrounds. Both organizations exhibited unprecedented success in their respective fields and garnered the admiration (however temporary) of the majority of their respective stakeholders. Can mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy help us understand how Wal-Mart's organizational behavior evolved to its present state? Perhaps Wal-Mart's response to this external threat will entail a rhetoric of denial of the problem. Rhetorical determinacy suggests that Wal-Mart's culture does not "see" its treatment of female employees as unfair; albeit different from the male employees perhaps, but

consistent with its founder's mythic vision. Time will tell.

For the organization theorist, the challenge is to identify the future likelihood of issues that might call for a latent rhetorical determinacy and provide mechanisms for the organization to escape from this self-defeating perspective. Thackaberry (2004) identifies how external factors perceived as either an opportunity or a threat can force organizations to examine their culture. The complexities of organizational dynamics are manifold and inter-related, underscoring that the symbolic dimensions of change and continuity can make even overt attempts to change organizational cultures problematic. Perhaps the forces of rhetorical determinacy can be limited or overcome by institutionalizing a form of organizational self-study as advocated by Thackaberry (2004). Deetz (2003) suggests that an organization's ability to adapt to changes in the social environment is a function of how inclusive it is in consideration of "other decisional voices" (609). Perhaps both these suggestions can be built into control systems to make organizations more responsive to external forces of change than their original cultures would allow. In any event, this paper forwards the belief that our awareness of how organizations begin, evolve, and successfully or unsuccessfully respond to a changing environment is enhanced by the use of the concepts of mythic vision and rhetorical determinacy.

Beyond this potential topic of investigation, future research on organization culture and the interaction between rhetorical phenomenon and managerial practice should benefit from further development of the terminology and tools needed to explain each field to the other.

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