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The myth of charismatic leadership and fantasy rhetoric of crypto-charismatic memberships

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THE MYTH OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP AND
FANTASY RHETORIC OF CRYPTO-CHARISMATIC MEMBERSHIPS

A Dissertation

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by
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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Bob and Donna Treat; my brother, Stacey; and my children, Kaitlynn and Austin. They have all been a constant source of inspiration and support, and are proof that with love all things are possible… even a dissertation on charisma.

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ABSTRACT

This study will analyze the relationship between myth and the fantasy rhetoric of charismatic leadership by employing Fantasy Theme Analysis to examine the pervasive discourses invoking this enduring folk belief. Fantasies of the Charismatic Superhero are explored within the popular leadership treatises of successful "management gurus" and in our popular culture entertainments. The rhetorical visions of Stephen Covey's "Principle-Centered Leadership," Jim Collins' "Level 5 Leadership," and Manz and Sims' "SuperLeadership" are examined for their displacement of charismatic leadership in favor of the empowered crypto-charisma of self-leading memberships. Findings suggest "empowerment" rhetorics, like the rhetorical visions championed by many populist "gurus," bear striking similarities to the fantasy script of charisma and tacitly champion mythic culturetypes that are variations on known routinizations of charismatic leadership: the Visionary Prophet, the Messianic Prince, the Servant Superhero, and Technocratic Superteams.

CHAPTER 1

THE RETURN OF CHARISMA

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Myths are like scripts embedded in the American psyche.[1] Myth unconsciously

structures our most basic understandings of social relationships, whether between parent and

child, neighbor and friend, employer and employee, or leader and follower. John Fiske (1990)

explains that myth is "a way of circulating meanings in society," and can thus provide "unique

insights into the way a society organizes itself and the ways its members have of making sense of

themselves and of their social experience" (133). Myth is always "in the background," Reich

(1987) observes, as "disguised, unarticulated" beliefs and "the unchallenged subtexts of political

discourse" (6). Myths form the very foundations of culture and community but, because they

function below consciousness, they are accepted as "common sense" and seldom interrogated.

This dissertation is about one of these powerful social myths, the myth of charismatic

leadership. Like many social myths, it is seldom expressed crudely in its jejune, linear form:

social crisis, the rise of a visionary leader, confrontation of an old order, mobilizing a new

community identity, victory over the status quo, and a subsequent institutional routinization of

the revolutionary leader's power. Rather, this myth of charisma exists in covert and coded form,

encrypted within many discourses and informing various manifestations. In Max Weber's theory

of social organization, all authority is in a sense "fallout" from charismatic explosions, so Swatos

(1996) confirms that "various transformations and routinizations can and will appear" (135).[2] In

this study, I argue that this covert myth of charisma is ever-present within our popular culture,

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and that it can be rhetorically evoked in encrypted form by leaders and other myth-makers in times of social crisis. It is also sometimes present in more mundane and seemingly "routine" discourses as a rhetorical strategy, albeit in a modified or subtler form, to lend a quality of idealism, urgency and energy to particular issues. The return of charisma, however, may take on new mythic forms as this familiar script is adapted for particular contexts.

The justification for this study grows out of the embarrassingly sparse rhetorical explorations of charisma, the most notoriously powerful of discursive phenomenon. Hogan and Williams (2000) criticize that while "most studies of charisma retain an emphasis on psychological and sociological concerns... what remains insufficiently explored is the phenomenon that links leader and follower: the charismatic *message"* (2-4, original emphasis). Demonstrating the pervasiveness of this enduring folk belief within the social scientific literature on leadership, management models, and popular culture will therefore give us a greater appreciation of its wide use and provide valuable insight into its unconscious appeal. The presence of social myth within success literature and popular media is not unexpected, of course, but it may offer insight into our shared beliefs about charismatic leadership and cultural perceptions of its rhetorical power and enduring utility within public discourse.

Other chapters, however, will go beyond mere location of this social myth to show myth-in-use. This dissertation will examine the rhetoric of so-called "management gurus" for their embedded or subliminal charismatic discourse. The covert invocation of the myth of charisma within the rhetoric of these populist leadership authorities may well reveal how a powerful cultural form is used to mobilize "a people" and the ways in which key phrases or images lend charismatic appeal to seemingly ordinary bureaucratic discourse.

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Like myth itself, charisma today remains conceptual quicksilver despite oceans of ink having been spilt on the subject since antiquity. Lumsden and Lumsden (1993) succinctly reveal the difficulties facing leadership and charisma rather tongue-in-cheek: "Maybe identifying a leader is like defining pornography; it's hard to define, but you know it when you see it" (259). In an encyclopedic overview of leadership study, Bernard M. Bass (1981) confirms "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (6-7). Citing a widespread failure of scholarship to holistically grasp the dynamics of leadership, a problem compounded by empirical methods which consider only those aspects of leadership perceived as quantifiably researchable, Bass cryptically concludes that "suggestions continue to appear that leadership research- in addition to its narrowness- has been concentrating on the wrong things" (609). The prevalence of such difficulties leads Thayer (1988) to suggest that "our highly scientized, rational, linear, cause-effect world-view actually prevents us from seeing what we might otherwise be able to see, from knowing what we really want to know about leadership" (p. 237).

Definitional and methodological problems thus seem symptomatic of a deeper crisis in conceptualizations of leadership, which may be better understood by looking more closely at leadership's revolutionary extreme: charisma. This study, like most others, will therefore draw upon Weber's conceptualization of charisma as the starting point. As defined by Weber:

> The term "charisma" will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine

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origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. In primitive circumstances this particular kind of deference is paid to prophets, to people with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, to leaders in the hunt, and heroes in war. It is very often thought of as resting in magical powers. How the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical, aesthetic, or other such point of view is naturally entirely different for purposes of definition. What is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his "followers" or "disciples."[3]

Weber's conceptualization exhibits several salient characteristics which are central to the present study, and these features intimate what I argue is the inherently mythic nature of charisma.

For Weber, any estimation of charisma ultimately resides in the eye of the beholders, but its effects exhibit fairly predictable features that correspond to the mythic expectations of particular cultural audiences. First, Weber finds it "necessary to treat a variety of different types as being endowed with charisma in this sense" (Ciulla, 2003: 189-92). That is, leaders are not the only type of charismatic authority since variations of charisma can include but are not limited to warlords, shamans, magicians, prophets, sages, heroes, saviors, or chieftains. Weber notes when a differing leadership type of charisma "comes into with the competing authority of another who also claims charismatic sanction, the only recourse is to some kind of a contest, by magical means or even an actual physical battle of the leaders" (191). Thus, there are numerous archetypal variations of this myth of charisma, understood in this study as culturally specific fantasies or "culturetypes" of charismatic leadership.[4] Second, the power and authority of charismatic leadership rests solely in the subjective beliefs, emotions, and convictions of believing charismatic memberships. "It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive to the validity of charisma," Weber insists. Charismatic devotion "is freely given and guaranteed by what is held to be a "sign" or proof, originally always a miracle, and consists in devotion to the corresponding revelation, hero worship, or absolute trust in the

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leader." The basis for the extraordinary leader's personal authority "is sharply opposed both to rational and particularly bureaucratic authority, and to traditional authority," Weber continues, and "is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules" as the "direct antithesis" to "forms of everyday routine control of action." Charismatic authority, he posits, "lies rather in the conception that it is the *duty* of those who have been called to a charismatic mission to recognize its quality and to act accordingly." Psychologically "arising out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope," the shared missionary duty of the "group which is subject to charismatic authority is based on an emotional form of communal relationship" where there is "no hierarchy," "no appropriation of official powers" or offices of social privilege, and "no established administrative organs," Weber says. "In their place are agents who have been provided with charismatic authority by their chief or who posses charisma of their own" and assume roles within the group "chosen in terms of the charismatic qualities of its members" (Ciulla, 2003: 189-92). Not only may there be a wide variety of culturetypes for charismatic leaders, Weber interestingly indicates, but there may also be *very different types of charismatic memberships* functioning within the group itself. Exploring some instances of charisma as rhetorically empowering varied and variational *crypto-charismatic memberships*, therefore, is an idea that has yet to be fully explored.

Understanding charisma as a mythic fantasy rhetoric that empowers a self-revolutionizing identity for crypto-charismatic memberships, therefore, will be the focus of this study. Particularly fascinating in Weber's formulation is an idea that continues to stir debate and disagreement amongst leadership scholars, and that is the nature of the reciprocal relationship between audience beliefs or heroic expectations and the revolutionizing agenda of the leader.

While some dismiss charisma as an antiquated authoritarian model for personal leadership with little value to contemporary society, others insist that the unacknowledged ghost of charismatic leadership still haunts the benevolence and egalitarianism of our new leadership fantasies. Khurana (2002) demonstrates that contemporary business management and economics continue to irrationally quest for a charismatic corporate savior as capitalistic corporations, the most rational of bureaucratic institutions, "tacitly support the orientation toward charismatic leadership on the part of executives, investors, and other corporate constituents by the way they shape and reinforce existing thought and discourse on the relationship between the CEO and firm performance" (213). This study will be concerned with the discursive spaces where the expectations of leader and led meet, and that is within the mythic rhetoric forging a mutually constitutive cultural fantasy of charismatic leadership within management.

THE PARADOXES OF PSEUDOCHARISMATIC MANAGEMENT

Despite the profound conceptual and methodological difficulties in leadership studies, or perhaps because of them, there has been an explosion of interest in charisma within recent years. Models for charismatic CEO leadership permeate business literature, attempting to foster an egalitarian, nonhierarchical, family-like atmosphere within companies.[5] Management researchers are similarly obsessed with charismatic models for today's "new leader," questing for motivational and communicative expertise that cultivates a unifying vision and shared mission within organizational cultures.[6] Carefully distinguished from the legal-rational authority or traditional authority of stabilizing institutional systems characterized by rules and procedures, whether legislated or customary, Max Weber's notion of charismatic authority emphasizes the

unstable, irrational, and crisis-driven sentiments that have historically precipitated revolutionary

changes in the other authority structures. In traditional societies charisma is an "objectification"

by reference to which society can perceive itself and recognize the possibility of new modes of

interaction and power, new relationships built upon trust rather than bureaucratic processes or

new benefits from the salvation offered, but it is a belief in charisma which creates the effects of

charisma (Wilson 1975: 33). The emotionally-charged charismatic relationship emerges out of

extraordinary situations of emergency or enthusiasm but, unlike the managerial functions of

bureaucratic conventions or organizational institutions which conform individuals to society,

charismatic authority instead revolutionizes social conventions and the normative processes of

institutions by transforming the people who are ruled. These features lead some Weberian

apologists to criticize the inconsistencies and paradoxes in the authoritarian models of

charismatic management, since the revolutionary character of charisma is highly suspect when

occurring within insular corporate bureaucracies and their hierarchical cultures with highly

centralized decision-making structures.[7] To focus upon the managerial leader in power is to risk

confusion, however, since bureaucratic power is not synonymous with charisma as

prototypically wielded by a revolutionary, prophet, or activist (Tucker, 1968). Charisma as

conceived by Weber is instead unpredictable, radically innovative, and characteristically

counter-hegemonic in stance toward the status quo institutional authority of normative traditions

and bureaucratic procedure. Unfortunately, charisma is often oversimplified as formulaic

techniques and procedures for managers to "take audacious action, win power, and use it."[8]

Other scholars and writers, therefore, tacitly agree with leadership guru Peter Drucker's

(1996) bold assessment that "the one and only personality trait the effective [leaders] I have

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encountered had in common was something they did *not* have: they had little or no 'charisma' and little use for the term or what it signifies" (xii).[9] Although researchers have long attempted to integrate the elusive notion of charisma into conceptual models,[10] leadership as enacted by the everyday manager most often reveals itself as merely "autocratic, coercive behavior dressed in charismatic clothes."[11] Leader-centric models of charisma have privileged the strategies of only those leaders who have clearly "succeeded in inspiring, swaying, or seducing multitudes and holding their minds and emotions in thrall."[12] While some continue to view charisma as a useful concept for understanding leadership dynamics, others dismiss charisma as an invitation to demagoguery and authoritarian rulership. Yet there is a tacit assumption across seemingly divergent theoretical perspectives that "the mark of leadership is still influence, or control."[13] The defacto consequence of this conceptual schism over charisma has been a persistent indistinction between volitional leadership and imposed headship.[14]

The infiltration of Weberian charisma into our leadership models is thus tarnished or distorted, since the routinized notions of charismatic management within mass-mediated societies often blurs the boundaries of persuasion in volitional leadership and propaganda of imposed rulership. The return of charisma thus continues to evoke connotations and anxieties long associated with manipulative dictators, social upheaval and fanatical irrationality. Because of our profound ambivalence, charisma thus returns in covert and encrypted forms so that we do not have to confront its contradictions and limits directly. It is no small irony that while many are eager to declare charisma an outmoded relic of some bygone age of superstition, a vast majority of leadership literature aspires to manufacture its effects. Accounts of "new" leadership models or "empowering" management within business contexts generally refer to traits,

qualities, and behaviors that are very similar if not identical to those historically ascribed to charisma.[15] Bensman & Givant (1986) contend that today's mass-mediated social bureaucracies actually manufacture and market their own rationally self-interested *pseudocharisma,* which seems to "demonstrate that the concept of charismatic leadership as developed by Weber is of little use to the analysis of modern political and social movements," since "impersonality, formal rationality, and bureaucracy are central to the very operation of contemporary society" (53). In short, charismatic leadership has become functionally synonymous with bureaucratic management, thereby disguising and perpetuating a myth of leadership as effective top-down influence and pseudocharismatic methods of control.[16]

THE WEBERIAN MYTH OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

Paradoxically, however, it is these very same alienating conditions which Weber himself noted as conducive to charisma, which reacts against "the whole process of rationalization and demystification" (Eisenstadt, 1968; xviii). Many overlook Weber's caution against confusing charisma with the mere "Rhetoric of Charisma," the manipulative attempts by a "dictatorship of the bureaucrats" to "routinize" and simulate the language and style of charisma.[17] These conflicts and inconsistencies within charismatic management are signals that we are in the presence of a social myth, powerful beliefs and contradictory presuppositions that lurk just beneath the surface of our conceptual models. Weber's "ideal types" are themselves rhetorical constructs, and there are persistent clues that his analytic typology of has in fact become a mythology all its own. Often used as a static archetype decontextualized from other leadership types, neo-Weberians often complain that many if not most applications of charisma frequently

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obscure its complexity within Weber's overarching process of bureaucratic routinization.[18]

Swatos (1996) confirms a chronic "failure to understand that Weber makes a consistent

distinction" between "genuine charisma" and "routinized" bureaucratic forms. "It is thus

possible and correct to speak of persons as "charismatic" figures within traditional or rational-

legal systems in varying degrees," Swatos elaborates, since Weber's ideal types "are

methodological constructs rather than empirical realities" (134-5). It therefore appears more

consistent to view charisma as not only revolutionary but evolutionary, while remaining mindful

that its more "pure" form during the genesis stage as a social phenomenon serves very different

rhetorical functions than does its varied "routinized" forms during the later stage of bureaucratic

stabilization.[19]

    Despite Weber's seemingly prophetic foreshadowing of this contemporary reign of

management by manufactured pseudocharisma, communication scholars have until recently been

embarrassingly reluctant to answer Weber's challenge and examine the rhetoric of charisma.

Such hesitancy ironically coincides with a resurgence of interest in charisma, which impels John

Jermier (1993) to observe that "the manner in which the leader formulates and articulates the

mission cannot be dismissed" (222). Hogan & Williams (2000) have insisted on the need for a

perspective that "approaches charisma not as the product of personality traits nor of sociological

conditions, but rather as a textual creation - a phenomenon manifested within *rhetorical*

artifacts" (2). While Schlesinger (1960) contends that charisma is a concept that invokes the

"prophetic, mystical, unstable [and] irrational" as an irrelevant throw-back to the "world of myth

and sorcery,"[20] Hogan & Williams posit that "modern democratic republics might invite a

different *sort* of charismatic leadership... no less grounded in myth and emotion than the

charisma of tribal chieftains."[21] Charisma has been closely connected to myth by many

scholars,[22] and Max Weber himself clearly links myth and charisma when he observes that "the

power of charisma rests upon the belief in revelation and heroes, upon the conviction that certain

manifestations- whether they be of religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political or other kind-

are important and valuable" (1947, p.1116).   Thus, the mystical, irrational, and revolutionary

characteristics of charisma seem to imply that the power of charismatic rhetoric is intimately

bound to our self-told cultural mythology.

It is the assumption of this study that charisma is an ancient and enduring myth of

leadership, and that this mythology informs the rhetorical deployments, invocations and

discourses which continue to make charismatic leadership a persistent trope within the popular

imagination. The discursive constructions of charisma, as well as what will later be explored as

the variational fantasies of charismatic leadership and memberships, seemingly exhibit most if

not all of the characteristic features of mythology. William Doty (1986) offers a comprehensive

working definition of mythology that I find suggestive of how charisma functions rhetorically

within the study and practice of leadership:

> A mythological corpus consists of (1) a usually complex network of myths that are
> (2) culturally important (3) imaginal (4) stories, conveying by means of (5)
> metaphoric and symbolic diction, (6) graphic imagery, and (7) emotional conviction
> and participation, (8) the primal, foundational accounts (9) of aspects of the real,
> experienced world and (10) humankind's roles and relative statuses within it.
> Mythologies may (11) convey the political and moral values of a culture and (12)
> provide systems of interpreting (13) individual experience within a universal
> perspective, which may include (14) the intervention of suprahuman entities as well
> as (15) aspects of the natural and cultural orders. Myths may be enacted or reflected
> in (16) rituals, ceremonies, and dramas, and (17) they may provide materials for
> secondary elaboration, the constituent mythemes having become merely images or

reference points for a subsequent story, such as a folktale, historical legend, novella, or prophecy. (p. 11)

Charisma in this study is therefore approached as an enduring mythology that informs our beliefs, expectations, and discourses on leadership, its practices, and its practitioners.

While our culturally specific fantasies can and do vary, certain symbolic features of this enduring mythology may adhere to a narrative structure informed by the seemingly universal functions of mythology. Joseph Campbell (1970) provides a serviceable classification of mythology into four categorical functions: mystical, cosmological, sociological, and psychological. The mystical or metaphysical function portrays sacred origins or some nature of being through some ontological dramatization, such as "an originally good creation corrupted by a fall" within the Judeo-Christian tradition (139). The cosmological function embodies the universe and all things within it as components of a single, integrated creation where all discrete parts point back to the holistic mysticism via symbolic "vehicles and messengers of the teaching" (140). The sociological function validates and maintains "some specific social order, authorizing its moral code" as a microcosm of mystical origins and an integrated cosmos (140). The psychological function of myth then operates by "shaping individuals to the aims and ideals of their various social groups" (141). Campbell contends that while the psychology of mankind remains more or less constant and a fundamentally consistent core of mythic patterns still permeates our beliefs, the cultural specificity of cosmological and sociological views changes over time as archetypal variations and socio-historical inflections of the universal symbols of myth continue to re-emerge. Understood as myth, charisma exhibits evolutionary variations and conflicting connotations as invoked by different groups in different times for different purposes. Confucius posited the "Superior Man" as ruler who was the north star of exemplary virtue for his

subjects, Lao tzu celebrated the enlightened humble "Sage" who was the lowly valley to which all other waters flowed, the Hebrews revered King David, while Anglo-Europeans had Charlemagne or King Arthur as their models for benevolent kingship. Max Weber noticed similarities between Moses, the Hebrew kings Saul and David, Judas Maccabeus, Bedouin tribal leaders, various prophets and founders of religions, Homer's Achilles, Classical Greek 'demagogues', legendary Irish hero Cuchulain, China's emperors, Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleon III, Lassalle, Gladstone, Theodore Roosevelt, Kurt Eisner, and cult-poet Stefan George. From these and other historical cases he abstracted certain features to produce his ideal type of charismatic domination. These superheroic figures, gifted with inspiring virtue and often supernatural powers or extraordinary abilities, have long served mankind as models for benevolent rule and a mythic yardstick for leadership.

This study is therefore interested in how charismatic messages may be part of a larger mythic script, embedded or covertly encrypted within discourses contemplating the near-universal phenomena of superheroic leadership. The interesting question for rhetorical critics, and the research question guiding this study of charismatic discourse, is this:

> How is this myth of charisma characteristically encrypted within the contemporary leadership narratives of popular culture, and how is charisma subsequently used by those seeking to constitute and mobilize new identities or constituencies within contemporary bureaucratic organizations for new forms of managerial leadership?

In examining the rhetorical constructions of charismatic membership, any study must confront the problem of distinguishing charismatic rhetoric from the mimicry of mass-manufactured pseudocharisma. As future chapters suggest, it is charisma's distinguishing characteristic of *mythic transcendence* which may help unlock the mysteries of charismatic rhetoric, since this

concept invokes mythic associations from charisma's religious heritage while also suggesting its

secular mystique for revolutionary transformation in both individuals and society.

ORGANIZATIONAL FANTASIES AS MYTHIC RHETORIC

Renowned American historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. echoes many who have long

argued that charisma is utterly useless "as a concept with which to analyze leadership in more

complicated cases than those of medicine men, warrior chieftains, and religious prophets," and

therefore has "little relevance at all to questions of leadership in a democracy."[23] Yet Kenneth

Burke's analysis of Adolph Hitler's rhetorical appeal serves to remind us that modern "medicine

men" continue to produce their own "crude magic" grounded in appeals to "nature" and

"symbolic rebirth."[24] The challenges of achieving, maintaining and transforming social identity

bring us simultaneously into the realms of persuasion and organization. George Cheney (1991)

insists that organizations are rhetorical and rhetoric is itself organizational, "and both rhetoric

and organization lead us toward the study of identity." Cheney explains that:

> "All types of rhetoric involve some appeal to the identifications, the associations, of
> human beings; organizational rhetoric involves the management of multiple
> identifications, multiple interests... 'Rhetoric,' then, is the arbiter of 'congregation'
> and 'segregation'; it makes possible the moves from 'I' to 'we' and 'we' to 'I'...
> From an individual's standpoint the organization of his or her identity reveals how he
> or she is 'located' with respect to social groups, organizations and institutions. The
> individual manages multiple identities while participating in an organizational
> world... None of this is to say, of course, that for an individual or organization all
> identities are treated equally."[25]

The identifications and identities invited by charismatic leadership are thus expected to exhibit

cultural specificities and variations as it is manifested within American popular consciousness.

Hogan & Williams (2000) find that an emergent "republican charisma" promoted a uniquely

democratic collective identity, and did so through the strikingly concrete imagery of a shared

persona which textually embodied the sort of leadership appropriate to the values of the

emergent American republic. "The myth of American exceptionalism and the prophesy of an

American Age," Hogan & Williams write, undergirds early Republican discourse "not as

political *persuasion* but as an act of *identification.*"[26]

Mythic identifications used to establish, reinforce or challenge institutional legitimacy

have been fruitfully examined using Ernest Bormann's model for Fantasy Theme Analysis.

"When a speaker selects and slants the interpretation of people's actions he or she begins to

shape and organize experiences," explains Bormann.[27] Fantasy Theme Analysis is a form of

rhetorical criticism that highlights the ways groups construct shared symbolic realities. When

shared by individuals, fantasy themes lead to what Bormann calls symbolic convergence, or "the

way two or more private symbolic worlds incline toward each other, come more closely together,

or even overlap during certain processes of communication." Fantasy Themes, Bormann

continues, construct shared symbolic worlds and create the values, beliefs, ideals, and norms of a

group.[28] Fantasy Theme Analysis is particularly valuable because it can "account for the

development, evolution, and decay of dramas that catch up groups of people and change their

behavior."[29] Similar to Griffin's (1993) dramatistic theory of social movements, this mythic

perspective on leadership and membership emphasizes "people do not want information about,

but identification with, community life; In drama they *participate*" (193).[30]

Bormann provides a specific vocabulary to guide Fantasy Theme analysis. A *fantasy* is

"the creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical

need."[31] These fantasies are repeated and often elaborated, and thus are "chained out" across

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various interpretations and discourses.[32] This chaining of fantasies is sparked by the content of a

dramatizing message, becoming rhetorically invoked as a *fantasy theme*. Bormann explains that

fantasy themes cultivate in people "a sense of community, to impel them strongly to action... and

to provide them with a social reality filled with heroes, villains, emotions and attitudes."[33] As

fantasy themes become a persistent rhetorical resource, a *fantasy type* can result, "a recurring

script in the culture of a group... essentially the same narrative frame but with different

characters and slightly different incidents."[34] As people come to share a group of fantasies and

fantasy types, a coherent *rhetorical vision* of their social reality is articulated by synthesizing

common themes within specific rhetorical situations, "a unified putting-together of the various

shared scripts that gives the participants a broader view of things."[35] Taken together, all of these

communicative units are manifested within the rhetoric of an *organizational saga*, a "detailed

narrative of the achievement and events in the life of a person, a group, or a community."[36] An

essential distinction to be made when considering charisma as a Fantasy Theme is an ability to

recognize its use as a unique mythology, manifested as a *fantasy type* or "master analogue".[37]

Bormann's model can be more fruitfully utilized, I suggest in following chapters, with a

fuller understanding of myth. Of particular interest to this study is the observation that Fantasy

Themes are in fact "mythic shorthand," since "if myths are the prized tales of humankind in

general, fantasy themes are the local variations wrought on these themes."[38] In Bormann's view,

group sagas are the narrative product of unifying rhetorical visions, which utilize the fantasy

types and fantasy themes by bringing shared mythologies to bear on specific rhetorical contexts.

Myth, however, acknowledges that group fantasies are ideologically interested and

psychologically charged with the unconscious drives, desires, and motivations of interpretation.

Thus, fact and fiction frequently collides within mythic narratives serving ideological agendas

since, as Rushing & Frentz (1995) explain:

> The cultural treatment of a myth responds to historical and political contingencies,
> and may appropriate archetypal imagery, consciously or unconsciously, for rhetorical
> means - to further the ends of a particular person or group, to advise a general course
> of action, to enhance the power of a privileged class. (46)

A mythic understanding of rhetorical fantasy and fantasy rhetoric, therefore, needs to be

critically attentive to the ideological functions that are being served alongside spiritual functions

for fantasy memberships. That is, when considering rhetorical visions, critics need to consider

how every fantasy payoff for adherents may carry a mythic price in the unconscious motives,

repressed desires, or unintended consequences potentially lurking within our fantasies of

charismatic leadership (Gunn, 2003).

To help distinguish the fantasy theme of charisma, and with the above methodology in

mind, five distinctive message characteristics have been identified and will be used to guide

analysis in this study: (1) an aura of "presence" fostered by "certain figures" that suggest

"mystical" or "magical" powers; (2) "simplistic" appeals "not to the intellect" but rather "to the

emotional and irrational"; (3) "polarized aggression," or the division of the world into forces for

good and evil; (4) appeals to a "collective identity"; and (5) a "revolutionary mission".[39] These

message features, now understood as characteristics of the mythic fantasy script of charisma, will

provide guidelines for examining the transcendent identifications and identities being offered

within the setting, characters, and actions presumed within rhetorical constructions of charisma's

mythic memberships. If charisma is a mythic script that informs diverse cultural fantasies of

charismatic leadership, future chapters will argue, then it seems necessary to examine the

variations and conflicting routinizations currently holding sway over the popular imagination as emergent fantasy "culturetypes."[40]

To address the research question presented earlier, I will examine fantasies of "empowered memberships" within popular management treatises to explore how the fantasy themes of this mythic script for charisma are deployed in the rhetorical visions of those who seek to mobilize membership in their social crusades for "new" kinds of leadership. The mythic narratives of popular culture seem prudent choices for initial analysis for two important reasons: (1) because the authority of charisma rests upon the beliefs of its popular audiences, it seems crucial to explore what those beliefs include; and (2) theorizing about charisma's "irrationality" would seem dismissive and shallow (that is, lack narrative fidelity) if it did not reflect perceptions and portrayals of how these messages indeed "make sense" within the understandings of popular audiences. For this reason, I whole-heartedly agree with Swatos' (1996) insistence that charisma "is also a question that must be addressed in terms of popular culture as well as theoretical abstractions" (129). "The fossilized remains of shared group fantasies," Bormann reminds us, "can be found in texts of the oral and written messages that created them in the form of fantasy themes and fantasy types."[41] Thus, this study intends to determine if the current fascination with populist theories of "empowerment" and "self-leadership" is a subtle fantasy reinvention of the ancient myth of charismatic leadership for the crypto-charismatic memberships being championed.

PREVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The current study will proceed as follows. Chapter two will chart the mythic evolution and subsequent theoretical transmutations of charisma in order to contextualize the rise of

pseudocharismatic management. Although charismatic leadership is an ancient concept that

continues to influence the study of leadership, the specter of pseudocharismatic management and

"The Hitler Problem" continue to haunt the quest for utopian models of benevolent management.

Chapter 3 will then examine charisma as a social myth that spawns conflicting fantasies for both

charismatic leadership and crypto-charismatic memberships. This chapter will be particularly

interested in the perceived pay-off of charisma for its mythic memberships, exploring its

rhetorical features as Charismatic Superhero culturetypes of a fantasy script tacitly invoked

within leadership discourses. Chapter 4 will next examine the leadership fantasy within Stephen

Covey's bestseller "Principle-Centered Leadership," attending to its invocations of the fantasy

themes of the crypto-charismatic fantasy script. Chapter 5 then examines influential newcomer

Jim Collins and his model for "Level 5 Leadership," offering analysis attentive to its similarities

and departures from the crypto-charismatic fantasy script amidst an overt hostility toward

charisma. Chapter 6 then explores the "SuperLeadership" model of Manz & Sims, which is

critical of the heroic visionary models of charismatic leadership in positing their own utopian

SuperLeader. Finally, chapter seven will conclude this examination of the Charismatic

Superhero fantasies of these "management gurus" by considering the fantasy payoff and mythic

price of these rhetorical visions for potential memberships, as well as provide possible avenues

for future research into crypto-charismatic rhetoric.

ENDNOTES

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1. Frederick Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); C.G. Jung and Carl Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Pantheon/Bollingen Series XXII, 1949). A synthesis for rhetorical critics is offered by Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz, "Integrating

Ideology and Archetype in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 385-406.

2. Arthur Schweitzer (1984) in, 1984] likewise emphasizes that historical reality constitutes combinations, mixtures, adaptations and modifications of the "pure type" of revolutionary charisma, examining several variational subtypes of charismatic leadership. *The Age of Charisma* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall).

3. Reprinted in Joanne B. Ciulla's (2003) *The Ethics of Leadership* (Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth), pp. 189-192.

5. David A. Waldman and Francis J. Yammarino, "CEO Charismatic Leadership: levels-of-management and levels-of-analysis effects," *The Academy of Management Review* 24 (no.2, Apr 1999): 266-85. Manfred De-Vries, "Charisma in Action: the transformational abilities of Virgin's Richard Branson and ABB's Percy Barnevik," *Organizational Dynamics* 26 (Winter 1998): 6-21. Jane A. Halpert, "The Dimnsionality of Charisma: research on charismatic leadership," *Journal of Business and Psychology* 4 (Summer 1990): 399-410.

6. Jay Conger, "Charisma and How To Grow It," *Management Today* (Dec 1999): 78-9. Matthew Valle, "Crisis, Culture and Charisma: The New Leader's Work in Public Organizations," *Public Personnel Management* 28 (#2, Summer 1999): 245-57.

7. Jane M. Howell and Bruce J. Avolio, "Charismatic Leadership: submission or liberation?" *Business Quarterly* 60 (Autumn 1995): 62-70. Patricia Buhler, "Leaders vs Managers," *Supervision* 56 (May 1995): 24-6.

8. John Wareham, "Eight Steps to Charisma," *Across The Board* 32 (Apr 1995): 49-50. Patricia Sellers, in her article "What Exactly is Charisma?" (*Fortune* v133, 15 Jan 1996), finds that rapid and unpredictable change in business necessitates charisma's remarkable ability to get others to support your vision and promote it passionately (pp. 68-72). In "Growing Charisma: silent messages can draw people to you" (*Industry Week* v247 #9, 4 May 1998), Shari Caudron outlines the image-management techniques for personal magnetism from Tony Alessandra's book, *Charisma: Seven Keys to Developing the Magnetism* (pp. 54-5).

9. Winston Fletcher, in "Qualities that are not stained" (*Management Today*, May 1999) insists that a leader does not need charisma (p. 38). Other studies periodically find no clear evidence for the elusive traits of charisma (Shelley A Kirkpatrick and Edwin A. Locke, "Leadership: Do Traits Matter?" *Academy of Management Executive* 5 (May 1991): 48-60), and one survey of 115 Fortune 500 companies found charisma to be least important for hiring management positions (Kathryn Martell and Stephen Carroll, "Stress the Functional Skills when Hiring Top Managers," *HR Magazine* 39 (July 1994): 85-7).

10. The most influential of which has been the notion of Transformational Leadership, which

plays a pivotal role in this study of charisma, as proposed in James MacGregor Burns (1978) Leadership (NewYork: Harper & Row).

11. Culbert & McDonough (1980); See also Buhler (1995), Howell & Avolio (1995).

12. Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1984), p. 1.

13. Heifetz (1994), p.18.

14. Gibb (1969).

15. Yusuf-Ahmed Nur, "Charisma and Managerial Leadership: The Gift That Never Was," *Business Horizons* 41 (no.4, July/August 1998): 19-26.

16. For an insightful analysis into the subtle uses of value premises to control subordinates, see Tompkins and Cheney (1985), *Communication and Unobtrusive Control in Contemporary Organizations.* In R.D. McPhee & P.K. Thompkins (Eds.), Organizational communication: Traditional themes and new directions (pp. 179-210). Beverly Hills: Sage.

17. See Glassman & Swatos (1996) for chapters which independently examine misappropriations of Weber and the many ways charisma is manufactured and simulated as pseudocharisma.

18. Although many studies use trained actors or 30-year-old videotapes while purporting to measure charisma, the most widely denounced example (Donald Vinson, "Charisma," *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 14 (1977): 269-75) advances the claim that the bureaucratic corporation IBM evidences all the features of charisma, thus displaying a complete lack of awareness if not flagrant misappropriation of Weber's conceptual theory. For some rather pointed criticisms of such embarrassingly persistent misappropriations, see: Carl J. Friedrich, "Political Leadership and the Problem of Charismatic Power," *The Journal of Politics* 23 (1961): 3-24; and John M. Jermier, "Introduction - Charismatic Leadership: Neo-Weberian Perspectives," *Leadership Quarterly* 4 (1993): 221.

19. Stewart, Smith & Denton in *Persuasion and Social Movements* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1984) suggest a five-stage life cycle of social movements, quite complimentary to Weber's theory, that is based upon different rhetorical functions required at each point. First is the *genesis stage*, where an exigence is identified and subsequently dramatized by some "triggering event" which draws public attention to some deprivation. Second is the *social unrest stage*, when an agitator draws upon a sense of collective identity to provide a "diagnosis" of social ills eroding the credibility of established order, a "prognosis" offering a rhetorical vision that must provide narrative coherence and fidelity for audiences, and a "prescription" for action. I find these first stages reflect understandings of Weberian charisma, while the subsequent organizational stages of *enthusiastic mobilization*, *maintenance,* and *termination* accurately

correspond to the bureaucratic routinization of charismatic authority.

20. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "On Heroic Leadership and the Dilemma of Strong Men and Weak Peoples," *Encounter* 15 (December 1960): 6-7.

21. J. Michael Hogan and Glen Williams, "Republican Charisma and the American Revolution: The Textual Persona of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (no.1, Feb 2000): 8.

22. Connections between charisma and myth abound. Boss (1976) argues that charisma must demonstrate a fidelity to the rhetoric and rituals of sacred shared myths, since the charismatic "relationship is an intimate one of community and continuity" (312). Bendix (1962) suggests the inherent importance of a narrative mythos since charisma's "rewards are derived from the messianic quest itself" (302), while Willner & Willner (1965) contend that a charismatic is able to "draw upon and manipulate the body of myth in a given culture" (77). Thus, charisma's rhetorical power seems to spring from its ability to imaginatively articulate a new contextualizing story which integrates sacred ideals and mythic elements.

23. Schlesinger (1960), p. 6-7.

24. Kenneth Burke (1941), "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1973), 191-220.

25. George Cheney, *Rhetoric in an Organizational Society; Managing Multiple Identities*. (Columbus, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991): 20-23.

26. Hogan & Williams (2000), 8-14.

27. Ernest Bormann, "Fantasy Theme Analysis and Rhetorical Theory," in James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist an William E. Coleman (eds.) *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1993): p. 368.

28. Ernest Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence: Organizational Communication and Culture," in Linda Putnam and Michael E. Pacanowsky (eds.) *Communication and Organizations: An Interpretive Approach* (Beverly Hills; Sage, 1993): 102-106.

29. Ernest Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985): p. 213.

30. William L. Gardner & Bruce J. Avolio advance a similar idea in "The Charismatic Relationship: A Dramaturgical Perspective," *The Academy of Management Review* 23 (Jan 198): 32-58.

31. Bormann (1985), p. 8.

32. Ernest Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair: A Fantasy Theme Analysis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (1973): 143-160.

33. Bormann, "Fantasy Theme Analysis and Rhetorical Theory," (1993), pp. 212-13.

34. Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence" (1993), p. 110.

35. Bormann, "Fantasy Theme Analysis and Rhetorical Theory" (1993), p. 368.

36. Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence" (1993), p. 115.

37. Competitive symbolic interpretations of rhetorical communities often conflict in their specific rhetorical visions because of differing "master analogues." Whereas the Pragmatic Analogue stresses actions based upon expediency and utility, and the Social Analogue stresses the nature of human relationships, the Righteous Analogue invokes transcendent values and principles that suggest the right way of doing things. Ernest Bormann, John F. Cragan and Donald Shields, "In Defense of Symbolic Convergence Theory: A Look at the Theory and its Criticisms after Two Decades," *Communication Theory* (1978).

38. Roderick P. Hart, *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* (Glenview; Scott Foresman, 1990), p. 251.

39. These rhetorical characteristics are excavated by Boss (1976) and Lewis (1988). Although I synthesize the message elements outlined by these authors, I have rearranged the order offered by Lewis to better reflect the rhetorical characteristics of Stewart, Smith & Denton's (1984) "Genesis Stage" of social movements in order to highlight what I perceive to be a clearly mythic form intuited by Max Weber.

40. Osborn, 1986; Lucaties and Condit, 1995.

41. Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence" (1993), p. 107.

CHAPTER 2

THE MYTH OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

In exploring the origins and development of charisma, my goal is to examine the rhetorical functions of charisma intimated by those who have offered their understandings for the term. In the sections that follow, I examine three major rhetorical shifts in the usage and understanding of charisma. First, I explore the Greek origins and Christian appropriation of charisma. Next, I examine the secular and social-scientific modifications offered by Max Weber, whose seminal works are frequently invoked as virtually definitive treatments of charisma for modern researchers. Finally, I survey the conflicts and criticisms surrounding modern appropriations of Weberian charisma in an attempt to identify themes central to both theoretical development and conceptual disagreement. I do not intend to follow countless other scholars by examining charisma as a political or behavioral reality; what interests me instead is the evolution of charisma as *a rhetorical reality* invoked to characterize social realities, and the specifically discursive consequences of charisma as a means for expressing (or revising) some transcendent mythological cosmos of the human condition. Of particular importance to this study, therefore, is charting the secular evolution of charisma's spiritual or divine connotations, and subsequently examining the rhetorical uses of charisma in expressing a mythic *cosmos* and narrative *telos* of human relationships. I intend to explore charisma as a site of rhetorical struggle over the locus of Power, an enduring discursive phenomenon that expresses the tension between divinely sanctioned leadership and spiritually empowered memberships. We will begin by examining the origins of charisma in ancient Greece and chart its Christian appropriation.

GREEK CHARISMA AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

> How foolish men are! How unjustly they blame the gods! It is their lot to suffer, but because of their own folly they bring upon themselves sufferings over and above what is fated for them. And then they blame the gods.
>
> --Zeus in *The Odyssey*

The earliest usage of charisma comes from ancient Greece, harkening from translations of the verb *charidzomai* ["to make oneself agreeable or to court favor"] and, according to the Liddell-Scott Greek lexicon, charisma translates to "a gift of grace or favor."[1] Citing usage across various Greek texts, Liddell & Scott further note that the Greek *charidzomai* is a verb form rather than a noun or adjective-- that is, an action versus some quality as we commonly understand it today. Charisma's etymology implies an activity or co-constitutive process of *becoming* favorable or pleasing, a relationship of reciprocity that contextualizes the courting of another's good graces and favor. The payoff for the Greek audiences of gifted speakers possessing such "grace" was an almost passionate exhilaration, an intensely pleasurable quickening of the spirit that evoked profound feelings associated with all the best moments that life offers, moments which occur both because of and through social relationships.[2] Greek charisma was thus not only inspired but inspiring. Perhaps not unlike the exchange of Christmas gifts within our own times as a mutual sign of affectionate admiration or special favor, charisma for the Greeks likewise implies a decidedly reciprocal social dynamic. Boss (1976) draws upon this relational reciprocity to portray charisma as a "super-ethos," an exceptional relationship rhetorically forged between extraordinarily eloquent speakers and an admiring audience.

Yet speakers and audiences were never the lone agents in this process, since the cosmos of ancient Greece was inhabited by gods and goddesses thought to play active roles in human affairs. Richard Enos (1993) finds little doubt that the Greeks believed "eloquence is god-

produced and god-given" (8). Many gods were assumed the almost magical source of inspiration

for heroes and villains as well as speakers and poets. Homer, for example, describes how Athena

inspired Achilles to heroic warfare while Aphrodite possessed Helen of Troy with adulterous

passion. "The Homeric orator is always understood as speaking extempore, and when he is at

his best he has a gift of speech, an *inspiration from the gods*, which is something more than his

own understanding," points out Kennedy (1980), who goes on to note that "this phenomenon

continues throughout the history of great oratory" (10, emphasis added). Achilles and Odysseus

for Greeks were the charismatic speakers of words but also the heroic doers of deeds, their epics

serving as socio-cultural textbooks from which the Greeks and later the Romans would educate

their citizens. Walter Ong (1982) suggests that for pre-literate antiquity, "the heroic and

marvelous had served a specific function in organizing knowledge in an oral world," since these

mythic tropes could "mobilize knowledge in story form" (70-1). Heroic literature was thusly

"venerated as almost the bibles of the culture," says Kennedy, and greatly influenced the

conception of the agonistic orator in Greco-Roman civilization. "The classical orator is usually

heroic; he puts the stamp of his personality on his speech, he imposes his will on others,"

Kennedy says, as a "fighter in a lonely contest." Kennedy admits this Greek warrior-speaker

offered a rhetorical model distinct from those of other cultures: "In contrast, the role of the

speaker is much less emphasized in the rhetoric of India or China, where harmony rather than

victory is often the goal" (10). Walter Ong agrees that in Western traditions, "Rhetoric is of

course antithetical" because of "the tendency among the Greeks and their cultural epigoni to

maximize oppositions, in the mental as in the extramental world: this by contrast with Indians

and Chinese, who programmatically minimized them" (111, emphasis mine). Yet it is

noteworthy that the hero-warrior is a figure found across cultures whose extraordinary abilities were not unlike the divinely sanctioned emperor-kings of antiquity, in both East and West, who wielded authority almost always ascribed some degree of supernatural influence if not divine sanction.[3] As we shall see later, such cross-cultural similarities become central to Max Weber's concept of charisma.

But in the ancient world, at least, it is unthinkable if not virtually impossible to separate such gifts, favor or eloquence from the mythos of some divine cosmology, which is precisely what made the concept of charisma so amenable for appropriation by later Christian authors. Elaine Pagels (1995) confirms that a "conviction that unseen energies impel human beings to action was, of course, nothing new; it was universally accepted throughout the pagan world" (123). The heroic orator in both Greek and Hebrew traditions were presumed to have access to the invisible realm of divine reality, and evidenced such intimate knowledge not only with miraculous heroic deeds but also through the miracle of persuasion itself. Kennedy (1980) confirms that "Judeo-Christian rhetoric shows similarity to philosophical rhetoric: it is the simple enunciation of God's truth, uncontaminated by adornment, flattery, or sophistic argumentation; it differs from philosophical rhetoric in that this truth is known from revelation or established by signs sent from God, not discovered by dialectic through man's efforts," and Kennedy similarly finds "a hint of such a possibility in the divine voice which came to Socrates" (121-2). Charismatic gifts, in fact, often function within Judeo-Christian scripture as the miraculous *logos* of the Hebrew God's divine authority conveyed through some prophetic hero-messenger. Kennedy argues that within Judeo-Christian tradition, "Authority is confirmed by miracle, and this, rather than logical argument, will be the primary mode of persuasion," since

27

the ideal Christian orator often lacking the technical understandings of the Greeks "needs only

the inspiration of the Spirit" (122). "The role of the speaker in Judeo-Christian rhetoric is

generally incidental," observes Kennedy, "except in those cases where the speaker is God or

Jesus or in later instances where a bishop or pope speaks with authority" (122). If the Greek

"gift" spoke to the relational exchange of favor between speakers and audiences, the "divine

gift" invoked within Judeo-Christian traditions would redefine this relationship as one of divine

providence between God and specially anointed individuals who acted as prophetic messengers,

miracle-workers or kingly hero-leaders.[4]

Judeo-Christian charisma thus clearly amplified its Greek connotations as a miraculous

phenomenon, yet another more radical implication is also lurking in the New Testament epistles

of Paul. Early Jewish followers of Jesus called themselves the people of "The Way," yet the

emergence of this gentile-friendly Judaism created division even amongst core disciples over

how closely converts should adhere to kosher observances (Davis, 373 & 422). Pagels notes that

as a radical group who became increasingly alienated within clashing Jewish communities and

zealously persecuted by the Roman Empire, early followers of Jesus quickly realized that

"recognizing and understanding the interrelationship of supernatural forces, both good and evil,

[was] essential for their sense of their own identity- and the way they identified others" (60).

Paul was not an original disciple of Jesus but a zealous Pharisee persecutor of early believers

until a rare intervention by God on the road to Damascus, so the story goes, resulted in religious

conversion and a name change. Over half of the standard New Testament gospels have been

historically credited to letters written by this apostle formerly known as Saul (or perhaps his

pupils), and Pagels notes that prior to these Pauline letters "there were as yet no written gospels"

although there may have been a 'Q' collection of Jesus sayings which informally circulated during the first century (65-66). While many early Jesus disciples expected converts to adhere to stringent Jewish rituals & tradition, Paul instead preached his more radical conviction that these traditions "were antithetical to embracing the gospel since Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, men and women were now able to become 'one in Christ'" (Pagels, 64-5).

Paul's gospel 'good news' was indeed a controversial departure from Jewish traditions upon which Jesus had based his teachings. "If Jesus 'invented' Christianity," Davis remarks, "Paul 'marketed' it to the world" and "took Christianity from an offshoot sect of Judaism to a separate, dynamic religion that transformed history" (333). No easy task, since Paul begins his missionary journeys decades after Jesus' crucifixion, establishing churches across the Roman world amidst growing anti-Christian sentiment. Roman animosity culminated with Nero burning Christians to light the streets of Rome, and legends hold it was during this time that Paul was martyred (Davis, 416-17). Dubbed "Christians" by the prolific missionary Paul, early converts of the Jesus cult generally believed Jesus to be the Messiah (Greek *christos* or 'anointed one') prophesied in ancient Hebrew apocalyptic tradition, a spiritual revolutionary who "transformed the relationship between Israel's God and the whole human race" (Pagels, 8).

It is within this transformed divine cosmos of Pauline Christianity that the Greek notion of charisma would be invoked. It is the New Testament epistles of Paul that employ the notion of charisma in two letters (Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12) referring to "the gifts of God's grace," enumerating such things as wisdom, knowledge, prophesy, healing, and speaking in unfamiliar languages as *gifts* (charisma) endowed by the Holy Spirit in members of early Christian congregations. Centrally important here is the very non-traditional notion that many (if

not all) believers in Jesus Christ were now believed capable of manifesting extraordinary "gifts" from God, a destiny previously reserved in Hebrew tradition for extra-ordinary prophets like Moses or messianic hero-kings like David or Solomon. "As it was out of the ordinary, it was of divine origin," H.D.F. Kitto also confirms of the Greek worldview, since "the gods do not so favor ordinary men, and he whom they do favour is not ordinary. We are not to think that the gods suddenly took up any weakling and gave him strength" (34).[5] Pauline charisma thus reflects the transformed cosmos and radically inclusive spiritual identity that was being set forth within the early Jesus movement, a rather stark contrast with what had long been the traditionally exclusive powers of divinely sanctioned leaders. To put it differently, Paul's surprising usage locates charisma inclusively within spiritual memberships rather than exclusively within the domain of some divinely-sanctioned leader.

Paul's unconventional notion of charisma is not without contradictions, however, but understanding its internal difficulties first requires contextualization within the passionate conflicts of the early Jesus movement. A professor of Religion at Princeton University, Elaine Pagels (1995) finds that "Jesus appeared as a radical prophetic figure whose public teaching, although popular with the crowds, angered and alarmed certain Jewish leaders, especially the Temple authorities, who probably facilitated his capture and arrest" (xxii). Virtually everything known about Jesus, however, has come from gospel accounts "written by zealous believers as a call to faith for their own day, not as documents for some historical accounting" (Davis, 332). But as "stories, sayings and anecdotes proliferated, various interpretations of Jesus' life and teaching circulated among diverse Christian groups throughout the Roman world" during the first century, Pagels explains, we find that "what Jesus actually taught often became a matter of

bitter dispute" (67). The diversity of Christian teachings even today stands as a testament to the

enduring nature of such interpretive conflicts amongst believers. Kenneth Davis (1998) agrees

that from the very beginning, "the 'church' was a feuding, bickering bunch of thinkers who were

all contributing their own take on the life and death of Jesus" (413). These disagreements would

come to a head with the third century organization of orthodox Christianity, which Davis

succinctly explains:

> Just as modern Christianity is split among many contending sects with differing ideas
> about Jesus, the early church was deeply divided. Gnostics believed, for instance,
> that Jesus' rising from the dead was spiritual, rather than a physical event. They also
> believed in a spiritual search for an inner truth that had more in common with eastern
> views like Buddhism than with orthodox Christianity. The "Gnostic Gospels" had
> been denounced as heresy by early Christian leaders who were no longer persecuted
> victims. They had become the authorities. To challenge them was to risk
> excommunication, arrest, or worse for heresy. (344)

What can be more generally agreed upon across often diverse gospels is that the life and

teachings of Jesus indeed inspired such radically defiant interpretations. "Jesus often preached

that the spiritual life was more important than mere obedience to a careful set of rules and

regulations," Davis observes, since the "ideals of justice, charity, forgiveness and love of

neighbor were far more important than going through the motions of obeying laws and then

behaving badly" (415). It is these early conflicts that Paul sought to reconcile amongst gentile

congregations, setting the groundwork for standardization of what would become accepted as

orthodox Christian doctrine.[6]

  While the actual teachings of Jesus and the New Testament gospels remain a contested

matter of religious faith, more important here is how the Jesus story was used to advance a

revolutionary counter-interpretation of charismatic sanction that was not only spiritually

revolutionary but politically dangerous. "We cannot fully understand the New Testament

gospels," Pagels insists, "until we recognize that they are wartime literature" (8). Rulers,

empires, and priesthoods had long claimed supernatural selection as grounds for both political

and spiritual authority, a topic which the New Testament gospels address with a generally

conciliatory tone toward traditional civic virtues and Roman institutions of leadership. "What

was revolutionary, however," Pagels insists, "was that Christians professed primary allegiance to

God" and now claimed a freedom of religious liberty "rooted in the sense of being God's people,

enrolled by baptism as 'citizens in heaven,' no longer subject merely to 'the rulers of this present

evil age,' the human authorities and the demonic forces that often control them" (147). Various

gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry, Pagels points out, "invites Christians to see demonic forces

working through Roman officials as well as through Jewish leaders" (114). Jesus stories were

used to advance a radical spiritual identity, suggests Pagels, which taught converts "not only that

the bonds of family, society and nation are not sacred, but that they are diabolic encumbrances

designed to enslave people" (143-6). In fact, Pagels discovers that gospel authors shrewdly turn

the notion of supernatural sanction against religious and political leaders: "Matthew, following

Mark's lead, implies that political success and power (such as the Pharisees enjoy under Roman

patronage) may evince a pact with the devil- and not, as many of Matthew's contemporaries

would have assumed, marks of divine favor" (81). New Testament invocations of Jesus as The

Son of God, not coincidentally one of the titles for Caesar, similarly doubled as subtle political

subversion. Although the New Testament gospels avoid overt criticism of Roman leadership,

and at points portray Roman officials like Pilate somewhat sympathetically, it is not difficult to

see why these deeply skeptical inversions of divine sanction might easily be perceived as

seditious by the Roman empire. Ironically, the Jesus movement would spread both despite and

because of imperial persecution, says Pagals, since many who witnessed their brutal and often

grisly deaths "became convinced that Christians had discovered access to great power- divine

power" (117).

This radical and revolutionary nonconformity, however, was soon squelched by an

emergent theological illuminati of bishops who now sought to standardize an official doctrinal

orthodoxy. "In the face of deadly persecution by Jewish and Roman authorities," says Davis,

"the earliest followers of Jesus were basically an outlaw 'cult' until Emperor Constantine

converted in 313 CE and Christianity became Rome's dominant religion" (333). As church

clergy strove to organize the conflicting doctrines of bickering Jesus sects, and as Christians

became public enemies of Rome, Paul's notion of interdependent charismatic memberships was

modified by the notion of apostolic succession. The revolutionary thrust of early Christianity

gradually yielded to an institutionalization of spiritual power and, despite the fact that the

diversity of interpretations had enabled the rapid spread of Jesus' teachings, doctrinal

interpretation would become increasingly restricted to the emergent hierarchy of the orthodox

(literally "straight thinking") majority. One of the fathers of the orthodox church, Tertullian,

would go so far as to contend that whoever deviates from the majority consensus of this new

priesthood is by definition a heretic, insisting that choice is evil since it destroys group unity and

undermines true Christian faith. "In place of choices, questions and discussions of spiritual

interpretation, Tertullian prescribes unanimous acceptance of the rule of faith," explains Pagals,

which is ensured only through submission and obedience "to the priests who stand in proper

succession from the apostles" (165). The orthodox priesthood now downplayed the subversively

anti-authoritarian undertones of early Jesus stories, embraced by persecuted Christians for almost

two centuries, since it inspired Gnostic sects to instead posit a spiritual identity no longer

requiring the dogmatic mediation of prescriptive doctrines and rituals from a priesthood. Ong

(1991) finds that when occuring within societies of limited literacy, sacred writings inevitably

come to be considered dangerous in the hands of unwary or unlearned readers, thus "demanding

a guru-like figure to mediate between reader and text" (93). Churches thus increasingly tended

"to emphasize the growing authority of the clergy and enjoin adherence to detailed and practical

moral codes," Pagals explains, doctrines which often "borrowed from pagan catalogues of civic

virtue" and prone "to emulate conventional Roman behavior' (151-3). The justification of

orthodox Christianity for establishing this party line: Satan, who distorts human perception of

God's truth and necessitates submission to the new priesthood and the authority of apostolic

succession.

The conflicting views of the spiritual identity being articulated in some Jesus gospels

were zealously suppressed and persecuted by a new orthodox power hierarchy of clergy, who

returned to the more traditional view of charisma as supernatural selection. The first four

gospels canonized around 200 C.E., Pagels reminds us, "were chosen not necessarily because

they were the earliest or most accurate accounts of Jesus' life and teaching but precisely because

they could form the basis for church communities" (65). Some jettisoned gospels, she says, were

problematic for the increasing standardization and bureaucratization of Christianity:

> But as we have seen, [the Gnostic gospel] Thomas offers a very different message.
> Far from regarding himself as the only begotten son of God, Jesus says to his
> disciples, "When you come to know yourselves" (and discover the divine within
> you), then "you will recognize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father" --
> just like Jesus... Profound as such an answer may be, it offers *no programmatic
> guidelines for group instruction.* The gospels included in the New Testament, by
> contrast, do offer such guidelines... Furthermore, while Thomas says that finding the
> kingdom of God requires undergoing a solitary process of self-discovery, the gospels

of the New Testament offer a far simpler message: one attains to God not by spiritual self-knowledge, but by believing in Jesus the Messiah. Now that God has sent salvation through Christ, repent; accept baptism and forgiveness of sins; join God's people and receive salvation... Successive generations found in the New Testament gospels what they did not find in many other elements of early Jesus tradition— a practical design for Christian communities. (72-5, emphasis added)

Put simply, answers to pesky questions regarding puzzling nuances in Jesus' spiritual teachings were uncomplicated enough for early church organizers like Turtullian: simply join the club and submit to the authority of the clergy's interpretive orthodoxy. On a very pragmatic level, those non-synoptic teachings "denounced as heresy did not serve the purposes of institutionalization," Pagels observes; "Some, on the contrary, urged people to seek direct access to God, unmediated by church or clergy" (70). Particularly noteworthy is the notion that although the charismatic prophets and priesthood claimed privileged status due to some special communion with the divine, many early gospels- including those of Paul- believed that the 'New Deal' of Jesus established a relationship for every believer brave enough to renounce an evil world and pursue the enlightenment of spiritual maturity. Yet Pagels reminds us that "the majority of Christian churches, from the second century to the present, have regarded such renunciation as a counsel of perfection, achieved by only a heroic few" (157). Ironically, orthodox Christianity thus reasserted charisma as the exclusive domain of spiritual—and soon again political— elites who would rule the Holy Roman Empire and one day launch The Crusades.

What we're left with after this survey of the rise of orthodox Christianity is a profoundly conflicted view of charismatic leadership, which brings us back to the Pauline epistles. Whereas Gnostic gospels and significant sections of Pauline epistles advanced the radical belief that charisma was a spiritual potential available to every individual, the orthodox majority would instead return to a more traditional view of charismatic 'gifts' exclusive to extraordinary leaders

who are exceptionally 'favored' or anointed by God to oppose the worldly forces of Satan.[7]

Upon closer scrutiny, the Pauline epistles indeed convey profoundly ambivalent views about charisma yet consistently stresses two guidepost themes for gentile congregations: interdependent memberships and Christian love. Kenneth Davis offers perhaps the most convincing explanation for these competing views in the Pauline epistles: "Recent research suggests that some of Paul's letters may have been written by later church leaders who used Paul's name to lend authority to their writings" (435). The incongruous notions of charismatic memberships and apostolic succession may bear the editorial fingerprints of later orthodox bishops who sought to legitimate their own power, using Paul's authoritative works to validate the dogma of apostolic succession.[8] Emerging from early Jesus gospels and within Pauline charisma is nevertheless a decidedly skeptical view of the status quo of worldly leadership as practiced, and a conviction in an 'other' transcendent model being offered both by and through Jesus Christ. By their own gospel accounts, notes Davis, even devoted disciples of Jesus were often left scratching their heads when presented with his "more Zen-like and obscure" parables. "Jesus often used these parables not simply to make a point but more importantly to get his followers to think," Davis opines, "an activity that later church leaders have not pursued as vigorously" (388). Merold Westphal (1984) agrees that "the personal *and especially political non-conformity* involved in imitating the non-violent, *non-power seeking service* through self-giving life and teachings of Jesus is the sacrifice by which we give ourselves to God and neighbor" (158, emphasis added).[9] These ideas have directly shaped the "servant leadership" models popular in some contemporary circles since spiritually empowered memberships are thought to be corrective for the leader-centric models dominating contemporary practice.

This agonistic history of Pauline charisma now points us in the direction of memberships

who actively use their charismatic figures as a point of articulation, and the centrality of such

rhetorical invocations of charisma by diverse memberships to advance differing behavioral

doctrines. Whether one takes the stories of Jesus as literally or figuratively 'true' misses two

important points. First, there is obviously no leadership without memberships, and leadership is

rhetorically 'authorized' both in and through the discourses of devotees. As we have seen, the

mythic invocations of a divine *cosmos* plays a significant role in this process for both Greeks and

Christians. Second, the divine *cosmos* embraced by memberships can itself become rhetorical

fodder for arguments over a *telos* of behavioral praxis; that is, how to practice Christian

citizenship and whose instructions or which doctrines to follow.

As I have attempted to demonstrate through the concept of charisma, Gnostic and

orthodox perspectives generate an ongoing dialectic amongst believers even to this day. Craig

R. Smith (2001) contends that a rhetorical perspective is especially important for grasping the

existential dynamics at work within the teachings of Jesus:

> Jesus required his listeners to act, to choose; over and over he forced them to face
> difficult decisions regarding God and mammon, faith and hypocricy, physical health
> and spiritual well-being... The questions Jesus raises force his audience and readers
> to make the responsible choices that awaken their potential to lead a life of faith. In
> fact, by his life Jesus demonstrated that choice tests the value structure by which one
> lives... [The teachings of Jesus insist] that people are in fact responsible for the
> decisions they make, the thoughts they possess, and the intentions they have, no
> matter the result... [but] because following Jesus' word leads to pain and suffering, it
> also forces an examination that is existential in nature... If we think of Jesus as the
> creator of a new way of looking at life, we must also credit his narrators for
> preserving his work. (189-200)

That church leadership was a point of heated dissent even among the earliest Jesus communities

is not incidental. Elaine Pagels contends that each gospel author "shapes a narrative to respond

to particular circumstances, and each uses the story of Jesus to 'think with' in an immediate situation" by strategically "identifying with Jesus and the disciples" (xxii). Squabbles over the existence and teachings of a historical Jesus obscure a very important point: devoted but diverse memberships worked very hard -and successfully- to similarly anoint Jesus as their charismatic messiah but often for very different reasons and for quite different rhetorical purposes.

If nothing else, this brief jaunt through the history of Christian charisma should impress upon us the centrality of individual memberships who persuade, perpetuate and perhaps even amplify the charismatic figures who inspire them. Chapters two and three will examine the mythic rhetoric within such invocations in greater detail but, as I have attempted to demonstrate thus far, the rhetorical constructions of the Jesus story vary in their interpretations of charisma as either divine power exclusive to elite hero-leaders or as instead the empowering spiritual potential of interdependent memberships who operate within a new and radically inclusive mythic cosmos. As we shall see, these competing portrayals of divinely super-powered leaders and spiritually empowered memberships will become recurring motifs in the history of charisma, themes which are often portrayed as conflicting leadership paradigms depending upon whether or not one believes that charisma is indeed a "real" phenomenon or merely the storied stuff of mythic antiquity. These same tensions are very much alive and well today, but contemporary understandings undergo significant changes yet again in the seminal works of Max Weber.

MAX WEBER AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF LEADERSHIP

The radically revisionary cosmos of Pauline charisma would ironically play a very notable role in the development of secular rationality and the nation-state. As we have seen, charismatic membership for Paul implicitly challenges the Caesarpapist elevation of a singular

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emperor or ruler to semi-divine legitimacy. The cosmos of the early Jesus movement, Pagels

points out, "forged a radical tradition that undermined religious sanction for the state, claiming it

instead for religious conscience- a tradition that would enormously influence subsequent

Western government and politics" (146). As orthodox Christianity developed, however,

doctrinal standardization and more centralized authority would emerge in conjunction with the

Holy Roman Empire. Karen Armstrong finds that these pre-modern bureaucratic priesthoods

also influenced the Reformation and Enlightenment as "the Church, like the modern state,

became a more centralized body" and "made the mystical process more systematic." Oddly

enough, Armstrong notes, "this emphasis on method, discipline and organization was similar to

the new science" (5-6). Science would usher in a new secular cosmos of human relationships

that would paradoxically compliment and contradict the religious cosmologies of old. "The

Church offered the state the disciplined citizen, the canopy of divine legitimacy, the construction

of the Godly prince," writes Turner (1993), while the "ontologically corrupt nature of humanity"

would not only precipitate scientific explorations into Nature but also necessitate "the

disciplinary apparatus of the state" (111). It is this long and conflict-ridden trek to secular

modernity and the emergence of rational bureaucracy that intrigued the legendary German social

theorist Max Weber.

　　　Perhaps no other single author has been more influential upon our contemporary

understandings of leadership and charisma than Max Weber. Indeed, Weber still commands

reverence as a touchstone for numerous disciplines like those of sociology and political science,

and any reference to charisma will invariably invoke his name. In his intricate social theory

culled from cross-cultural analysis, Weber demonstrates admirable competence as a virtuoso on

subjects ranging from agricultural law and capitalist modes of production to Chinese religion and Russian folk music. The founder of modern sociology and the first to critically examine bureaucracies being pioneered in Germany during the 19th century, Max Weber grew up in a family context characterized by merchant wealth, liberal politics and Protestant pietism.[10] Weber's mother was a devout Calvinist Protestant and his aristocratic father a mid-level bureaucrat, two influences profoundly shaping Weber's lifelong interest in the intersection of religious orientations, economic systems and the authority relationships that legitimize social organization. In the wake of World War I, Weber was keenly interested in the agencies of German government then experimenting with bureaucracy as a replacement for Middle Age practices owing loyalty to dukes, monarchs and the church. Weber's intricate social theory identified a number of key features that continue to spark lively debate across numerous disciplines, not the least of which is charisma. In what follows, I examine Weber's use of charisma as an "ideal type" within his broader theories of bureaucracy and rationalization by exploring Weber's connection to social theorists of his day.[11] As we shall see, Weber was prophetically attentive to the payoffs and price of both scientific rationality and the increasing bureaucratization of modern industrial civilization.

We should note in passing that Weber at all turns emphasizes the subjective motives and meanings of participants as the independent variables of his "value free" social science. Although there is always a multitude of motives and meanings held by individuals, Weber's sociology of "social action" set out to compare and contrast different societies in order to determine similarities and differences across both history and cultures. The conceptual device that Weber invents is the "Ideal Type," analytic abstractions intended to broadly understand

"human behavior in so far as the actor attaches a subjective meaning to it." This type of understanding is expressed in Weber's recurring use of the German word *Verstehen*, which conveys the notion of empathy along with strong connotations of "going native" more than any single English word can capture.[12] Weber in this sense was interested in discovering how individuals actively confer meaning and significance to their social world, making sensitivity to the rules and norms of culture central to his social science. When Weber insists his analytic typology is "value free," it would be a mistake to think that Weber meant his analysis is free of subjectivity. On the contrary, it was the subjectivities of active participants, or "social actors" as Weber liked to call them, which interested him most. As Eisenstadt puts it, "Weber employed all this richness to analyze systematically the great variety of human creativity in its social context, to analyze the most salient of the common characteristics and problems of different spheres of human endeavor, and to explore the conditions of emergence, continuity, change, and stagnation of different types of social organization and cultural creativity" (xiv). Weber flatly denied that sociological analysis could discover universal laws of human behavior, nor could it provide moral evaluation of any existing or future state of affairs.[13] Man and nature, rather than God and Being, had preoccupied thinkers from Machiavelli to Nietzsche and later Hobbes, who reimagined the mysterious universe of religion as an intellectual challenge providing mankind with new knowledge from science and new powers through political philosophy. "Where the classical and medieval writers were concerned with the source of authority, of right, and of justice, these thinkers studied the reality of power," observes Hallowell and Porter (1997); "Politics for them was the realm of force, selfishness, conflict and domination, and political institutions and statescraft should be formed accordingly" while questions of right and justice

"were of little import" (232-33). Eric Voeglin (2000) finds Weber intuited this "positivistic thinking had to be determined as a variant of theologizing," since thinkers like Comte and Marx "recognized the validity of metaphysical questions but refused to consider them because such consideration would make their irrational opining impossible" (25). Indeed, Weber identified such arid intellectual 'rationalization' as the emergent trend of Western capitalistic civilization, detecting the creep of rational calculation and instrumental rationality within all social spheres: politics, religion, music, economic organization, administration, and even within science. Weber's comparative method instead sought to '*verstehen*' the subjective meanings of social actors and thereby more objectively examine the historical causes and potential social consequences of such meanings and actions. Weber's conceptual typology indeed reduces culture-specific complexities to analytically manageable patterns of motives and meanings, but this comparative method is useful because it exposes key differences that nuance the seeming similarities of recurring social phenomena like leadership.[14] "Weber's historical sociology was very different, therefore, from the tradition of English empiricism," stresses Bryan Turner (1993), since "we could more safely describe Weber's purpose as the production of a moral characterology of modern times" (4). Although not beyond critical scrutiny, the Weberian method is flavored with the ethnographic sensibilities of a cultural anthropologist, which are unfortunately too often overlooked.[15]

Weber's enduring influence has been that of an intellectual maverick, boldly challenging the historicism and universalism so in vogue with the idealistic German *Geistegeschichte* of his contemporaries. Conventionally identified as neoKantian because of his distinction between objective 'rational' judgments and subjective 'value' judgments, Weber's comparative

methodology revolves around the twin concepts of rationalization and disenchantment.[16]

Rationalization (*Rationalität*) encompasses not only the development of technical-instrumental

processes based upon empirically grounded and efficiency-directed reason (*Zweckrationalität*),

says Swatos, but also the rationalization of ethical-moral values (*Wertrationalität*) in a world

that has been 'robbed of gods' and in which "the agencies of magic and spiritual power have lost

their grip on human lives" (130). Disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) is the resulting

demystification in our conceptualizations of the world and is connected with growing secular

humanism, the rise of science and technology, and the increasing bureaucratic routinization of

education, social organization and culture.   Swatos explains that "if we explain things in this

world's terms (rationalization), we no longer need a supernatural explanation or level of 'reality'

(hence disenchantment)."[17] As Turner explains it, Weber intuited contradiction in scientific

rationality and the human quest for a meaningful existence:

> While science can make the world predictable, science cannot make the world
> meaningful. In fact, quite the contrary. As science advances, meaning retreats,
> leaving the world disenchanted. (11)

As an antithesis to social systems founded upon the enchantment of religion, the scientific

"demystification and secularization of the world" was posited by Weber as increasingly yielding

an "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationalization.[18] Bureaucracy for Weber occupies the place of

capitalism for Marx, the admired enemy spreading inexorably throughout the world and

oppressively permeating every sphere of life. The fear was that "the state would indeed become

total, and Weber, hating bureaucracy as a shackle upon the liberal individual, felt that socialism

would thus lead to a further serfdom."[19] In Weber's analysis, Marxism could only perpetuate the

alienation which it seeks to resolve since "rational bureaucracy, rather than class struggle, was

the most significant factor" for understanding alienation as social disenchantment.[20] While Marx

distastefully viewed religion as a conservative force and an 'opiate of the masses', Weber turns

Marxism on its head to instead demonstrate that religious sentiments have been historically

generative of ideas triggering dramatic social change.[21] "Through his analysis of the relation

between Protestantism and capitalism," Eisenstadt explains, Weber "attempts to show that even

in this seemingly most 'material' of all social spheres, real change, innovation, or transformation

are greatly dependent not only on the objective forces of the market or of production but on a

charismatic reformulation of the *meaning* of economic activities."[22] This charismatic

reformulation of social meanings has long drawn the spotlight to individual representatives of

Weber's abstracted "ideal type" but, as we shall see, it is the active subjectivities of *charismatic*

memberships within this dynamic that are central to Weber's larger project.

In Weber's social scientific reformulation, charisma is secularized as an objectively

historical concept useful for understanding power attributed to exceptionally rare individuals.

Weber borrowed the term from Rudolph Sohm, whose *Kirchenrecht* had in turn borrowed the

notion of charisma from St. Paul to explain how the early church legitimated itself as a durable

institution in antiquity. In the works of Weber, however, the "gifted leadership" of charisma was

expanded "to include all leaders, both religious and nonreligious, who attracted devoted

followers through their extraordinary powers" [Hackman & Johnson, 1991; p. 181]. Charisma

plays a significant role in Weber's examinations of cross-cultural authority relationships, which

pioneered the 'ideal type' as an analytic tool for classifying the differing social relationships

used to historically legitimate social authority. [23] In *Economy and Society,* Weber's typology

sketches three modes for achieving legitimacy: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic.[24]

Rational-Legal authority is the 'rule of law' based upon rational grounds and anchored in impersonal rules legally enacted or contractually established within a bureaucratic society. This new kind of rulership is of course not found in the ancient classifications of governance, and is systemically distinct in function from monarchy or aristocracy. This type of authority is rule-based and managerial, formalizing distinctions in functional roles and social status.

Weber's works are most interested in the ways in which bureaucratic rule increasingly characterizes the relational value-orientations of modern societies. *Traditional Authority*, which Weber identifies as an enduring characteristic of pre-modern societies, is instead based upon a collective belief in the sanctity of tradition as inherited from 'the eternal yesterday' of a sacred cultural past or history. The rational-legal systems of bureaucracies and the traditional sovereignty of inherited cultural conventions, it should be noted, are similarly impersonal since both are social institutions that precede and mediate the individual behavior rather deterministically. In a sense, these types of authority are imposed by society and history upon individuals born into a cultural system. *Charismatic authority*, on the other hand, rests upon an intensely personal devotion of some group to an extraordinary individual who defies convention and tradition as an ethical, heroic or religious revolutionary. In Weber's view, charisma is uniquely counter-institutional and "in its most potent form, disrupts rational rule as well as traditional altogether and overturns all notions of sanctity" as "the specifically creative revolutionary force in history."[25] With Weberian charisma, the uniquely gifted individual impacts society and history rather than vice-versa.

Although derived conceptually from religious contexts, charisma for Weber would also be profoundly influenced by the German philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche.[26] Weberian charisma

places emphasis upon exceptional and rare individuals during times of crisis who have historically provided the messianic impetus for revolutionary social change. "There are important parallels between Weber's defense of the individual against the encroachment of the state" and "Nietzsche's concept of the *übermensch,*" notes Turner, "above all in his denunciation of the state as an impediment to self-realization" (186). Yet Weberian charisma departs significantly from Nietzsche's philosophical worldview precisely because, to use the words of Terry Eagleton, Nietzsche's *übermensch* "reflects the values of a political system which subordinates the sociality of human life to solitary individual enterprise."[27] Weber instead advocated an interactionist typology for charting the dynamic social interplay between the institutionalized "rational-legal" authority of bureaucratic organizations, the socio-cultural "traditional" authority of inherited conventions, and the distinctly "personal" authority that anoints rare charismatic individuals (1947: 241-358). Since Weber posits that all forms of authority will contain fallout from past charismatic explosions, bureaucracy too will evidence institutionalized remnants of past revolutionary movements. Within his 'social action' approach to studying human societies and cultures, we should recall, Weber invokes charisma as an 'ideal type' to explain the role of subjective beliefs in perpetuating or creating new constructions of social reality. Weber portrays the charismatic leader as instilling duty and devotion in followers drawn to them because they are *perceived* to possess extraordinary sanctity, heroism or exemplary character.

> The term charisma will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. (358)

Although Weber posits the charismatic 'type' useful for analytic purposes, it seems clear that it is the subjective beliefs of charismatic memberships which occupy a place of central importance within this social dynamic. "Weber emphasizes not so much the charismatic leader," Eisenstadt agrees, "but the charismatic group or band, be it the religious sect or the followers of a new political leader."[28] This oft overlooked tenor of Weber's work clearly rebukes the folly of endlessly obsessive probes into the techniques, psychology or biography of charismatic leaders since these efforts implicitly marginalize the active role of charismatic memberships in anointing their leader. Weber is indeed emphatic that "what is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his 'followers' or 'disciples'…" (241-242). While other forms of authority are impersonally appointed from custom or law, charisma is instead intensely personal and conferred by individuals who actively anoint their leader's authority in defiance of custom and law. "The charismatic leader is always a radical who challenges established practices by going to 'the root of the matter'," observes Weber, and "dominates men by virtue of qualities inaccessible to others and incompatible with the rules of thought and action which govern everyday life" (300). As a radical who defies mindless daily routine, the charismatic inspires memberships to reassess the values of normative traditions. Says Weber: "Hence its attitude is revolutionary and transvalues everything; it makes a sovereign break with all traditional or rational norms" (1115).

Thus charisma for Weber is a revolutionary force only because it is first transformational for individuals, which invites us into the realm of discourse and rhetoric. While Marx explored economic determinants and Nietzsche pined for individualist revaluation, both presupposed 'the masses' as possessing little more than the herd mentality of sheep. Weber would instead posit

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the beliefs and subjectivities of followers as a crucial dynamic for understanding the implicit power relationships of social authority and cultural change. Weber interestingly portrays charisma as an inward transformation of individuals that becomes projected outward, since "charismatic belief revolutionizes men *from within* and shapes material and social conditions according to its revolutionary will" (1116). Charisma for Weber revolutionizes society only because it first successfully revolutionizes selfhood and personal identity for its memberships, as opposed to the mere regulation of external behaviors by rational-legal bureaucracy. Unfortunately, Weber offers few clues regarding the rhetorical dynamics of this charismatizing process. Hackman and Johnson (1991) criticize that Weber's theory "never describes the origin or exact nature of the charismatic leader's extraordinary powers or clarifies how charismatic authority can rest both on the traits of the leader and on perceptions of followers," although they find that studies of charisma nevertheless often reveal a "key to their success is the use of cultural myths" (182-3). In a particularly lucid passage that will become a touchstone for future chapters, Weber indeed boldly asserts that "the power of charisma rests upon the belief in revelation and heroes, upon the conviction that certain manifestations- whether they be of religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political or other kind- are important and valuable" (1116). Weber further suggests that charismatic 'irrationality' is accountable only to their own message and the mythic expectations of followers, which must be continually proved through action if they are to retain legitimacy: "If he wants to be a prophet, he must perform miracles; if he wants to be a warlord, he must perform heroic deeds" (1114).

Time and again, Weber contrasts the scientific secularism of modern bureaucratic systems with the 'enchanted' mythic expectations of charismatic memberships, portraying these

as an antithesis to the instrumental rationality and calculated self-interest that guides bureaucracy and much of our daily routine. Weber insists that charisma "is sharply opposed" to all "rational, and particularly bureaucratic authority," oddly positing "charismatic authority is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules" (244). Dow (1969) explains that this emotive irrationality emerges because the charismatic "appeals neither to intellectually calculable rules, nor to tradition, but to the revolutionary image and his own exemplary qualities with which the follower may identify" (315). Shils (1965) likewise declares the charismatic individual defiant of an alienating status quo as one who instead "embodies, expresses, or symbolizes the essence of an ordered cosmos," which "thereof awakens the disposition of awe and reverence, the charismatic disposition" (203). The enchanted cosmos of Mythology, as we shall see later, may play a significant rhetorical role in transforming individual identities and subjectivities.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that charisma for Weber was less a person than a process. Key to understanding Weberian charisma, and often overlooked, is his departure from 'Great Man Theories' of history by emphasizing the subjective beliefs of memberships who defy tradition and institutions to voluntarily and enthusiastically anoint the charismatic leader. Yet Weber believed that every successful visionary leader is gradually engulfed by the competing demands of constituencies and the practical minutia of a growing organization, concluding that "every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material interests: every hour of its existence brings it nearer to its end" (1120). If one cannot live by bread alone, neither can charisma endure unless it is institutionalized into some effective form of social organization complete with rituals and structured routines. Ironically, these constitute its death-knell as an

intensely personal charisma becomes bureaucratized and de-personalized by organizational

demands. "Such transformation of a great charismatic upsurge and vision into some more

continuous social organization and institutional framework constitutes the first step in the

routinization of charisma," Eisenstadt writes, a notion "used by Weber to denote the process

through which the charismatic characteristics are transferred from the unique personality or the

unstructured group to orderly institutional reality" (xxi). In perhaps all cases, legitimate order

for Weber is a mixture of the three types of authority complexly related to one another. Because

bureaucracy was viewed as an odd new mixture of traditional and charismatic authority, Weber

was most interested in "the ways in which any particular religion is transformed by the processes

of mission, acceptance and institutionalization," Turner writes, and how new social movements

subsequently "cope with the empirical facts of the heterogeneity of beliefs and practices" when

"these beliefs come to characterize the religious elite rather than the great mass of the laity" (61).

  Weber was particularly fascinated by the different ways charismatic routinization had

historically occurred, using other times and cultures as data for speculating how these functions

might be changed by the emergent phenomenon of bureaucracy. "The special problems and

conditions of the present obviously influence a group's conception of what will count as the pure

and original practices of the early community," notes Turner, "formulated in terms of a

conception of the 'foundation event'…" (63). Sohm's examination into the development of

Christianity is helpful here, since arguments and debate over the meaning of Jesus' teachings

require the interpretive clarification of those who touched the hem of the Master or possess

special knowledge of sacred teachings. Little wonder, then, that Weber was more fascinated by

the successive priesthood of organizational virtuosi who succeeded the charismatic visionary to

bureaucratize and standardize a stable organizational mission that might endure interpretive

conflicts and political infighting.

Understanding Weber's theory of charisma as social process rather than a person yields a

fundamental paradox: charisma for Weber is both revolutionary and evolutionary. Swatos

confirms this chronic "failure to understand that Weber makes a consistent distinction between

'genuine charisma' and routinized or transformed 'stable' forms" which "appear in both

traditional and rational-legal types of societies" (134-5). Because Weber posits that all authority

is the institutionalized fallout of charismatic explosions, Swatos concedes that it is "possible and

correct to speak of persons as 'charismatic' figures within traditional or rational-legal systems in

varying degrees," since the 'ideal types' Weber offers "are methodological constructs rather than

empirical realities" (134-5). What Weber's typology offers, however, is a clear picture of how

early messages of visionary self-realization for individuals necessarily evolve into missionary

subordination to doctrines that will sustain organizational self-preservation and continuity. The

message of 'pure' or genesis charisma is differentiated as follows by neoWeberian Ken Jowitt,

professor of Political Science at UC Berkeley:

> Basically I continue to think that Christ was the greatest cultural revolutionary in history. Because what he said is, "Its the individual that counts, not the chosen people." And its not simply the Jews who believe in the chosen people; almost every group in history has assigned identity to the group, not to the person, not to the individual. Christ was a revolutionary. The Roman Catholic church took that and subordinated it to the church, which is again a group... As soon as you dissolve the tension between that superior group and the society, unless the group is willing to allow those people in society to be equal as individuals, there's only one thing that can happen to that group: it becomes corrupt. Aquinas, in effect, tried to revise the church to deal with the fact that the society had become more Christian. Khrushchev was Communism's Aquinas, but neither Aquinas nor Khrushchev allowed for the individual to become the major figure. Rather, the church stayed superior, even under Aquinas; the party stayed superior. What happened in the church? You got a Luther. What happened in the Communist party? You got a Lech Walensa and an

Adam Michnik. And what did they stand for? They stood for the appearance of the individual against the domination of the group.[29]

Jowitt's picture paints a visionary message of self-realization for individuals which quickly becomes dogmatically distorted into one of subordination to group orthodoxy. Not unlike the rise of orthodox Christianity as sketched in the previous section, the standardization and formalization required to convert a new identity and charismatic vision into a stable, homogenous organizational mission will fundamentally alter the purpose and function of charisma. As yesterday's revolutionary charisma is in the process of becoming tomorrow's status quo, however, Weber acknowledges that various transformations and routinizations of charisma will become interpretively dispersed over time across numerous social structure and institutions.[30] These later routinizations, however, will differ significantly from the emergent charisma. Unfortunately, a common complaint from charisma scholars is that too many studies mistakenly invoke the concept of charisma when they are, in fact, clearly examining routinized bureaucratic forms or leadership practices of institutionalized charisma.[31]

If Weber's theory of charisma sounds suspiciously cyclical as a Hegelian dialectic of charisma begetting bureaucracy begetting another charisma, it takes a decidedly more pessimistic turn in considering the impact of modern bureaucratic rationality. Weber's theory of bureaucracy and his 'Protestant Ethic' thesis intimates a suspicion that the displacement of religion by science and the technical rationalization of social relationships has and will continue to frustrate the possibility of charisma in civilized modernity. Although Weber preferred the rational administration of bureaucracies as supremely efficient in historical comparison to the 'demonic' potentials of religious theocracies, Swatos nevertheless finds "one still gets a strong impression from reading his works that the mystical quality of existence to which religion has

addressed itself as a social institution throughout history has value," and yet for Weber, "that

value is the price paid for rationalization."[32] Again we must acknowledge Weber's very

Nietzschean pessimism about the "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationality and a fate of

institutionalized dehumanization.[33] Who we are and how we interact is increasingly defined by

our dependence upon and subordination to the bureaucratic machine of impersonal systems, says

Swatos, "one in which unrelenting bureaucratization reduces creativity, spontaneity and

freedom" in favor of "capitulation before a mechanized system of action that denies the irrational

and transcendent potential of human existence" (144). Increasingly concerned with efficiency

and formalized social control through impersonal rules, regulations and divisions of labor,

modern civilization suffers from what George Ritzer has called *The McDonaldization of*

Society.[34] The people of modern societies are increasingly quantified with the formulaic

checklists of creditors and employers, standardization and homogenization encourage minimal

deviation in favor of efficiency and predictability while personal face-to-face interactions are

now largely mediated and controlled by technologies like cell phones, PCs, e-mail and

automated tellers or even through bureaucratic processes like dress codes, timed appointments,

itemized agendas, suggestion boxes, contractual obligations, mandatory evaluations and long

lines in waiting rooms and rush hour freeways. Human life also suffers as a result of fast food,

industrial pollution, stress-related illness, corporate down-sizing and long working hours that

necessitate time away from family. In countless daily ways, freedom and choice are sacrificed

for the predictability and convenience that can be harnessed through bureaucratic control.

Weber's 'iron cage' of bureaucracy in many respects also echoes Kenneth Burke's observations

on how "terministic compulsions" can lead social systems into "hierarchical psychosis," a

"striving to make our lives perfect" that can "carry to resolution even those terminologies detrimental to our well-being" (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 199). Swatos indicates that Weber had indeed cautioned against such dark potentials, fearing the rise to prominence by the "dictatorship of the bureaucrats":

> Weber indicated --perhaps more prophetically than he realized-- the possibility that bureaucratic structures in a democratic society might have to use "mass effects" and the "charisma of rhetoric" to create "charismatic hero worship" in order to build the emotional support necessary for the maintenance of power... From the viewpoint of its creators in modernity (as contrasted with traditionalistic manufacturers of charisma, where enchantment still prevailed), then, this would be a completely rational activity intended to remain within clearly nonrevolutionary bounds. (137)

Mommsen agrees that Weber's analysis is indeed "overshadowed by a deeply pessimistic fear of a new enslavement to come," one in which "the endless struggle between creative charisma and rationalizing bureaucracy" would almost unquestionably be won by the latter.[35] Weber's work is valuable, however, because it insightfully recognizes that both religious sentiments and secular bureaucractic rationality yield a payoff and a price. Swatos finds the "Weberian is cursed because he must live on a tightrope drawn between an intellectual sacrifice to religion or a similar one to uncontrolled bureaucracy" (131-2). Weberian charisma suspends 'social actors' within this tension, between the 'demonic' potentials of 'enchanted' religious sentiments and the 'disenchanting' bureaucratic rationality that often reduces human beings to predictable cogs of social machinery. The rhetorical emergence of 'pure' charisma, then, is often contrasted as decidedly antithetical to the purposes and functions of later 'routinized' forms which make charisma rational, orderly and structured. The irrational character of early charisma has indeed been one of the most puzzling aspects of Weber's theory of bureaucracy, and will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

While it is certainly true that Weber devotes more space to the variational routinizations of charisma, the more 'pure' forms of charisma during its emergent "Genesis stage" would seem to serve very different rhetorical functions than does its 'routinized' forms during later stages of bureaucratic stabilization and rational organization.[36] In earlier stages of Genesis Charisma, we find that "the nature of the charismatic and of its relation to the process of institution building implies a reorientation of the major questions about the nature of the social order," Eisenstadt observes, "and of the quest for participation in such an order" (xli). Eisenstadt finds that what begins as a quest for rejuvenating the active individual participation in the institutionalized spheres "of cosmic, cultural or social order" will inevitably degenerate into "the differential distribution in a society of the major charismatic symbols and centers and of differential access to them," which in turn yields "the possibility that 'anti-systems' may develop within the system" (xxxii-xlv). It is the quest for participation which is central to Weber's analysis of charismatic change and transformation within social systems, notes Eisenstadt, whereas in the later factional routinizations of charisma, "the ruler interprets these desires or hopes as disbelief and demands unconditional acceptance" (xliii). Weber's acknowledgement that religious offices and doctrinal standardization evolve over time to accommodate new needs and expanding memberships becomes a telling feature of bureaucracy, says Turner:

> It is in reality the 'peculiarity' of the social bearers rather than the original charismatic conception of ideas which is significant during 'the formative and decisive' epoch of a social movement. The social carriers of religious beliefs are crucial because they set a decisive mark on religious movements which becomes a normative standard for all later developments… It is for these reasons that origins become a forum of ideological conflict. Comparisons between contemporary practice and tradition can lead either to the legitimation of the cultural status quo or to reformation in terms of pristine beliefs. Such a standard is clearly not static, but itself a process of evaluation, since the origins of a tradition are themselves matters of dispute and interpretation… intellectuals, patrons and clients struggle for the

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> control of mental production… [Thus, subsequent] intellectual change may be conceptualized in terms of a struggle of discourses... (1993: 58, 64-5, 77)

Swatos agrees that later stages of successfully routinized charisma will become "a completely rational activity" of organizational self-preservation that "would maintain the status quo rather than overthrow it" (137). If Genesis Charisma is more 'pure' in its concern for some self-realizing quest for participative identity and the internalization of new symbolic constructions, then later forms of Routinized Charisma will increasingly require submission to some emergent dogma of group orthodoxy and the unreflective imitation of their bureaucratic decrees. To put it somewhat differently, pure charisma seems concerned with individual self-realization whereas routinized charisma becomes occupied with group subordination.

Of particular rhetorical significance, therefore, is the tacit tension between the active participation and revolutionized memberships of Genesis Charisma and the passive submission to some form of organizational orthodoxy or group leadership that is found in Routinized Charisma. The re-orientation of individuals within pure charisma, Weber's model demonstrates, ultimately begets the stratified imperialism of new group hierarchies as charisma becomes routinized, standardized and homogenized. Successfully routinized charisma ironically sows the seeds of its own undoing as the polysemic participation of individuals is stifled by subordination to a new organizational hierarchy and bureaucractic orthodoxy. Thus, implies Weber, the revolutionizing charismatic visionary must become -or be superseded by- an organizational legislator for the emergent charismatic group, or a group of virtuosi imparting guidelines that will inevitably yield bureaucratic hierarchy and all the disenchanting alienation that eventually entails (Casanova, 1984). "The institutionalization of charisma as a response to the problems of continuity, recruitment and organization," writes Turner, "brings about a subtle but inevitable

routinization of charisma" (61). Weberian charisma is inherently transient and temporary but, as the charismatic vision successfully evolves into an organizational mission that might endure, charismatic leadership establishes or is supplanted by a bureaucratic orthodoxy and hierarchy... which itself may in turn one day be challenged by some other charismatic figure.

This rather lengthy contextualization of Max Weber and his sociological theory of power, undertaken to tease out the often nebulous dynamics in the rhetorical articulation of charismatic memberships, suggests three tentative paradoxes which will have far-reaching implications for this study. First, while Weber's sociology can be understood as a celebration of bureaucratic rationality having produced more egalitarian and reliable systems for the realization of public goals, Weber also intuited along with Nietzsche and Marx that this advantage over past epochs nevertheless contained its own dark potentials. Although secularization had liberated human beings from the magical world of ancient superstitions, writes Turner, "the very same processes of rationalization threaten to subordinate imagination and inspiration to the demands of standardized routines and technical procedures; they threaten to produce a new characterology of soulless, machine-like robots" (17). Many scholars find Marx and Weber converge in their belief that the alienating commodification of human relationships is increasingly refined through the discipline, surveillance and control made possible by bureaucracy (Turner, 30). Another paradox in Weber addresses not only the irrationality of rationality, but also the rationalization of the irrational charismatic impulses within organizational routinization. The blurred distinction between 'pure charisma' and 'routinized charisma' so often lamented by neo-Weberian scholars has had a chilling effect on the study of both leadership and charisma, namely a privileging of leaders and the marginalization of memberships who actively anoint the charismatic as leader.

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As we shall soon see, it seems scholars inherited both Marx and Nietzsche's distasteful view of 'followers' as a passive herd of sheep or mindless drones. Weber, in contrast, posits charismatic memberships and their subjective beliefs as an important dynamic in the social legitimation of power. Turner finds that Weber's typolology posits "different types of men or character" in exploring the "historical development of the specialist" (37). In the next chapter, I will argue that Weber's typology of power actually rearticulates mythic archetypes of leadership, expanding contentions that Weber's secularization process involves significantly "more than a change in vocabulary and imagery through which the charisma of the leader is described and understood" (Bensman and Givant, 1986: 42). For our purposes here, it is enough to observe that Weber is less interested in what charisma 'really' is than in how it is used to forge revolutionary change and new forms of legitimacy. From a rhetorical standpoint, "are they or aren't they?" is a far less interesting question than "how and for what purposes?"

The oft overlooked distinction between 'pure charisma' and 'routinized charisma' leads to a third paradox, and that is how charisma is ironically invoked to legitimate both radicals and rulers. Here we must acknowledge Weber's process of bureaucratic routinization as Alan Dawe has expressed this paradox, "the transformation of human agency into human bondage" (Turner, 179). Richard Bell (1986) correctly concludes that charismatic authority is janus-faced, "employed on the one hand by ruling elites to universalize, and thus render obscure, their power and its exercise" (70), while the genesis of 'pure charisma' on the other hand "must by its very nature be revolutionary or, at the very least, potentially subversive" and "constitute a threat to the state or any pre-existing legal structure, no matter how sublime, gentle, or pacific the doctrine taught by the master may be" (59). Yet Bell rightfully contrasts the reformist political

hero, who uses the nostalgic "charisma of rhetoric" to secure or maintain power, with the

dissenting thrust of "revolutionary delegitimization" inherent in the 'pure charisma' of divinely

gifted social revolutionaries. Although "genesis charisma" begins with an inspiring articulation

of dissent against a status quo, characterized by a figure who articulates a radical revaluation of

convention and tradition quite reminiscent of Nietzsche's *ubermensch*, "routinized charisma"

will instead increasingly become engulfed in calculated practices that manufacture consent for

the status quo and foster submission to established power relationships. Thus, in an ironic twist

so common to Weberian sociology, that which was once synonymous with revolutionary change

becomes transformed into the very essence of status quo stability and legitimacy.

What we are left with, then, are some important clues regarding the rhetorical features of

'pure charisma' and 'routinized charisma' that may prove helpful in unlocking the rhetorical

constructions of identity for charismatic memberships during the 'Genesis Stage' of charismatic

emergence. In his secular appropriation of the term charisma, Weber is clearly interested in how

charismatic leaders become a "point of articulation" for diverse charismatic memberships and

individual subjectivities (Voeglin, 2001). Weber is most tantalizing in suggesting that it is

charismatic memberships who anoint their leader as a symbolic articulation or representation of

their enchanted beliefs and mythic expectations. By emphasizing active audience subjectivities

in this social dynamic of legitimation, Weber perhaps implicitly suggests that the alchemy of

charismatic, traditional and rational-legal elements within actual leaders in large part explains

their ability (or inability) to adapt to changing demands and social circumstances. Because

leaders display a complex and varied mixtures of 'ideal types', Weber's theory of bureaucratic

routinization posits distinct yet evolving rhetorical functions of charismatic leadership as the

revolutionary "vision" becomes formalized and standardized into an enduring organizational

"mission." As individual self-realization becomes increasingly mediated by needs for

organizational self-perpetuation, the purpose and function of charismatic rhetoric necessarily and

subtly changes to meet these evolving demands. Weber's most brilliant insight may be that this

subtle evolution of charisma is most evident only when conceptualized in terms of abstracted

extremes. Yet Weber's pessimism in the 'iron cage' of bureaucratic routinization, says Turner,

also seems attentive to "a Nietzschean critique of modern rational, industrial culture which

accepted the idea that this form of modernization would produce a standardization of social and

cultural reality" (10). Weber suggests that genuine charisma itself may become a form of

dominant power, conceptually routinized and rationalized as modern civilizations become

increasingly secular, rational and bureaucratic.

> Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis
> of knowledge. This is the feature of it which is specifically rational. This consists
> on the one hand in technical knowledge which, by itself, is sufficient to ensure it a
> position of extraordinary power. But in addition… holders of power… increase their
> power… by the knowledge growing out of experience… It is a product of the
> striving for power. (1947, p. 339)

Weber pessimistically believed that technocratic specialists and a 'dictatorship of the

bureaucrats' consisting of 'specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart,' would rationalize

the very notion of charisma itself into technical skills and bureaucratic effectiveness to maximize

their will to power. That is, even the irrational would come under rational calculation and

control in the service of bureaucratic power-maintenance. Weber's pessimistic assessment of the

modern potential for charisma, as is often noted, has been prophetically accurate.

Since Weber's pessimism implies that the inevitable rationalization of human existence

by bureaucratic systems might one day make charismatic sentiment a thing of the past, it comes

as no surprise that many contemporary writers have boldly declared genuine charisma as dead to

modern society as God for Nietzsche. Glassman & Swatos (1996) find in modern society a

distastefully rampant simulation of transcendent experiences and mass-mediated sentiments as

"leaders lacking genuine charisma" now use "mass media to manufacture pseudocharisma in its

place" (6). Swatos offers an insightful distinction which intuits decidedly rhetorical dynamics:

> The pseudocharismatic leader gives a sense of crossing the threshold from everyday
> life to something beyond-though-unclear. There is the rhetoric of new interpretations
> of social relations and new interaction patterns... All of this, of course, is
> manufactured and unreal, lacking even the possibilities of transcendence that are part
> of enchanted religion. The quest for transcendence is channeled, controlled, and
> subjected to processes of reason in a structured game-like setting that vents affect
> while changing nothing. The "charismatic" politician manufactured in this way
> makes as little contribution to far-reaching social change as an electrified rock star,
> NFL football hero, or celluloid space cadet. All are managed efforts to keep things
> as they are... (1996; 138, emphasis mine)

Particularly important for our purposes is the revolutionary self-transformation of memberships

through transcendence which is being used as a criterion for distinguishing 'genuine' or 'pure'

genesis charisma, hereafter referred to as *crypto-charisma*: the intensely personal, irrational and

radical or self-revolutionary rhetorical qualities that Weber uses to characterize the divine or

magical beliefs which are encrypted in the enchanted expectations of charismatic memberships.

Pseudocharisma instead denotes the later stages of routinization when the revolutionizing

charismatic vision degenerates into a deliberate manipulation of audiences into submissive

subordinates for some collectivizing mission, the calculated manufacture of a cult of personality

or hero-worship that would maintain the status quo power structure of rulers through strategies

of image management (Bell, 1996). Whereas crypto-charisma is the self-revolutionizing,

irrational and intensely personal anointment of leaders by voluntary charismatic memberships

defiant of a status quo, pseudocharisma is the rationally calculated power-maintenance of status

quo leadership imposed through impersonal strategies for manipulating perception. Whereas "Charismatics proclaim a message," Michael Hill has observed, their successive organizational "virtuosi proclaim a method."[37] This distinction between crypto-charisma and pseudocharisma is intended to highlight Weber's own delineations between the visionary prophet who advances a message of 'spiritual' self-realization, and the successive organizational virtuosi of some core 'disciples' who transform the vision into a standardized, unified and stable organizational mission that might endure. Bensman & Givant explain pseudocharisma as "the employment of the means, the imagery, the appearance of charismatic leadership as a rational device by which rationally calculating leadership groups attempt to achieve or maintain power" (1996; 55).

The crucial problem for Weber, however, is that scientific disenchantment has made modern society too rational for the magical enchantment necessary for crypto-charisma, since bureaucratic systems prefer instead to rely upon technocratic experts and specialists. There are subtle undertones that the persuasive message of crypto-charisma has been gradually dissolved into the propaganda techniques of rational calculation and pseudocharisma. Weber had traced this trend of bureaucratization back to the apostle Paul, boldly proclaiming him the exemplar of routinization and the marketing virtuosi for both Christianity and charisma: "Paul learned the technique of propaganda and of establishing an attractive community from the Pharisees" (1952: 387). Loewenstein (1966) finds contemporary parallels when "the organs of propaganda are controlled by the supposed holder of charisma and his subservient following, the mass media can produce a reinforcement and deepening of an originally spurious but artificially promoted charisma" which is not the product of some revolutionary or radical vision embraced by diverse memberships but is instead "attributed to the ruler." The 'iron cage' of bureaucratic rationality

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implies that Weber suspected civilized modernity is perhaps becoming too secular, rational and

leader-centric for crypto-charisma as historically conceived. Dilip Gaonkar explains Weber as a

critic of rationality and modernity who mourned the displacement of meaning by method, ends

by means:

> According to Weber, the rationality that sustains and defines modernity is a purposive or means/ends rationality. Being value-neutral, purposive rationality is incapable of conferring meaning on the world it ushers into existence. At the same time, it works steadily to discredit and dissolve the traditional religious worldviews that, despite their errancy, give meaning and unity to life… Thus, in Weber's account, the triumph of reason culminates not in the establishment of a rational utopia imagined by the Enlightenment philosophers but in the forging of an "iron cage" of economic compulsion and bureaucratic control… In the Weberian vision, societal modernization fragments cultural meaning and unity… [and yields] the existential experience of alienation and despair associated with living in a disenchanted world of deadening and meaningless routine. This is the Sisyphean world of repetition devoid of a subjectively meaningful telos. ("On Alternative Modernities")

Bryan Turner agrees that Weber is best understood as a critic of capitalistic modernity whose

outlook conveys the fatalistic pessimism of Marx and Nietzsche. "Rationalism is manifest in the

progressive dominance of bureaucratic models of social organization, the dominance of

bureaucratic personnel, and the surveillance of the individual by the state," Turner elaborates.

"For Weber, rationalism ends in irrationalism," Turner continues, as "the dominance of the

expert over traditional authorities" begets a managerial rationality that "results in 'the iron cage'

whereby individuality is swamped by individuation" alongside "the submergence of

individuality within the administered society." Turner concludes the "differentiation of society

brought about by bureaucratically administered reality means that any quest for purpose in

universal human interests is utopian whistling in the dark" (177-9). These perceived

Machiavellian proclivities of today's bureaucrats-who-would-be-leaders bolsters the contention

of Bensman & Givant that our media-saturated consumer society now merely manufactures its own self-interested *pseudocharisma,* which seems to further "demonstrate that the concept of charismatic leadership as developed by Weber is of little use to the analysis of modern political and social movements" since "impersonality, formal rationality, and bureaucracy are central to the very operation of contemporary society" (1996: 53).

Quite paradoxically, however, Max Weber himself had also noted these very same alienating conditions as conducive to the rise of 'genuine' charisma, which reacts against "the whole process of rationalization and demystification" (Eisenstadt, 1968: xviii). If successful Weberian charisma inevitably undergoes routinization and the subsequent manufacture of consent for a new status quo, then this calculated pseudocharisma may also eventually be challenged by some new form of radical crypto-charisma. That is, if bureaucratic rationality seeks to rationalize the irrational, yet this rationality itself deteriorates into irrationality, then might there not be a dim rhetorical potential for the emergence of new forms of crypto-charisma? Eric Voeglin (2001) concludes that Weber's analytic use of "ideal types" may have hit upon a profound truth regarding the nature and function of social leadership.

> With advancing articulation of society [there] develops a peculiar composite representative, along with a symbolism expressing its internal hierarchical structure… Articulation, thus, is the condition of representation. In order to come into existence, a society must articulate itself by producing a representative that will act for it… Behind the symbol 'articulation' there hides nothing less than the historical process in which political societies, the nations, the empires, rise and fall, as well as the evolutions and revolutions between the two terminal points. (39-41)

Weberian charisma, therefore, may be a recurring symbolic articulation of a distinct power dynamic for challenging status quo social relationships. Crypto-charisma might still be possible in mediated postmodernity, it may turn out, so long as some enchanted expectations remain

encrypted within charisma *as a rhetorical reality* in public discourse which is used to critically

evaluate leaders like some mythic yardstick. Crypto-charisma may reflect a process of Thomas

Cordas (1999) calls "rhetorical involution": the process by which an audience rewards the

rhetorical skill with which a speaker elaborates, refines and systematizes the themes and

metaphors that constitute a discursive system. Turner further suggests that "it seems important,

as with all political analysis, to make a distinction between internal politics (the international

conflict of groups within the nation state) and external politics (the international conflict of states

within a global setting" (192). This notion of broadening Weberian charisma to examine the

contemporary quagmires of globalization is particularly intriguing since, as Turner suggests, the

"emergence of a world system and a global culture therefore have very profound implications for

religious change, not necessarily leading to secularization but on the contrary to the

fundamentalization of world systems" (105). The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in

September of 2001 by Muslim extremists certainly drive home the point that Western secular

rationality and bureaucratic modernity are still being fiercely resisted in many parts of the world.

 Heralding the death of charisma and religious sentiments has obviously been premature, while

Weberian charisma may indeed explain this 'revenge of the sacred' within the Global Village of

mediated cultures. Beetham (1974) agrees that Weber's political writings "were concerned with

power and the striving for power in particular societies" (Turner, 1993: 191), so it seems

appropriate to now explore charisma as a rhetorical tool able to serve oddly antithetical purposes

across cultures: the delegitimation of status quo power politics or the cultural propaganda of

power-maintenance. Bell (1996) concurs that "a distinction has to be made between

revolutionary delegitimization and nonrevolutionary delegitimization, between that anti-

institutionalist authority figure who challenges the established power arrangements or seeks to overthrow them and the institutionalist who seeks only to acquire them" (69). It is now more important than ever to carefully examine the power and allure of politically interested pseudo-religious sentiments by turning a critical eye toward appropriations of Weberian charisma. In doing so, we need to more closely examine Weber's impact upon the secular science of bureaucratic leadership.

THE McDONALDIZATION OF PSEUDOCHARISMA

Weber's theory has been ironically proven through its misappropriations, since much of what passes for charisma today are often rational routinizations of his concept. Whereas Weber posits charisma as self-revolutionizing, irrational and radically antithetical to status quo traditions or procedure, many modern writers obsess over charisma as power-maintenance through the strategic manufacture of organizational conformity. The central problem, observe Bensman and Givant, is that "every study of modern charisma but two suggests the rational planning and calculation of the appearance of charisma" (1996; 49). Indeed, the tendency to confuse 'pure' crypto-charisma with later forms of 'routinized' pseudocharisma is epidemic. Through the conceptual rationalization and routinization of charisma, bureaucratic appropriationists have long sought to replicate the "divine gift" of unquestioned devotion for managers-who-would-be-leaders, thus yielding countless attempts to bottle the genie of Weberian charisma within a calculated, efficient and predictable magic formula that can produce obedient and submissive subordinates. Entire sections of bookstores overflow with prescriptive tomes promising the secrets of charisma and effective strategies for managers to manufacture the "divine gift." As Sears CEO Arthur Martinez tells *Fortune* (133: 15, January 1996):

> Charisma matters more than it used to; when you had command-and-control environments, everyone knew his role and executed his boss' program. Today, if you're able to galvanize people into action, all the thinking, the analysis, the strategic prioritizing doesn't matter at all. (68)

The most common complaint by neo-Weberian scholars, however, is that too many writers mistakenly invoke the concept of charisma when they are in fact examining routinized or pseudocharismatic leadership practices.[38]

Also largely unheeded is Weber's views on science as vocation which, Turner writes, "saw the rise of scientific bureaucracy under the ultimate management of the modern state as an illustration of the 'quasi-proletarianization' of the intellectual," who is increasingly reduced to mere technical expertise for the corporate-bureaucratic state as a "specialist" separated from the products and consequences of their own mental labor (100). As we shall see, Weber's concerns were prophetic of things to come in the leadership sciences. Turner also reminds us that "Weber's sociology is shot-through with pessimism and with a sense of the precariousness of the scientific outlook," while charisma instead implies his intuition that "mysticism can play a radical, oppositional role" (82-3). The radical, oppositional and anti-establishmentarian tenor of charisma, however, would gradually fade as social scientists became more concerned with making inspirational leaders out of bureaucratic managers. Yet Weber recognized this rationalizing tendency of modern science as purely technical and thus limited, since science could perfect methodological means without considering what ends of action ought to be pursued. Albert Einstein's anguish over the military applications of his theories provides poignant illustration. Despite repeated cautions and criticisms over the years regarding conceptual misappropriations of Weberian charisma, even a cursory review of the literature on charismatic leadership reveals glaring inconsistencies and misuse. In what follows, I will trace

the concept of charisma as it has been developed in the leadership literature since Max Weber in light of the distinction between crypto-charisma and simulated pseudocharisma.

Few recall Weber as a watershed figure who triggered a firestorm of debate over his conceptual secularization of charisma. While many eagerly welcomed Weber's studies as justification for expanded empirical applications of charisma, others would launch passionate accusations of conceptual violence. An early critic of Weber was Carl Friedrich (1961), who argues that a central feature of the concept was the belief of followers that their leader receives his gifts from divine sources. Weber's error, which Friedrich criticized was being compounded by overly enthusiastic political science researchers, was to confuse differentiation between charisma and other forms of personal or inspirational leadership. Charismatic leadership from divine sources, he insists, is based upon "a transcendent call by a divine being, believed in by both the person called and those with whom he has to deal in exercising his calling." Charisma necessarily connotes transcendent, supernatural or divine powers that are absent in inspirational and political leadership, grouses Friedrich, despite the longstanding efforts of politicos to cloak themselves in some aura of divine sanction. Not every leader who inspires confidence or commands personal influence, the argument goes, automatically qualifies as extraordinarily gifted by God.

Friedrich paves the way for those rejecting application of the term charisma to any phenomenon other than a religiously-charged one, and first used the term "pseudocharisma" to make this distinction. Etzioni (1961) largely agreed, refuting the applicability of Weberian charisma to organizational settings under the rationale that the influence wielded by managers over their subordinates could hardly be considered anything other than authoritarian power.

Wolfgang Mommsen (1965), arguing that Weberian charisma itself is inherently religious, finds

it "a form of spiritual energy oriented to other-worldly ideals which are in more or less sharp

contrast to the facts of daily life" (33). Karl Loewenstein (1966) concisely summarizes the

position of these critics by observing that "fundamentally… the locus of charisma is the world of

religion" and rarely exists in the secularized modern era (86). Loewenstein pulls no punches

when he criticizes the secular appropriations of Weberian charisma as little more than disguised

propaganda techniques for corporate power-brokers and political managers-who-would-be-

leaders. Dow (1969) would consequently insist that charisma, by its very nature and etymology,

is inexplicable in empirical terms. While critics condemning the separation of Weberian

charisma from its religious etymology and divine connotations have long raised disturbing

issues, they nonetheless remain largely overlooked as a vocal minority.

Although Weber recognized significant differences between the institutional spheres of

religion, politics and the military, most commentators point out that Weber was also careful not

to divorce them. Talcott Parsons (1949), an early translator of Weber's works, would proclaim

that charisma is not metaphysical but a strictly observable social phenomenon. Weber was

indeed most interested in the routinized mutations of charisma, but the tendency to blur the

dynamic processes of crypto-charisma and pseudocharisma into a monolithic concept would

appear as soon as translations of his works found eager scholarly audiences. Whether they know

it or not, most writers who appropriate Weberian charisma have inherited the conceptual

murkiness of an early acolyte, Edward Shils. Criticizing Weber's notion of charisma as too

empirically imprecise, Shils set out to establish wider applications for Weber's theory. Whereas

Weber placed great emphasis not on the possession of 'divine gifts of grace' itself but the belief

of followers in such, Shils would instead seek to define charisma in terms of its institutional

effects as "the attractive 'power' of the center that enables it to keep the societal periphery in

order" (Swatos, 1996: 135). For Shils (1975), "charisma not only disrupts social order; it also

maintains or conserves it," while insisting that "the charismatic propensity is a function of the

need for order" (257, 261). In this sense, as Eisenstadt (1968) correctly observes, charisma is

viewed as an institution building process. Shils (1965) contends that the exemplary charismatic

hero personifies and thus defines a society's central value system:

> Whether it be God's law or natural law or scientific law or positive law or society as
> a whole, or even a particular corporate body or institution like an army, whatever
> embodies, expresses or symbolizes the essence of an ordered cosmos or any
> significant sector thereof awakens the disposition of awe and reverence, the
> charismatic disposition. (203)

This emphasis upon institution building, however, would further muddle distinction between

'pure' crypto-charisma and 'routinized' forms of institutionalized pseudocharisma. Dow (1969)

grouses that "Shils' attempt to attribute charismatic elements to a wide range of ordinary secular

roles, institutions, and strata of persons" creates a context in which "charisma ceases to have any

independent descriptive or analytic value" (317). Although Shils has been roundly criticized for

blurring the boundaries between power and authority, portraying charismatic legitimacy as

indistinct from other forms of social legitimacy or nostalgic reform (Bell, 1996), he is indeed

provocative in answering religious critics by emphasizing charismatic figures as symbolic

synecdoche for some contextualizing mythic cosmos. While this move will prove important

when future chapters consider the myth of charisma, for our purposes here it is suffice to say that

Shils finds charisma everywhere throughout social structures but unfortunately empties

Weberian charisma of its radically revolutionary nuances and anti-establishment character.

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Nevertheless, the insistence by Shils and Parsons that charisma needed greater empirical rigor and institutional application fell on receptive scholarly ears. The social science of leadership studies became intensely interested in replicating charismatic devotion for bureaucratic managers. Translation commentary by Gerth and Mills (1946) emphasized that there is no charisma without a leader believed to be endowed with supernatural qualities or extraordinary abilities, thus perpetuating what would become a subtly leader-centric view of charismatic leadership:

> Charisma… is used by Weber to characterize self-appointed leaders who are followed by those in distress and who need to follow the leader… Miracles and revelations, heroic feats of valor and baffling success are characteristic marks of their stature. Failure is there ruin… Charisma is opposed to all institutional routines, those of tradition and those subject to rational management. (as quoted in Nur, 1998: 21)

Most notable here is how charismatic memberships are marginalized by emphasizing the self-appointed leader and oddly absent from any potential explanation for their heroic yet baffling success. This troublesome trend that would continue even as Weber's antithetical contrast between charisma and rational management became increasingly disregarded. Although largely ignored, Friedrich (1961) had noted these conceptual missteps when he insisted that Weber had designated charisma as "the kind of leadership, epitomized by men like Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, and the like, who possessed a transcendent 'call', *a belief shared by their followers*, in a divine being, who had called them to their founding enterprise" (Nur, 1998; 20, emphasis mine). Friedrich's view sharply contrasts with that of Osborg (1972), who crassly proposed to completely divest charisma of its religious overtones while applying it to secular, profit-seeking organizations. Osborg bemoaned the loss of unquestioning devotion and loyalty in corporate organizations, and invoked charisma as a useful concept for recovering compliant subordinates.

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The prolific organizational work of researchers following House (1977) would further demystify

religious connotations by reducing measurements of charisma to leader traits, behavioral

manifestations and purported effects produced in followers. House would contend that

charismatic leadership should be empirically understood in terms of its measurable effects upon

followers, which included measurement items like: unquestioned acceptance of the leader,

willing obedience, emotional involvement and commitment to an organizational mission. As

they make clear, House and Baetz (1979) promote the charismatic relationship as one of

dominance, bolstered by a strong conviction in the moral righteousness in their beliefs. House,

Spangler and Woycke (1991) would continue to propagate charisma as a "relationship or bond

between a leader and subordinates" based upon extraordinarily "inspirational powers," but now

without any hint of Weber's divine or supernatural connotations.

While most other theorists and researchers were less obvious and dutifully paid lip-

service to charisma's pseudo-religious and anti-establishment qualities, the tendency to perceive

charisma as effective leader-centric dominance over compliant subordinates would become a

tacit assumption even when it was not overtly stated as a methodological goal. The spiritual

dimension of charisma was soon eclipsed by an obsession for finding practical models that could

strategically reproduce such "charismatic" effects for bureaucratic managers and authoritarian

purposes. The central difficulty in appropriating Webetrian charisma, however, revolved around

competing paradigms for leadership studies that promoted different and often contradictory

perspectives on the nature and function of leadership.[39] The oldest are the "Great Man theories"

giving rise to the Traits Approach, which suggested that exceptional leaders are either born with

personality characteristics or learn specific behavioral attributes that predispose them to

positions of influence. Primarily conducted during the early part of the century and crystallized

by Thomas Carlyle in his 1841 volume *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*,

the Traits Approach "continues to set the grounds for popular debate" and enjoyed "a revival

during the 1980s" (Hiefetz, 1994: 16). Extraordinary leaders also became a particular

fascination for Freudian psychoanalytic studies like those of Abraham Zalenik, chair in

leadership at the Harvard business school, whose "description of leader characteristics has much

in common with Weber's description of charismatic authority" (Hackman & Johnson, 1991:

182). More common to later psychoanalytic perspectives, however, is the tendency to use

Freudian theories of projection to declare charisma a phenomenon of delusional group fantasies

or mass psychosis.[40] Meindl (1990) finds charisma a wistful "Romance of Leadership,"

fantasized by some desperate constituency willing to hang their messianic hopes on some

extraordinary figure during times of crisis. In reaction to the Great Man theory of history, social

theorists like Herbert Spenser (1884) would soon advance a Situational Approach, which

"suggested that the times produce the person and not the other way around" (Hiefetz, 1994: 16).

Because they were interested in the vortex of powerful political, historical and social forces

causing social change, these situationalists emphasized the socio-cultural contexts that can call

forth or even frustrate "an assortment of men with various talents and leadership styles" (Hiefetz,

1994; 16). The charismatic "Great Man of History" was thus the result of socio-cultural factors.

Unsurprisingly, the Traits Approach and the Situationalist view were soon synthesized by

theorists in the 1950s under the rubric of Contingency Theory. This perspective spawned

countless synthetic approaches, but the two most relevant to charisma would be the behavioral

and transactional views. Hackman & Johnson (1991) explain that "Behavioralists try to quantify

the differences between charismatic and noncharismatic leaders" but, unlike political scientists who largely limit charisma to radically innovative social leaders, behavioral scientists expanded charisma to include the successful organizational leadership of bureaucratic managers and corporate CEOs (184). Given the arguments of theorists like Parsons, Shils, Osborg and House, this theoretical shift was undertaken without even a hint of ironic contradiction. Yet these contradictions underlying charisma would become centrally important when James McGregor Burns (1978) differentiated Transactional from Transformational leadership. Whereas transactional leaders engage their followers in an exchange relationship, distributing material or symbolic rewards and punishments in return for work and loyalty, the transformational leader instead facilitates a mutual relationship of stimulation and moral elevation that can transform the beliefs and goals of followers. Although Burns offered Transformational Leadership to characterize different types of political leaders whose transforming qualities emanate from transcendent beliefs and moral values, Bass (1985, 1990) would borrow, elaborate and then generalize the concept to all kinds of organizational settings. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) point out the obvious in noting the concept of charisma is indistinguishable from Burns' and Bass' ideas of transformational leadership.

Burns, Bass and the researchers that followed en masse thus encountered some familiar criticisms regarding their extension and popularization of Transformational Leadership. Kotter (1990) is uncomfortable with their conceptual reliance on charisma, which he perhaps correctly suspects would destroy an organization, since motivation (leadership) and implementation (management) are functions which must necessarily co-exist in actual practice. Yet because Bass conceptualizes charisma as a strictly behavioral phenomenon, purging the superhuman

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dimension so intregal to Weber's theory, Kotter rightly objects that transactional leadership

primarily refers to the mere technical competencies and expertise of managers which further

muddles distinctions in functions of leadership and management. Nur (1998) also observes that

Transformational Leadership now encompasses the concept of charismatic leadership, oddly

making the more ancient latter a subset of the former. On the other side of the academic aisle,

however, political scientists like Willner (1984) and neoWeberian sociologists like Glassman &

Swatos (1996) would champion such exclusive characterizations of charisma that few modern

leaders -if any- could qualify as charismatic. Debate over charisma continues to fuel the heated

schism between empiricists and theologians over secular applications of the concept,[41] which

many argue has exacerbated habitually sloppy usage of the term and subsequently stripped

charisma of any conceptual value. [42] Charisma is at once everywhere and nowhere and, although

virtually all studies hearken to the works of Weber, little agreement can be found beyond its

most basic distinguishing features.

Since the early 1990s, numerous attempts have been made to more fully integrate

charisma and leadership research into an overarching theory… with predictable results. Aside

from the continued influence of Bass' Transformational Leadership, theories that include

charismatic leadership have been advanced by Conger (1988) and House & Shamir (1993) while

Sashkin (1988) advances "Visionary Leadership" and Nadler & Tushman (1989) offer "Magic

Leadership." House and Podsakoff (1994) also espouse "outstanding" leadership while Bryman

(1992) evangelizes his "New Leadership." While all agree that charisma is a pivotal concept

around which all leadership theories revolve, and similarly concentrate on behavioral aspects and

effects that can arise from shared beliefs and motivation, none of these theorists address where

such behaviors come from nor do they ask themselves what motivates those who anoint some charismatic leader. [43] Divorced from its divine connotations, charisma becomes little more than charm, popularity or personal appeal that has proven effective.

Despite oceans of ink spilt on the subject over the centuries, charisma today is still a lot like pornograpy: writers can't seem to agree on what "it" is, yet seem sure they know it when they see it. Despite profound contradictions and conflicts over conceptualizing the "divine gift," recent years have evidenced an explosion of popular interest in charisma. Models for charismatic CEO leadership permeate the business literature, professing strategies to advance egalitarian, nonhierarchical, family-like atmospheres within companies.[44] Management researchers are similarly obsessed with charismatic techniques for today's "new leader," emphasizing methods for motivational and communicative expertise that can perpetuate a unifying vision and shared mission within organizations.[45] Some writers, however, criticize the inconsistencies and flaws inherent in models for "charismatic management" within the contexts of insular corporate cultures and their highly centralized, authoritarian decision-making structures.[46] Charismatic leadership, in both theory and practice, is often presented as little more than reductive techniques intended to put a smiley-face on the top-down bureaucratic control of upper-level management. Yusuf Ahmed Nur (1998) boldly declares charisma "the gift that never was," since "accounts of leadership in business settings usually connote qualities that are quite similar, if not identical, to the ones hypothesized for charisma." Because of habitually sloppy conceptual oversights, charisma is too often (re)presented as formulaic strategies and techniques for bureaucratic managers to "take audacious action, win power, and use it."[47] It may therefore be unsurprising that studies examining the everyday enactment of Transformational

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Leadership by bureaucratic managers most often reveals little more than "autocratic, coercive behavior dressed in charismatic clothes" (Culbert & McDonough, 1980). Miller (1996) insightfully reminds us, however, that the aspiring leader within power-seeking managers is always evaluated by a "sure-shot automatic crap detector" that judges leaders by the gap between enacted and stated beliefs (5). Still common today are claims by leadership scholars and writers that fundamental differences between leaders and managers are too often ignored in practice if not theory (Rost, 1993). The result has been little practical distinction between leadership and management. The most profound lesson of Weberian charisma is that leaders are personally anointed, whereas managers are hierarchically appointed if not imposed by some group or organization. The very notion of charismatic management, in fact, only further perpetuates a chronic and profoundly troubling indistinction in volitional leadership and imposed headship.[48]

Misappropriations of Weberian charisma therefore point to deeper problems haunting the study of leadership. In an encyclopedic overview of leadership study, Bernard M. Bass (1981) confirms that "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (6-7). Citing a widespread failure of scholarship to holistically grasp the dynamics of leadership, a problem compounded by the dominance of empirical research which considers only those short-term aspects of leadership perceived as quantifiably researchable, Bass cryptically concludes that "suggestions continue to appear that leadership research- in addition to its narrowness- has been concentrating on the wrong things" (609). Academic scholarship has done little to clear the confusion, Hagopian (1974) observes, since "the price paid for increased rigor and sophistication in the several disciplines of political science, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and economics has been a division of

labor that has bordered on isolation and fragmentation" (xvii). It is therefore surprising that

many scholars tacitly agree with leadership guru Peter Drucker's (1996) bold assessment that

"the one and only personality trait the effective [leaders] I have encountered had in common was

something they did *not* have: they had little or no 'charisma' and little use for the term or what it

signifies" (xii). Yet Rustow (1970) voices the disagreement of others, examining the historical

and socio-political need for leadership to conclude that "a yearning for charisma represents that

need in its most intense form" (20). The prevalence of these profound difficulties and

contradictions leads Thayer (1988) to suspect "our highly scientized, rational, linear, cause-

effect world-view actually prevents us from seeing what we might otherwise be able to see, from

knowing what we really want to know about leadership" (p. 237).

SOMETHING MYTH-ING IN THE SCIENCE OF LEADERSHIP

"Charisma is a tricky thing. Jack Kennedy oozed it- but so did Hitler and Charles
Manson. Con artists, charlatans, and megalomaniacs can make it their instrument
as effectively as the best CEOs, entertainers, and Presidents. Used wisely, it's a
blessing; indulged, it can be a curse. Charismatic Visionaries lead people ahead-
and sometimes astray." [Patricia Sellers, "What exactly is charisma?" *Fortune*
v133, 15 January 1996: 68-72]

"Charisma is a key component to true leadership. Every organization has an
enormous, latent force waiting to be released. Management will keep it stifled,
true leadership will set it free… When you meet someone who practices charisma
you will feel inspired. You will also feel warm, and feel your life has been
touched by another. That is a feeling that is difficult to describe. The only word I
can think of is **MAGIC**." [David Taylor, "Rekindle the magic of team
leadership." *Computer Weekly*, 24 May 2001]

The nearly insurmountable definitional and methodological differences haunting

leadership studies may disguise shared assumptions lurking beneath seemingly varied schools of

thought. The very idea of 'Leadership' is, in fact, a recent historical development. Bass (1981)

points out in the encyclopedic *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership* that the largely Anglo-Saxon

tradition surrounding the origins of the word "leadership" appeared during the first half of the nineteenth century "in writings about political influence and control of British Parliament" (7). Rost (1991) finds these origins in "leden" (to show the way), although the meanings of leadership have sifted significantly. Rustow (1970) overviews the radical shift in seventeenth and eighteenth century translations of philosophical individualism into political models revolutionized by collectivist thought and democratic theory, finding that whereas "the natural-law philosophers had erected their systems on an anonymous individual," the "social thinkers of the nineteenth century based theirs on the equally anonymous masses" (2). Great Man theories following Plato's ideal philosopher-king would gradually become consumed by the situated dynamics of bureaucratic processes, while utopian social systems like communism or republicanism were purposefully intended to mediate the social impact of maverick individuals. To put it bluntly, bureaucratic management would slowly displace individual leadership.

Even as leaders became positional cogs within social machinery and subject to the impersonal methods for new systems of governance, so too would individuals become faceless masses, factions or constituencies. Rustow dryly remarks "this impersonal element became even more pronounced as economists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries proceeded to their calculations of marginal utility, fluctuations in the business cycle, and national input and output ratios" (2-3). Rustow finds that while "earlier sociologists were still concerned with broad theories of class and social evolution, their successors tended to multiply the detailed statistical correlations of a Durkheim or to refine the abstract definitions of a Weber and a Parsons" (3). These trends "had apparently succeeded in banishing the individual leader from the center of the stage" until the 1950s, notes Rustow, when "a half-century of revolution, economic crisis, and

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war had undermined traditional institutions, challenged accepted ideas, and dramatized the role of individual leaders" which then in turn sparked "a revived interest in Weber's notion of charisma" (4-5). This return of charisma, however, would not be without conceptual violence.

As charisma became increasingly operationalized as an empirical concept, there became little to distinguish charisma from other forms of personal or inspirational leadership. Because theories of leadership necessarily imply theories of motivation, it comes as little surprise that communication and persuasion skills have long been central to the task of building better leaders. What may be surprising, however, is the tenacity of chronically leader-centric beliefs and presumptions that taint how 'influence' is conceived and portrayed even within more seemingly egalitarian models. With few exceptions, organizational scholars have by and large viewed charismatic leadership in essentially positive terms and turned a blind eye to the darker potentials inherent in charisma (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). The interest of bureaucratic managers in charisma, however, rarely extends beyond strategies for image management and rhetorical dramatization that merely offer the veneer of charisma in hopes of inducing compliance.[49] Osburg (1972) goes so far as to crassly encourage would-be-charismatic leaders to engage in deliberate myth-making and carefully orchestrated behaviors, eerily blurring any practical distinction from propaganda techniques. Leadership, he says, has to be calculating in its presentation of symbols of grandeur, executive dramaturgy and calculated rituals and the forging of an ideological manuscript [or mission statement] instituted as a corporate creed to insure work force loyalty. Yet Friedrich (1961) dryly wonders of such pseudocharisma: How many would-be-charismatic CEOs would be willing to forego their 6 or 7 figure salary even one month for the sake of some "transcendent" mission or "divine call" that might better the lives of

fellow workers?[50] Questing to discover law-like generalizations, much scholarship instead

recycles mechanistic methods and formulaic typologies for controlling behavior and

manufacturing consent.[51] "Research studies that attempt to apply it to business settings tend to

purge it of its religious connotations, ending up with what amounts to another personality trait or

behavioral characteristic of business leaders," complains Nur, and "although virtually all studies

on charisma attribute the term to Weber and draw heavily on his work, their concept is anything

but Weberian" (19).

The tendency to conceive leadership as managerial methods of strategic influence and

manipulative control, some writers now suggest, is indicative of a faulty paradigm underlying

our tacit beliefs and presuppositions regarding leadership. Joseph Rost (1993), in his book

Leadership for the 21st Century, recognizes a shift from an "industrial" concept of leadership (a

leader-centered view) to an emergent paradigm he calls the "post-industrial" perspective.

Overviewing 450 books and journal articles between 1900 and 1979, Rost indicts scholars for

hazy definitions presenting 'leadership' as all things to all people and the unreflective pursuit of

theoretical fads. Rost's most biting criticism is that 'influence' or 'motivation' is functionally

synonymous with 'control' over subordinates, since managerial perspectives and an

unquestioned heroic viewpoint have largely resulted in self-perpetuating realities. The industrial

models dominating the 20th Century, growls Rost, have been "management oriented,

personalistic in focusing only on the leader, goal-achievement dominated, self-interested and

individualistic in outlook, male-oriented [and I would add Bass' observation, predominantly

Caucasian], utilitarian and materialistic in ethical perspective, rationalistic, technocratic, linear,

quantitative and scientific in language and methodology" (27). These characteristics are sharply

contrasted with the values that reflect emergent post-industrial sensibilities, writes Rost, which include "collaboration, common good, global concern, diversity and pluralism in structures and participation, client orientation, civic virtues, freedom of expression in all organization, critical dialogue, qualitative language and methodologies, substantive justice, and consensus-oriented policy-making process" (181). These post-industrial sensibilities unsurprisingly coincide with democratic values, too often marginalized within top-down authoritarian organizational structures. The harsh criticisms of Rost stem from a conviction that leadership is not something leaders do, but an interactive shared-power relationship or "collaborative endeavor" where many people actively participate in egalitarian leadership to promote change for the collective good. "Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers," Rost insists, "who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (1993: 102).

Unlike the traditional top-down philosophy and leader-centric models for managerial leadership, and strikingly similar to the distinction between management and leadership by writers like McGregor and Burns or Kotter, many writers call for a new paradigm characterized by collaboration and empowerment through the facilitation of power-sharing. Charles Mantz and Henry Sims (1995) go a step further when they consider the modern heroic leader to be a myth and propose a "post-heroic Superleader" who leads others to lead themselves. The authors capture the essence of Superleadership by invoking the aphorism, "Give a man a fish and he will be fed for a day; teach a man to fish and he will be fed a lifetime" (59). Similarly eschewing authoritarian command-and-control models, Manz and Sims define Superleadership as facilitating self-leadership, "the influence that followers exert over themselves to shape and control their own behavior" (67). Manz and Sims significantly reformulate their model in *The*

New Superleadership (Berrett-Koehler, 2001) to conclude that a leader is not the hero in today's flattened organizations, but a "hero-maker" who facilitates interdependent "superteams" (217). In shifting emphasis to a Superteam model, these authors purport to shatter the traditional, aggrandized "heroic" leader-centric myths and their inherent drawbacks: the "Strong Man" whose reliance on fear-based compliance smothers initiative; the "transactor" who promotes bargaining from shallow self-interest; and the "Visionary Hero" whose powerful personality inspires commitment but inadvertently discourages independent thinking (37). Echoing the sentiments of Rost, Manz and Sims similarly "propose a different form of leadership, one that empowers others" since the "industrial age with its hierarchical command-and-control form of organizing is past" (12). While charisma is neither overtly acknowledged nor conceptually considered, these works nevertheless offer thinly-veiled indictment of the leader-centric models derived from (and assumedly epitomized by) Weberian charisma.

These authors herald their models as embodying a new paradigm of empowerment for organizational memberships, yet this call for greater collaboration or cooperation through power-sharing and participative decision-making is by no means a new one. Offering an updated elaboration of his well-known treatises on *Servant Leadership* and *The Empowered Manager*, Block (1993) similarly rearticulates and re-packages service as the highest form of leadership. Warren Bennis (1997), too, has long raised questions regarding the evolution of leadership and the confounding wide-spread problem of leaders who seemingly cannot lead because they are unwilling to forego control, rules, procedure, compliance, secrecy, and perceiving people as liabilities [*Why Leaders Can't Lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy Continues* (Jossey-Bass, 1997)]. The simple fact of the matter is that most bureaucratic organizations, whether corporate

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or governmental, are simply too big to allow tedious and conflict-ridden participation to become part of daily routine. Max Weber unquestionably got that much right in his theory of bureaucracy, noting these same factional conflicts between material interests and competing constituencies as a sure-fire charisma-killer. Hence the command-and-control paradigm has proven exceptionally malleableable and resilient but, above all, efficient.

Despite differences in vocabulary, however, these "new" models all inadvertently brush up against the principled spirituality and empowered memberships of crypto-charisma. The wildly influential Steven Covey (1991) offers a paradigm of *Principle-Centered Leadership* admittedly shaped by his Christian worldview. Block's (1993) servant-leader stewardship similarly invokes Judeo-Christian themes and values, as does Manz & Sims' "fish for a lifetime" philosophy for Superteams. Manz went so far as to write a book exploring *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus* (Berrett-Koehler: San Francisco, 1998) after frequent comments from readers that his ideas resonated strongly with their religious beliefs. "The issue kept coming up," says Manz, who not surprisingly found within Jesus' teachings a model quite similar to his own superteams; "Over time, I concluded that there was a natural linkage between self-leadership, SuperLeadership and these spiritual ideas" (U Mass Amhurst press release, 4/8/98).

As we have seen, these very same themes resonate not only within the Pauline epistles and their more nontraditional portrayals of interdependent charismatic memberships, but also within the interactive dynamic set forth in Weberian charisma. Charisma is distinct from Weber's other authority types in its central concern for transforming membership and identity within audiences who, in turn, voluntarily anoint and empower the charismatic as leader of their quest for social change. In distinguishing the difference between leadership and management,

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Hackman and Johnson (1991) similarly claim "Leaders focus on what events mean for followers rather than on how to get things done" (182). Unlike transactional paradigms of leadership modeled upon the pragmatics of exchange and power-politics, the inspirational influence implied in both charisma and Transformational Leadership "must demonstrate the inadequacy of existing interpretive frameworks," and thus "it seems safer to discuss transformational leadership not as a move to higher moral ground but as a move from one interpretive framework to another."[52] While Hackman and Johnson criticize that Weber's theory "never describes the origin or exact nature of the charismatic leader's extraordinary powers or clarifies how charismatic authority can rest both on the traits of the leader and on perceptions of followers," they admit that studies of charismatic leaders nevertheless often find a "key to their success is the use of cultural myths" (182-3). Charisma has indeed been closely connected to myth by many scholars, and Max Weber himself clearly links myth and charisma when he observes that "the power of charisma rests upon the belief in revelation and heroes, upon the conviction that certain manifestations-whether they be of religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political or other kind- are important and valuable" (1947, p.1116). John Fiske (1990) explains that myth is "a way of circulating meanings in society" that provides "unique insights into the way a society organizes itself and the ways its members have of making sense of themselves and of their social experience" (133). As a response to alienation and fragmentation, Bendix (1962) similarly suggests, "charismatic leadership is a uniquely personal response to a *crisis in human experience*" (300, emphasis mine). The rhetorical resources for the aspiring revolutionary leader, Michael McGee (1975) points out, are clear:

> Each political myth presupposes a "people" who can legislate reality with their
> collective belief. So long as "the people" believe basic myths, there is unity and

collective identity. When there is no fundamental belief, one senses a crisis which can only be met with a new rhetoric, a new mythology. (245)

Utilizing mythology to preserve the rhetorical operation of transcendence within Weberian charisma not only highlights the central role of audience beliefs, but also emphasizes the power of myth to rhetorically forge new identities of membership. Because recurrent clarion calls for more egalitarian and participative models of leadership have so long endured and recurred, one might reasonably wonder if the problem lies not in methodology alone but within our self-told leadership mythology.

Myths are the unchallenged subtexts of rhetorical discourse, those often disguised or unarticulated contours which bound the field of argument and organize the way we think about issues like leadership. "What gives them force is their capacity to make sense of, and bring coherence to, common experience," Reich (1998) succinctly explains, since "mythology is a culture's device for interpreting its reality and acting on it" (7-8). But, says Reich:

> Cultural myths are no more "truth" than an architect's sketches are buildings. Their function is to explain events and guide decisions. Thus while it is pointless to challenge myths as unrealistic, it is entirely valid to say that a culture's mythology serves it well only to the extent it retains its connection to the reality the culture faces. Myths must evolve as the context evolves. Stories that stay rigid as realities change become ever less useful cultural tools.53

Reich's primary concern is that our public discourse "is often comfortably straightforward but perilously incomplete" because "our morality tales, too long unexamined, are losing their power to inform our present." Reich cautions that our shared cultural mythology "is dangerous when it undercuts the possibility of mutual responsibility and reciprocal gain" (18-19). The reigning American mythology invoked within most leadership, Reich warns, "tends to neglect the responsibilities that must accompany social membership" and "also tends to lose sight of the function of community itself" (189). Myth's role in interpreting social realities and

memberships now invites a provocative question: What is missing in our myths of leadership?

The nearly insurmountable definitional differences facing leadership may in fact disguise shared assumptions lurking across seemingly varied schools of thought, a priveledged "Myth of Leadership by Pseudocharismatic Management" which underlies both theory and practice. Alaisdair MacIntyre (1984) argues that "there is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources." His conclusion is that "Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things," since one can quite sensibly view "human beings as characters in enacted narratives" (216-7). MacIntyre explains that "what is specific to each culture is in large and central part what is specific to its stock of *characters*," those models for a "chain of reasoning" that "morally legitimates a mode of social existence" whilst also providing interpretive frameworks for any "particular individual's history of action, belief, experience and interaction" (28-9).

MacIntyre's groundbreaking exploration harshly criticizes the bureaucratic manager as "perhaps the most culturally powerful" moral fiction today, the "central character of the modern social drama" (76-7). Locating Max Weber as a watershed figure in the bureaucratic manager's ascendance to such mythic preeminence, MacIntyre condemns the "Weberian individualist" and the "Weberian managerial forms of our culture" as perpetuating "suppressed Nietzschean premises" (114). Weber's seemingly "value-free" typology, MacIntyre insists, has resulted in some deeply troubling implications for conceptualizing virtuous leadership and ethical persuasion:

> The consequence of Weber's emotivism is that in his thought the contrast between power and authority, although paid lip-service to, is effectively obliterated as a special instance of the disappearance between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations... For on Weber's view no type of authority can appeal to rational

criteria to vindicate itself except that type of bureaucratic authority which appeals precisely to its own effectiveness. And what this appeal reveals is that bureaucratic authority is nothing other than successful power. (26)

While Weber is vindicated in that effectiveness *is* precisely how bureaucratic management justifies itself, MacIntyre is nonetheless convincing when he demonstrates that any social-scientific claim to effectiveness or expertise will both presume and perpetuate "a mode of human existence in which the contrivance of means is in central part the manipulation of human beings into compliant patterns of behavior" (74). Within a Nietzschean *cosmos* of Machiavellian self-interest, MacIntyre argues, the social-scientific manager and the bureaucratic expert both pursue a *telos* of manipulative influence and control. Heifetz's (1994) overview of leadership studies further confirms that trait theorists, situationalists, contingency theorists, and transactionalists all similarly assume that "leading simply means being out in front," thus perpetuating leader-centric models and the notion that "the mark of leadership is still influence, or control" (16-18). The Myth of Pseudocharismatic Leadership lurking within contemporary theory and practice, therefore, tends to either disguise or confuse control with charisma.

The tedious look at charisma offered within this chapter leads us to two rather confounding conclusions. One is that charisma remains a paradoxical concept since it is used to characterize both kingly rulers and the radical revolutionaries who oppose them; it denotes the controlling (if not potentially dictatorial) super-powered "Superleader" who commands subordinates, while also retaining connotations of individual memberships in an empowered "Superteam" who exhalt participative interdependence within some new relational cosmos. "This dynamic," Charles Lindholm (1990) acknowledges of charisma, "is extremely powerful and strikingly ambivalent, greatly desired and greatly feared, and is morally conceived both as the peak of altruistic love and as the depths of violent fanaticism" (6). Both senses of charisma,

however, are quite notably relationships bound up in profoundly important issues of power and rhetorical constructions of power relations. Leadership as conceived in this study, therefore, will be more specifically concerned with relationships of power as rhetorically constructed or implicitly assumed in portrayals of charismatic memberships. Another conclusion suggested here is that despite obsessive attempts to secularize leadership, powerful moral expectations remain within rhetorical constructions of charisma that are inherently spiritual even when they are not overtly religious. Charles Lindholm (1993) finds "like the popular conceptualizations, all of these theories have a moral content, seeing in charisma either salvation, or damnation" (7). "This apocalyptic vision," Pagals notes of the Christian worldview, "has taught even secular-minded people to interpret the history of Western culture as a moral history in which the forces of good contend against the forces of evil in the world" (181). As it turns out, the inherent tension within the Pauline epistles-- between the unquestioning submission to divinely-sanctioned leadership and the reflexive interdependence of spiritually-empowered memberships—are themes which have continued to torment even secular views of leadership and charisma. Charisma remains suspended between this ideologically-charged dynamic of unquestioned domination and polysemic consent.

Charisma's religious and pseudo-religious connotations are centrally important to Weberian understandings but, as the next chapter will argue, it is perhaps better rhetorically understood as an encrypted MYTH of crypto-charismatic leadership. Oakes (1997) characterizes charismatic prophets as those who "espouse a message of salvation that is opposed to conventional values, and attract a following of people who look to them for guidance in their daily lives" (2). Yet most writers tacitly concur with Lindholm (1990), who views charisma as

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merely a "compulsive, inexplicable emotional tie linking a group of followers together in adulation of their leader" (p. 6). Although this leader-centered view dominates the study of leadership and charisma, it is flawed for three reasons: First, it ignores or marginalizes the tacit beliefs and expectations of memberships who anoint their leader; Second, the secular viewpoint leaves largely unconsidered the moral or religious "spiritual" mythology underlying rhetorical constructions of a membership dynamic; And third, overlooking the spiritual-secular continuum will also overlook the different types or archetypal variations of prophetic charisma which may subscribe to profoundly different myths of Power. [54]

It is thus profoundly consequential to leadership 'influence' whether one presumes human beings as empowered agents of visionary change or mere sheep craving a power-wielding leader on a mission. We might conclude along with Robbins and Finley (2000) that "Leadership is the vessel for many of the worst team myths" (187). Looking to myth importantly preserves an emphasis upon the charismatic message uniting leaders and members, but also allows consideration of charisma's purported transcendence as a "transformational" interpretive framework perhaps better understood as Mythic Rhetoric.[55] The next chapter therefore turns to mythology as a conceptual lens through which we might rhetorically explore charisma, a paradoxical myth used by fantasies for both super-powered "Superleaders" and "Superteams" of empowered memberships.

ENDNOTES

1. Even a cursory glance at the countless writings on charismatic leadership reveals a plethora of assinine misinterpretations and misguided appropriations of the Greek translation. According to the definitive Liddell Scott lexicon, the Greek *charizomai* translates as "the gift of grace or favor." The original term is a middle verb, which semantically encodes an action as being performed by a subject reflexively; that is, it suggests that one courts gifts or favors for some personal gain. Perhaps this dynamic is eloquently captured with reference to a later Roman

axiom, "I give so you give." Yet this middle verb form also tacitly acknowledges that one is not in full control of this process, merely part of a larger dynamic. Greeks often offered gifts to strangers (*xenon*) in the hopes that their visitor would not kill them in the night, yet this was done as a gesture of good faith without guarantee. Just as one might say they are "going fishing" to imply that success is largely dependent on how the fish are biting that day, we might analogously view charisma as "fishing" for gifts and/or favor; the presumption being that the ultimate outcome was in the hands of those being solicited and never fully under one's own control. The axiom that "charisma is in the eye of the beholder" thus resonates from its original Greek meaning.

2. In her engaging examination of Greek poetry and Homeric epics, Bonnie MacLachlan explores the nuances of *charis* (grace) within its literary use. As the Greeks invoked it, *charis* connotes pleasure and that which brings joy, says MacLachlan, thus "present at all the high points in life" (2). Similar to *chara*, which denoted a pleasurable state of mind, this 'gift' of 'grace' was intensely social, inherently mutual and always a reciprocal pleasure. Grace for the Greeks included the total spectrum of feelings and behaviors which express it, she observes, so that the giving of physical gifts was not linguistically distinguished from the psychological favor which might precipitate the gesture. MacLachlan points out that when Achilles fumes over having been denied his rightful 'gifts' from battle by the king, it is because he had given in battle yet not been reciprocated in return; a gross <u>relational</u> violation taken as a personal slight in being denied his due reward for excellence. Thus, any "gift of grace" from reciprocal "favor" carried connotations for a symmetrical exchange from mutual admiration or respect (pp. 1-6). In one significant analogy, *charis* is compared to calling someone 'good-looking' or 'graceful': that is, such a comment indicates a subjective judgment being bestowed as much as an objective quality being observed, the perceived presence of the very best which life has to offer. We should also note that psyche for the Greeks also entailed the totality of mind and soul, so such a pleasurable exchange of grace or favor also intimated spiritual joy when mental *chara* is sparked by deep affection and emotive affect. Bonnie MacLachan, *The Age of Grace: Charis in Early Greek Poetry* [New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993].

3. George A. Kennedy (1980). *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times.* Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Press. Even the emperors of ancient China were considered "sons of heaven," divinely sanctioned by cosmological forces despite significant ontological differences with Western kings and Ceasars. A fuller examination of such similarities and differences in the cosmos of East and West can be found in Roger Ames *The Art of Rulership* (1994).

4. Although Max Weber attended to the differences between the charisma of East and West, post-Weberian theorists have further refined his models. For an examination of similarities and differences between the divinely-sanctioned kingships of East and West, see *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, ed. S.H. Hooke (Oxford, England, 1958) and Henri Frankfort's *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, 1948). Also of interest is a book review by George J. Tanabe, Jr, "Charisma and community formation in medieval Japan" (*The Journal of Asian Studies* v59 n2, May 2000: 448-9).

5. H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks*. London: Penguin Books, 1991 (first published by Pelican Books, 1951).

6. William Foxwell more broadly speaks of the Bible's "archaic demythologizing" aimed at "eliminating specifically polytheistic elements in the narratives of Genesis as well as poetic survivals or pagan borrowings in Old Testament literature," a task which the New Testament authors then extend for their purposes against Gnostic sects. See *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, 1968), pp. 183-93.

7. While Paul's struggle between the spirit and the flesh are themes characteristic of Gnostics, the redemptive teleology ascribed to Paul by most early Christians "saw Christ not as one who leads souls out of this world into enlightenment, but as 'fullness of God' come down into human experience- into *bodily* experience- to sacralize it" [from *Ancient Near Eastern texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James B. Pritchard (3rd ed.; Princeton, 1969), p. 98]. As connected to my study of charisma's histo-rhetorical development, the orthodox Christian emphasis of Jesus as less spiritual leader or even gifted rhetor than the miraculously divine redeemer of all humanity will exert the greatest influence upon the charisma archetype. For an examination of the relation of this view to Greek and Hebrew concepts, see Walter Zimmerli, *The Old Testament and the World*, trans. John J. Scullion (Atlanta, 1976), pp. 111f.

8. Since biblical scholars know variations of these Pauline epistles were widely hand-copied and distributed amongst the clergy of largely illiterate Christian communities between 90 and 100 CE, and because many early congregations described in the New Testament resembled 'communes' in which money was pooled and decision-making was shared, one cannot help but suspect that the strict hierarchical injunctions within these Pauline epistles might bear the fingerprints of later commentary added by cleric literati. Yet because no 'original' letters of Paul exist, such suspicions can only remain speculative. Perhaps some support is to be found within the Pauline epistles' consistent development of bodily imagery and, as the 'members'of Christ, the consistent injunctions to nurture interdependent memberships rather than succumb to the pitfalls of hierarchical struggles over leadership. In Romans 12, Paul writes: "For as we have many members in one body, all the members do not gave the same function. So we, being many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. Having then gifts [charisma] differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them..." (v.4-6). The rest of Chapter 12 addresses brotherly love and blessing enemies before abruptly insisting, in the opening verses of chapter 13, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" since "rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil" (13:1-3). In 1 Corinthians, the Pauline author addresses more in-depth the bodily analogy and the central importance of humble submission amongst church members to one another through love. After noting the importance of self-reflection when partaking of communion ("...this is My body which is broken for you," v.24), chapter 12 asserts that miraculous gifts have likewise been divided amongst members of the church 'body': "There are diversities of gifts [charisma] but the same Spirit" which are "given to each one for the profit of all" (v.4 & 7). Wisdom, knowledge, teaching, faith, healings, speaking in tongues, prophesy and miracles are 'gifts' that serve different functions for the congregation,

as hands and feet and eyes do in serving the totality of the physical body. Despite cautions that lesser parts/functions should be humbly considered greater (thematic echoes here of the Sermon on the Mount promise that the least shall be made first), and the forceful insistence that all gifts serve different yet equally valuable purposes for edification of the church, this Pauline edict then oddly ranks their relative importance with a surprisingly unambiguous certainty: "And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues" (v.28). What follows in chapter 13 is Paul's well-known treatise on love: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging symbol" (13:1). In these passages, Paul seems to again disperse varied leadership roles among congregation members while heralding love and humility as guideposts, yet then quite oddly offers a rigid hierarchy that clearly places charismatic gifts below the leadership of apostles, prophets, teachers and even earthly authorities. As New Testament scholar Dennis MacDonald suggests, sections of these letters sometimes place Paul in the unlikely role of urging adherence to conventional Roman behaviors and authority. Other Pauline verses clearly advocate counter-hierarchical perspectives as well as profound skepticism "against the world-rulers of this present darkness" [Eph. 6:12]. Taken as a whole, the Pauline epistles thus present an odd contradiction between the persistent bodily analogies of empowering non-hierarchical, interdependent memberships and the curt, direct insistence for submission to the powers of divinely-sanctioned authorities. For discussions regarding the all-too human interests and conflicts influencing compilation of the New Testament canon, see Davis (pp. 335-42) and Pagels (pp. 69-70, 153). For a fuller examination of the orthodox priesthood's possible fingerprints within Pauline appropriations, also see Dennis Ronald MacDonald [yes, that is really his name], *The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983).

9. Merold Westphal, *God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987/1984). Following Max Weber's lead, Westphal's typology acknowledges that "virtually every living religion will have elements of more than one type within it" and seeks "to avoid the implication that a kind of Hegelian dialectical development from less adequate to more adequate is involved" by locating religions on a spectrum of particular attitudes toward worldliness and salvation, thus attempting to understand "whether salvation is best understood to occur in history, in nature, or outside of both in a worldless pure consciousness" (166). In his nuanced model, Westphal is additionally helpful in sorting through differences between the gnostic and more orthodox Christian perspectives by distinguishing the religious redemption within mimetic, exilic and covenantal religions. Westphal identifies *mimetic* as "semi-worldly" types that find salvation through the imitative participation in the timeless events of the natural cosmic order, most frequently re-presented through the recurrence of myths and rituals (195-6). Rather than ritualized participation in the cyclical recurrences of nature, Gnostics exemplify the exilic or "anti-worldly" view of mankind as exiled both physically and psychically in a world which is "not so much a field of conflict between good and evil as the product and permanent domain of 'The Adversary'... The enemy is the world *and its God*, and Gnosticism is a revolt against both" with a philosophical "dualism more radical than Plato's" (174-5, original emphasis). Finding within Hebrew and Christian traditions elements of both exilic and gnostic religion, Westphal nevertheless distinguishes them

convincingly as covenantal or "worldly" in their belief "that the sacred is manifest not only in nature but also in history, where by virtue of a vowed partnership, historical experience is shared by human and divine participants" (xiv). Rather than viewing the cosmos as nature and some cyclical order from chaos, or viewing cosmos as exhibiting a radical nature/spirit dualism which requires the liberating seperation of the mind-soul *psyche* from a tainted bodily nature, the covenantal religions "affirm the world as history, as unique event, as linear teleology" (225) or a promised "messianic futurism" (242) which is realized through "the joint action of the covenant partnership" (251). Particularly important here is Westphal's notion that some underlying metaphysical ontology guides the telos of praxis; that is, fundamental beliefs regarding spme myth of human 'nature' are used to justify certain ritualistic patterns of action within that mythic cosmos.

10. Nicholas Abercrombie et al., *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (3rd edition). London: Penguin Books, 1994: p. 450.

11. Whereas the comparisons between Hegel, Weber and Marx are rather commonplace, links between the religious sociologies of Weber and Nietzsche have become somewhat of a fad. W.G. Runciman, *A Critique of Max Weber's Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); E. Fleichmann, "Max Weber, die Juden und das Resentiment," in W. Schluchter's (ed) *Max Webers studie hber das antike Judentum* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981); G. Strauth & B.S. Turner, "Nietzsche in Weber oder die Geburt des Modernen Genius im Professionellen Menschen," in *Zeitschrift fur Soziologie* (15), 1986: pp. 81-94; W. Hennis, *Max Weber's Fragestellung* (Thbungen: Mohr, 1987); David Owen, *Maturity and Modernity: Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the Ambivalence of Reason* (New York: Routledge, 1994). For an in-depth examination of Weber's links to the theories of Marx and Nietzsche, see Bryan S. Turner's book, *Max Weber: From History to Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1993).

12. As discussed by both Swatos and Eisenstadt.

13. Weber, favoring cultural specificity and sociological complexity, agreed with Kant that empirical analysis and moral judgment belong to separate systems. Sociology for Weber cannot and should not evaluate nor prescribe moral values, but can examine the observable and historical causes, effects and consequences of such systems by contextualizing socio-cultural action with the social interaction of subjective meanings.

14. For an in-depth defense of the Weberian methodology and his utilization of "ideal types" as an analytic tool, see chapter one of Westphal (1987).

15. Swatos reiterates a recurring neoWeberian condemnation that many "writers claiming to present analyses in the Weberian mode act as if he had proposed a taxonomy" (134). Attributing to Weber's work "orchestral complexity and harmonic depth," cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz also notes such richness "is also what gives it, especially to ears less attuned to polyphony, its chronic elusiveness" (150). Clifford Geertz, "Centers, kings and charisma," in

Joseph Ben-David and Terry Nichols Clark, eds., *Culture and its Creators*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 150-71.

16. For particularly lucid discussions of these concepts across the works of Weber, see Eisenstadt's introduction (p. xli) and Swatos' extrapolation (130).

17. Swatos, p. 130.

18. Eisenstadt (1968), Introduction, p. *liv*.

19. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (1958). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 50.

20. Richard W. Hadden (1997). *Sociological Theory: An Introduction to the Classical Tradition.* Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, pp. 126-7.

21. In his work on Protestantism and Capitalism, Weber develops his theory that Calvinistic predestination not so coincidentally paralleled the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribners, 1976).

22. S.N. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); p. xxxi-xxxii.

23. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber sketches his own historical progression. Pre-modern societies, collectives of clans or tribes organized on the basis of kinship, possessed belief-systems based upon the power of magic. The types of social action in such a society were affectual and traditional, dependant upon the local knowledges of elders as well as magicians who preserve the relationships- both natural and supernatural- of the immediate, the particular and the personal. As societies came to be more hierarchically organized into classes and social groups, social institutions such as the state emerge and the figure of the prophet develops from the role of a shamanistic magician. Like the magician, the prophet enjoys authority based upon personal access to natural-supernatural realms but, unlike the shaman, the hope for salvation comes from the universal doctrines of some world yet to come rather than some divine sanction local to a tribe or clan. Such universal doctrines, observes Weber, are the basis for world religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. But because the secular state becomes a source for new and conflicting value-orientations, tensions arise between prophets and emergent priesthoods of intellectuals. According to Weber, the universalizing religiosity of the prophet now creates stratification between lay people (mere believers) and a hierarchy of virtuosi (religious messiahs and some elite intelligensia who will preserve their sacred teachings). Institutionalized priesthoods -both religious and secular- now develop into formal hierarchies and, as opposed to their radically revolutionary prophet/founders, these priests become conservative figures of social control and bureaucratization. Weber points to the Reformation as the "return of the prophets" including Martin Luther and John Calvin, but by this time Science and the secular state have begun to displace religion with Instrumental-Rational social action. That is, social systems begin to

replace and restrain the influence of individual prophets with orthodox processes of leadership. Emergent bureaucratic systems now set the stage for the 'Protestant Ethic' and modern development of the 'spirit of capitalism,' in which technocratic rationalization and bureaucratic expertise dominate value-orientations (perhaps one might say Capitalistic Spirituality?). This technocratic rationality, seeking immediate gains and local control through impersonal universalizing systems, now reformulates 'secular man' and traps him within an 'iron cage' of bureaucratic process and institutionalized power hierarchies. Bryan Turner finds that "the overt emphasis is on the role of the active individual who constructs and creates meaning," yet the covert theme within Weber's process "is that the ultimate origin of the meanings of actions is to be found in charismatic religious movements and that these absolute values dig their own graves with the inevitable logic of fate" (48). Far from the optimistic hope found in Hegel's dialectical progression of Reason, Turner suggests that "Weber's pessimism produces a deterministic sociology in which the intentions of social actors are overtaken by historical fate" and the iron cage of bureaucratic rationality (52). For further explications on this theme, see Bryan Turner's *For Weber: Essays on the Sociology of Fate* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

24. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

25. As quoted by Miyahara, p. 371.

26. Says Weber: "The honesty of a scholar today, and particularly of a philosopher, can be measured by where he stands in relation to Nietzsche and Marx. Anyone who does not admit that he could not have achieved very important parts of his own work without the work that these two men accomplished, deludes both himself and others. The mental world in which we ourselves exist bears to a great extent the stamp of Marx and Nietzsche." Quoted by G. Therbon, *Science, Class and Society: On the Formation of Historical Materialism* [London: New Left Books, 1976, p. 277].

27. Terry Eagleton, "Political Criticism," in William Covino & David Joliffe (ed.) *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions and Boundaries* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), p. 502.

28. *Ibid*, p. xx.

29. UC Berkeley lecture series "Conversations with History," moderated by Harry Kriesler, 12/7/99. Online transcript found at http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Jowitt/jowitt-con2.html. The ideas discussed were attributed to Jowitt's book *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

30. Arthur Schweitzer in <u>The Age of Charisma</u> [Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1984] likewise emphasizes in his introduction that "historical reality constitutes combinations, mixtures, adaptations and modifications of the 'pure type' of charisma," examining several variational subtypes of charismatic leadership.

31. Although many studies routinely use trained actors or 30-year-old videotapes while

purporting to measure charismatic effects, the most widely denounced misappropriation [Donald Vinson (1977), "Charisma," *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 14: 269-75] advances the claim that the company IBM evidences all the features of charisma, thus displaying a complete lack of awareness if not flagrant disregard for Weber's conceptual theory. For some rather pointed insights and criticisms into such embarrassingly persistent misappropriations, see: Carl J. Friedrich, "Political Leadership and the Problem of Charismatic Power," *The Journal of Politics* 23 (1961); and John M. Jermier, 'Introduction - Charismatic Leadership: Neo-Weberian Perspectives," *Leadership Quarterly* 4 (1993): 221.

32. Swatos, p. 131.

33. The "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationality certainly reflects a profound pessimism which Weber and Nietzsche share. Where Weber traces the uncertain routinization and misappropriation of charisma by 'the dictatorship of the bureaucrats', Nietzsche similarly laments an identical fate for the Great Man of history: "A people is nature's detour to arrive at six or seven great men-- and then to get around them." Walter Kaufmann (ed. & trans.), *The Portable Nietzsche* (Middlesex, England: Viking Penguin Books Ltd., p. 444).

34. George Ritzer (1992), *The McDonaldization of Society.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

35. As quoted by Swatos, p. 131.

36. Stewart, Smith & Denton in *Persuasion and Social Movements* [Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1984] suggest a five-stage life cycle of social movements, quite complimentary to Weber's theory, that is based upon different rhetorical functions required at each point. First is the *genesis stage*, where an exigence is identified and subsequently dramatized through some "triggering event" that draws public attention to some social deprivation or injustice. Second is the *social unrest stage*, when an agitator draws upon a sense of collective identity to provide a "diagnosis" of social ills eroding the credibility of established order, a "prognosis" offering a rhetorical vision that must provide narrative coherence and fidelity for audiences, and a "prescription" for action. I find these first stages reflect Weber's portrayal of 'pure' charisma, while the subsequent organizational stages of *enthusiastic mobilization*, *maintenance,* and *termination* accurately correspond to the bureaucratic routinization of charisma.

37. Michael Hill, *The Religious Order* [London: Heinemann, 1973: p.2]. As Eisenstadt also acknowledges, "the test of any great charismatic leader lies not only in his ability to create a single event or great movement, but also in his ability to leave a continuous impact... to transform any given institutional setting by infusing into it some of his charismatic vision." But these routinizations, Eisenstadt admits, are also "the process through which a great upsurge of charismatic vision loses, as it were, its initial impetus and becomes flattened, diffused, and in a sense obliterated" (xxi).

38. Although many studies routinely use trained actors or 30-year-old videotapes while purporting to measure charismatic effects, the most widely denounced misappropriation [Donald

Vinson (1977), "Charisma," *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 14: 269-75] advances the claim that the company IBM evidences all the features of charisma, thus displaying a complete lack of awareness if not flagrant disregard for Weber's conceptual theory. For some rather pointed insights and criticisms into such embarrassingly persistent misappropriations, see: Carl J. Friedrich, "Political Leadership and the Problem of Charismatic Power," *The Journal of Politics* 23 (1961); and John M. Jermier, 'Introduction - Charismatic Leadership: Neo-Weberian Perspectives," *Leadership Quarterly* 4 (1993): 221.

39. The discussion of these leadership paradigms is derived from Bernard Bass, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

40. A vast majority of psychoanalytic studies posit and explore the psychopathology of charismatic audiences and the narcissistic personality of their leaders. Oakes most clearly argues that the Charismatic Prophet is in actuality both Psychopath and Rationalist who draws their power from manipulation. Len Oakes (1997), *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Prophetic Religious Personalities* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press). For an overview of leadership paradigms and their research applications, see Bernard Bass, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

41. The debate revolves around locating charisma within the mythos of religion or cosmos of science. Friedrich (1961, p. 24) is representative of theologians rejecting the suitability of the concept of charisma in all but a religious context, while Shils' (1965) social scientific criticism finds Weber's concept of charisma too empirically imprecise. Such an impasse has discouraged studies into charisma and thus accounts for inconsistent and contradictory research.

42. Clifford Geertz (1977), *Centers, kings and charisma* (pp. 150-171). In Joseph Ben-David and Terry Nichols Clark (Eds.), Culture and its Creators. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

43. Forsyth, D. R. (1991). "Charismatic Leaders: Manipulators, Madmen, or Myth? Review of Charles Lindholm's Charisma," *Contemporary Psychology*, 36: 1037-1038.

44. David A. Waldman and Francis J. Yammarino, "CEO Charismatic Leadership: levels-of-management and levels-of-analysis effects," *The Academy of Management Review* 24 (no.2, Apr 1999): 266-85. Manfred De-Vries, "Charisma in Action: the transformational abilities of Virgin's Richard Branson and ABB's Percy Barnevik," *Organizational Dynamics* 26 (Winter 1998): 6-21. Jane A. Halpert, 'The Dimensionality of Charisma: research on charismatic leadership," *Journal of Business and Psychology* 4 (Summer 1990): 399-410.

45. This problematic has been noted by both academics and populists. Jay Conger, "Charisma and How To Grow It," *Management Today* (Dec 1999): 78-9. Matthew Valle, "Crisis, Culture and Charisma: The New Leader's Work in Public Organizations," *Public Personnel Management* 28 (#2, Summer 1999): 245-57.

46. Yusuf Ahmed Nur, "Charisma and managerial leadership: The gift that never was," *Business Horizons* 41 (n4, July/August 1998): 19-26. Jane M. Howell and Bruce J. Avolio, "Charismatic

Leadership: submission or liberation?" *Business Quarterly* 60 (Autumn 1995): 62-70. Patricia Buhler, "Leaders vs Managers," *Supervision* 56 (May 1995): 24-6.

47. The traits-centered perspective is exemplified in John Wareham, "Eight Steps to Charisma," *Across The Board* 32 (Apr 1995): 49-50. Patricia Sellers, in her article "What Exactly is Charisma?" (*Fortune* v133, 15 Jan 1996), finds that rapid and unpredictable change in business culture necessitates charisma's remarkable ability to "induce others to support your vision and promote it passionately" (pp. 68-72).   In "Growing Charisma: silent messages can draw people to you" (*Industry Week* v247 #9, 4 May 1998), Shari Caudron outlines the techniques for personal image-management from Tony Alessandra's book *Charisma: Seven Keys to Developing the Magnetism* (pp. 54-5).

48. Gibb, C.A. (1969). "Leadership." In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (eds), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 2nd ed. vol. 4. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

49. "Charisma is the remarkable ability to get others to support your vision and promote it passionately," enthuses Patricia Sellers in a typically leader-centric portrayal ("What exactly is charisma?" *Fortune* v133, 15 January 1996: 68-72). William Gardner and Bruce Avolio explain charisma as a process whereby "social actors" use "impression management" techniques to create and maintain identities as charismatic leaders; framing, scripting, staging and performance are offered as strategic behaviors for manipulating the perceptions of subordinates ("The charismatic relationship: A dramaturgical perspective." *The Academy of Management Review* v23 (1), January 1998: 32-58). Bass and Avolio (1993) sometimes call the charisma factor "idealized influence," wherein submissive followers behaviorally emulate the vision and mission as dictated by the charismatic leader. While their 6-item measurement of charisma posits the beliefs and values shared by leaders and followers as centrally important, no measurement nor mention is made regarding what such beliefs and values specifically include. ("Transformational Leadership: A Response to Critiques," in Martin Cheymers and Roya Ayman (eds), *Leadership: Theory and Research Perspectives and Directions*. New York: Academic Press, 49-80).

50. Carl J. Friedrich (1961), "Political Leadership and the Problem of Charismatic Power," *The Journal of Politics* (v23).

51. For an insightful analysis into the subtle uses of value premises to control subordinates, see Tompkins and Cheney (1985), "Communication and Unobtrusive Control in Contemporary Organizations," in R.D. McPhee & P.K. Thompkins (Eds.), *Organizational Communication: Traditional Themes and New Directions*. Beverly Hills: Sage, pp.179-210.

52. Smith, p. 56.

53. In Robert Reich's *Tales of a New America* (New York, Vintage Books: 1998, p. 40).

54. Describing the varieties of charismatic experience, Weber spoke of a continuum ranging from "pure" to "routinized" charisma. Pure charisma is rare (Weber, 1968: 1002) and is usually

found only in the very beginning of a social movement when a "charismatic community" coalesces around a leader. Along this continuum lie the variants of magical and prophetic charisma. Magical charisma is attached to the shaman or magician who is "permanently endowed with charisma" (Weber 1968, 401). Such charisma is basically conservative, supporting the customs of the tribe. Prophetic charisma, however, occurs in more complex societies and adheres to the prophet who proclaims a divine mission or radical political doctrine. This form of charisma leads to revolution and social change. Weber regarded the prophet as the archetypal prototype for other kinds of charismatic leaders (Schweitzer 1984, 32). Weber added two crucial components to this. First, charisma is fundamentally a religious concept; although in his usage it need not involve a notion of the divine, nevertheless it remains a form of spiritual energy oriented to otherworldly ideals. Second, the charismatic process is one of intense emotional arousal and great pathos; charismatic belief revolutionizes people from within and revolutionizes society by transforming individual identity. Mythology traffics in both of these functions, expressing the ideology of a socio-political *cosmos* and identity-building *telos*.

55. Transcendence for religion is rooted in divine revelation of *cosmos* but, when rhetors mythologize history within a cosmic evolution to in effect re-identify it as natural or "Nature," transient and disordered events of the present can become stabilized within an eternal spectrum. In this way, mythic rhetoric enables the events of human history to take on a new reality within sacred time, but only to the extent that it retraces secular temporal evolution in a way which resonates with audiences and their experiences. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1954), pp. 25-34, 51-92. For a detailed examination of the prophetic archetype in Weberian charisma, see Len Oakes, *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

CHAPTER 3

MYTHIC RHETORIC AND FANTASY CULTURETYPES OF THE CHARISMATIC SUPERHERO

INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters, I have examined the rhetorical evolution of the concept of charisma. I have argued that as a central concept to the study of leadership, charisma operates as a discursive distillation of an enduring conversation over problems, anxieties and idealistic aspirations regarding contemporary leadership and the benevolent exercise of power. In chapter two, I surveyed Max Weber's secular expansion of the concept as generative of a profoundly ambivalent view of charismatic domination and god-like power. Charisma is thus an ancient and paradoxical myth of leadership informing our beliefs and expectations. By viewing Weber's ideal typology as mythic archetypes of authority, I suggested that the inevitable routinization of charisma into more safe and stable bureaucratic forms brings unpredictable consequences in the exercise of power, thus possessing equal potential for the demonic or divine. In Weber's view, even a benevolent charismatic prophet cannot escape the inevitable "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationalization, interpretive orthodoxy and power politics if successful.

Post-Weberian theorizing about "inspirational" or "transformational" models for bureaucratic power relationships, however, promote dominant leadership paradigms which may be rhetorically understood as attempts to escape the despotic potentials for Weber's "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationality. Of particular interest to this study, therefore, are the recurring Fantasy Themes of Charismatic Leadership that seek to "routinize" the "divine gift" into more safe, stable, and secular forms of benevolent power for organizational management. This

chapter will endeavor to outline the recurring rhetorical features of the mythic charismatic script, and identify the variational fantasies regularly invoked.

As a "mythic yardstick" for leadership, charisma is frequently invoked as a recurring mythic script which fosters divergent fantasies of heroic leadership and the benevolent exercise of power. As such, charisma is a generative term and its usage is symptomatic of our difficulties and limitations in both thinking about and practicing leadership. By understanding charisma as a phenomena of rhetorical discourse, a co-constitutive message as opposed to a person or context, I am most interested in the narrated mythic memberships which are constituted to legitimate the power relationships linking charismatic visionaries to the devotees they inspire. This rhetorical perspective understands charisma as textual and intertextual: it is created, maintained, challenged, re-created and above all tacitly perpetuated through rhetorical discourses. I will argue that leadership paradigms are little more than superhero power fantasies for grown-ups, rhetorics which quest for bureaucratic models of benevolent power yet inadvertantly repress Weber's paradoxical mythos of charismatic leadership and the potential dark side of charismatic domination. An emergent paradigm is evident, however, that contemplates post-heroic Superteams as a more democratic and egalitarian model of membership. The rhetorical pay-offs and mythic price of different fantasy themes of charismatic memberships will be the primary concern of the following chapter.

TEXTUAL CHARISMA AS CONSTITUTIVE RHETORIC

There is little doubt that in Homer eloquence is god-produced and god-given...
Individuals who are eloquent are seen as having a gift from the gods and themselves
are "god-like"... The divine gift from the gods is reserved for two categories of
humans. The first group is royal or god-descended and god-blessed... the hero of the
Iliad, Achilles, is not only god-born but has been raised in a kingly fashion so that he

can be a rhetor of speech and a doer of deeds... It is a provocative point to historians of rhetoric that this earliest notion of the term which would be the basis for the founding of the discipline of rhetoric centuries later is now clearly associated with the god-blessed hero Achilles... The other group of individuals in the *Iliad* who have the capacity for eloquence are the aoidoi, the bards who weave together or compose chants of heroic tales to honor the gods... Aoidoi are invariably given the epithet "divine" or "god-like"... These composers of discourse were the pioneers of the techniques of oral literature... (Enos, 1993: 9)

Enos is indeed provocative when he looks to ancient Greece and suggests that charisma's "gift of grace or favor" belongs equally to both mythic heroes and their storytelling myth-makers. As a rhetorical phenomenon, charisma continues to enjoy numerous boosters who follow the tradition of St. Paul and Max Weber by investing the concept with cultural currency. An over-riding concern dismissed in Weber's value-free typology, however, is the difficulty in distinguishing myth-makers from myth-fakers. Thomas Dow (1969) puzzles that "obviously, people must recognize, accept and follow the pretender before he can be spoken of as truly charismatic. The question is why do they do so?" (190). Hogan and Williams (2000) suggest that answers to this elusive question persist because "little has been written about the *rhetoric* of charisma," since "most studies of charisma retain an emphasis on psychological and sociological concerns" (2). "What remains insufficiently explored," Hogan and Williams complain, "is the phenomenon that links leader and follower: the charismatic *message*" (2-4). It may turn out that charisma is a message, a rhetoric characterized by a distinctive mythic narrative. Charisma has indeed been closely connected to myth by many scholars, and Max Weber himself connects charisma and mythology when he observes that "the power of charisma rests upon the belief in revelation and heroes, upon the conviction that certain manifestations- whether they be of religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political or other kind- are important and valuable" (1947, p.1116). Thus, the mystically transcendent, irrational, and revolutionary characteristics of Weberian charisma

suggests that the power of charismatic rhetoric is to be found in popular beliefs nurtured by our cultural mythology.

The few rhetorical critics who have explored charisma find fairly predictable rhetorical characteristics typical to the mythic script of charisma. Boss (1976) gleans nine rhetorical constituents from the literature on charismatic attributes: (1) a leader believed to possess the "gift of grace" or a "divine gift"; (2) the concept of leader as communicator; (3) an inspiring message; (4) idolatrous followers; (5) a shared history; (6) the leader's privledged status as miracle-worker; (7) a sacred "mission" or quest; (8) an important crisis; and (9) successful (i.e. positive) results. "In addition to having the trait of heroism," observes Boss, "the charismatic leader seems messianic in his appeal," is "perceived by his followers as the supreme solver of their particular problem, and as the supreme communicator of their desires, beliefs, and aspirations" (305). Yet Boss notes that charismatic leaders "do not achieve success without a following of devoted apostles who help propagandize the chosen one and his purpose," those who "enlarge his area of power" and promote their "leader's message of alluring change" as an "idealistic crusade" (306-9). Loyalty in followers, Boss notes, grows from the charismatic leader's "willingness to live by and die for the myths of his associates" (308). Boss concludes that charisma is "an exceptional relationship" between a leader-communicator and followers-audience, "an intimate one of community and continuity, sustained by shared events and sociopolitical crisis" (312). In this view, charisma is a super-ethos rhetorically evoked by a shared mythos.

While Boss portrays charismatic followers as active co-propagators of their leader and a revolutionary crusade, Lewis (1988) instead posits the charismatic as a "Symbolizer/Myth-

Maker" who is filtered and constrained by the situational crisis. Examining media evangelists

like Oral Roberts and Jimmy Swaggart, Lewis finds the televangelist "has no guarantee that the

charisma granted him in the religious situation could carry over into a possible decision to move

into political leadership" (98). These limitations may perhaps be offset, Lewis suggests, in the

ability of the charismatic messenger to promote a reduced scope of perspective in their audience,

thereby decreasing likelihood for the construction of alternative contextual outlooks. The

discursive characteristics of charismatic communication is identified by Lewis as including: 1) a

revolutionary message, 2) simplistic appeals to emotions, 3) rhetorical figures generating an aura

of "presence," 4) invocations to a collective identity, and 5) dramatization of polarized

aggression between forces of good and evil. Here we find evidence that the rhetorical situation

both mediates and is mediated by the charismatic myth-maker, calling into question the degree to

which a charismatic may rhetorically script social realities in crisis to guide new perceptions of

social identity and potential social relationships.

Several rhetorical theorists prove invaluable in further unlocking the mythic power of

charismatic rhetoric to mediate a new social reality for groups. Michael McGee (1975) argues

that although myths may technically represent what Marx called "false consciousness," mythic

symbols deployed as rhetorical tropes nonetheless provide the necessary fiction of social unity

and collective identity. "Though myths defy empirical or historical treatment," McGee observes,

"it is easy to recognize them rhetorically as ontological arguments relying not so much on

evidence as on artistic proofs intended to answer the question, What is "real?"" (244).

Functioning at the level of mythic identification rather than logical persuasion, such rhetoric can

forge new discursive maps for the complex and otherwise chaotic realities of our social terrain.

Says McGee:

> Each political myth presupposes a "people" who can legislate reality with their
> collective belief. So long as "the people" believe basic myths, there is unity and
> collective identity. When there is no fundamental belief, one senses a crisis which
> can only be met with a new rhetoric, a new mythology... Because it is a response, not
> only to discomfort in the environment, but also to the failure of previous myths to
> cope with such discomfort, a new political myth also conflicts with all previous
> myths. (245)

McGee's description closely parallels Weber's characterization of charisma as precipitated by

both a crisis and audience beliefs, thereby offering a vantage point from which to examine the

rhetorical deployment of myth to legitimate charismatic leaders. McGee insists that we begin

with the understanding that "myths are purely rhetorical phenomenon" and are "intended to

redefine an uncomfortable and oppressive reality." "Indeed, "the people" are the social and

political myths they accept" (247). Thus, a collective identity shared by leaders and followers

alike via some collective identity as a "people" is narratively forged when individuals share and

accept living within a common mythic map of otherwise ambiguous social realities. Such

symbolic inducements to collectivity can compel the surrender of individuality in favor of

belonging to a community of believers, McGee suggests, since "the people" is a rhetorical fiction

of mythic membership that becomes a self-perpetuating reality when socially acted upon.

By viewing some instances of persuasion as the product of mythic identification, the

revolutionary social identity so often associated with charisma now becomes understood as the

rhetorical effect of mythic narrative. Maurice Charland (1987) extends McGee by arguing that

"we cannot accept the giveness of "audience," "person," or "subject," but must consider their

very textuality, their very constitution in rhetoric as a structured articulation of signs. We must,

in other words, consider the textual nature of social being" (137). In this view, the necessary

fiction of a collective identity is rhetorically constituted through shared mythic narratives. This

Constitutive Rhetoric "exists only as a series of narrative ideological effects," says Charland,

since being "constituted as a subject in a narrative is to be constituted with a history, motives and

telos" that offers "a logic of meaningful totality" (139-41). Explains Charland:

> Constitutive rhetorics are ideological not merely because they provide individuals
> with narratives to inhabit as subjects and motives to experience, but because they
> insert "narratized" subjects-as-agents into the world... While classical narratives have
> an ending, constitutive rhetorics leave the task of narrative closure to their
> constituted subjects... Its rhetorical effect derives from their interpellation as subjects
> and on their identification with a transhistorical and transindividual subject
> position... Audiences don't exist outside rhetoric... but live inside rhetoric... [Thus,]
> constitutive rhetoric is part of the discursive background of social life. (143, 147)

The notion of Constitutive Rhetoric highlights narrative myth-making as central to our

understandings of history, identity, and collective action. "It is also perfectly tautological,"

muses Charland, "for it is a making sense that depends upon the a priori acceptance of that which

it attempts to prove the existence of, a collective agent" who "transcends the limitations of

individuality" (140). As epic characters of a larger and all-encompassing social drama,

individuals are therefore able to heroically participate in a larger purpose that gives their lives

meaning and narrative coherence. Charland finds that "because the narrative is a structure of

understanding that produces totalizing interpretations, the subject is constrained to follow

through, to act so as to maintain the narrative's consistency" (141). Thus, acceptance of a new

mythic map of social reality allows re-narrated subjects to be "born again" and dramatistically

enact their new identities, but this subjectivity also inherently negates other possible storylines.

To imagine oneself or one's group the romantic hero of a dramatic social saga, for example, is to

also eclipse other narrative possibilities that their actions could ultimately prove comic or

perhaps even tragic.

The notion that social identity is the product of rhetoric, and narrated subjectivities rely upon mythic maps of social reality, now makes possible a fresh approach for understanding *textual charisma*. The perspective championed by Hogan & Williams (2000) "approaches charisma not as the product of personality traits nor of sociological conditions, but rather as a *textual* creation- a phenomenon manifested in *rhetorical* artifacts" (2). They examine Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* as "the prototype of what might be called "republican charisma"-- an unprecedented mode of leadership that, while revolutionary in spirit, actually repudiated charismatic leadership as conventionally understood" since it was "grounded in the mundane rather than the divine, the empirical rather than the mystical, the natural rather than the other-worldly, and the pragmatic rather than the prophetic" (2-3). These authors "consider how modern democratic republics might invite a different *sort* of charismatic leadership," finding within *Common Sense* that "Paine not only proposed a republican form of government but textually *embodied* the sort of leadership appropriate in such a state" (8). Understood not as the person named Paine but rather as a textual or rhetorical persona being modeled within the socially revolutionary message of the pamphlet, *Common Sense* is considered by Hogan & Williams as having articulated the "faith of the incipient republican mythology" and "reinvented charismatic leadership in a democratic, egalitarian context" (12, 15). This Republican Charisma "may be no less grounded in myth and emotion than the charisma of tribal chieftains," they admit, "but it does elevate a very different sort of personality to heroic status" (8). The heroic textual persona championed in *Common Sense,* they contend, "was that of the colonial "everyman"..." (13). "The myth of American exceptionalism and the prophesy of an American Age," Hogan & Williams conclude, undergirds early Republican discourse "by politically

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engaging and empowering the ordinary colonist... not as political *persuasion* but as an act of *identification*" (14-15). More important than the time-honored charismatic hero, these authors insist, is the narrated reality and textual persona of Republican membership being modeled or embodied within the messages of charismatic myth-makers. "Republican charisma" thus rhetorically constitutes a new myth of democratically empowered *memberships* that challenges the divine sanction for elite *leadership*.

Understanding charismatic leadership as the rhetorical product of mythic memberships also entails an awareness of how memberships may narrate differently the charismatic quest of their leader, which in turn heightens awareness to different types of charisma. Textual charisma has been recently explored within the narratives of the New Testament Gospels as providing tantalizing explanation for the enduring existential appeal of messages attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. In *The Quest for Charisma*, Craig R. Smith (2000) argues for 3 levels of charisma that correspond to Kierkegaard's life stages or existential "modes of existence," and contends that a rhetorical capacity to spur spiritual growth is what distinguishes the quest of "authentic" charisma. He explains that "the Gospel narrators in their own way contributed to the development of rhetorical theory, particularly to the art of preaching through storytelling that became charismatic to its readers" (74). Smith suggests that it is the mythic narrative of an existential quest which is itself the source of charisma. "Rhetorically sharpened," Smith maintains, "the tools of the historian or the storyteller are essential to building a narrative and making it charismatic" (77). Smith also insists that the ambiguities of mythic paradox is an essential ingredient to the existential rhetoric of authentic charismatic narratives. "If the ambiguity is artfully constructed," he observes, "then it will force us to choose, and in choosing

we exercise the self" (170). Smith's emphasis upon mythic paradox as a crucial existential

element of charismatic narratives is a theme of paramount importance, and one which will be

explored when distinguishing myth and fantasy in the next section. Nonetheless, Smith makes a

compelling case for the charisma of Jesus as attributable to a textual persona perpetuated (and

perhaps even amplified) by his Gospel narrators. Smith concludes that since "there are various

types of identification that the projected persona calls into play," textual charisma can be

manifest as different types displaying various levels of "authentic" existential self-reflexivity

(180-1).

As we have seen thus far, the notion of *textual charisma* provides fresh potential for

understanding the revolutionizing irrationality and transcendence characteristic of "the gift of

grace or favor." This rhetorical perspective attends to processes of identification through mythic

narrative rather than assuming charisma is the discursive product of persuasion through logical

reasoning. By attending to the textual personas being rhetorically invoked to inhabit and act

meaningfully within some narrated mythic reality, charisma may now be rhetorically understood

as a co-constitutive rhetoric of mythic membership. That is, charisma is a myth that itself is the

message, a dramatizing quest narrative which offers a distinctive script of superhuman heroes,

villains and epic context as a rhetorical map that recontextualizes identity by interpreting chaotic

social realities. The mythos of the heroic quest within American politics and popular culture is

an almost "universal structure," contends McGee (1984), although the "most fundamental thing

political quest myths contextualize is a people's ideology." McGee explains:

> Against the backdrop of "rhetorical fictions," human beings disappear into the roles
> they play in the story. Presidents cease to be people, prime ministers cease to be
> human beings, when they come to office; instead they are "charismatic symbolizers,"

human signifiers of romantic and heroic leadership. They are the focal points for the quest... and insofar as they fit the form of the story, they will be applauded; insofar as they do not fit, they will be degraded. (157-8).

Textual charisma therefore emphasizes the narrated identities of *memberships* which are being rhetorically constituted within a distinct quest narrative. As such, leaders and followers both identify with narrated roles or memberships within some overarching mythic saga. "Despite the stories of charismatic power and superhuman speakers," observes King (1987), "for the vast majority of speakers, the locus of power is in the audience" (25). Because charisma is indeed a concept that insinuates the heroic deeds and messages of superhuman personas during times of extraordinary dramatic social crisis, we therefore need to look closer at variations on this mythic script which evoke very different fantasy themes of ideological membership for the questing charismatic *ubermensch*.

THE DARK SIDE OF THE CHARISMATIC UBERMENSCH

> Charismatic leadership is a controversial phenomenon toward which we should always feel ambivalent. Paradoxical by its very nature, it has been associated with both the most inspiring and the most terrible episodes in human history. There are examples of charismatic leaders who are egotistical, elitist, exploitative, and destructive. There are also examples of those who are humble, egalitarian, fascilitative, and creative. For charismatic people exemplify, to an extreme degree, our human potential for the creation of both good and evil. As such, we need this paradoxical, contradictory concept to capture something of our paradoxical, contradictory nature: the phenomenon is all too real. (Hurst, 1995: 112)

In this passage, Hurst eloquently captures the archetypal appeal of what I have suggested is the myth of charisma. As we've seen in the previous chapter, the notion of charisma continues to be the subject of heated debate within leadership studies. Weber's secularization of the religious connotations of charisma highlights the powerful yet problematic status of emotionally-charged irrational beliefs within the socio-cultural processes of leadership and change, even for scholars

aspiring to objective theorization. Because charisma lies at the epicenter of key leadership controversies, evoking lofty ideals and dark realities that have endured since antiquity, it displays all the characteristic features of mythology. More than mere stories that a society shares, Fiske (1988) explains that "myth is a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature" (106). "Myths are a wonderful source of learning about the paradoxical, multidimensional complex aspects of human nature," says Peck (1993), including "the folly of attempting to assume god-like powers" (105-6). This paradoxical folly is indeed well illustrated in the continued scholarly debate over the pay-off and price of charismatic leadership, as well as the possible dependency of charismatic memberships.

Mythic narrative also provides a rhetorical vantage point from which we might contemplate the religious and spiritual connotations so closely associated with the history and nature of charisma. As Joseph Campbell (1973) has observed, the universal archetypes of mythology have historically served as dynamic rhetorical devices for religion, a language of symbols where "the inexhaustable energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation" (3). There is in fact very little to distinguish Weber's charismatic leader from Campbell's monomythic hero. "These special carriers of cosmic power constituted a spiritual and social aristocracy," notes Campbell (1973), yet these myths also often warn that the redemptive "hero of yesterday becomes the tyrant of tomorrow, unless he crucifies *himself* today" (316, 353). Glassman and Swatos (1986) similarly cringe that numerous scholars have pointed out Weber's study of populist or "plebiscitarian" leadership within the American presidency "when translated back into German, comes out "*fuhrer* democracy"-- a frightening specter indeed," and one which evokes discomforting "Nietzschean nightmares" (6). Thus, any

rhetorical invocation of charisma tacitly invokes its shadowy dark side, the fascistic or

totalitarian potential for the charismatic *ubermensch* to become Machiavellian Prince once the

hero has ascended to the throne of power. Forsyth (1991) infers the obvious of this god-like

savior figure who is equal parts religious prophet, socio-political redeemer, and Nietzschean

ubermensch: "The superman is, to a large degree, the prototypical charismatic leader" (1037).

The Superman seems a fictional fairy tale or the idealistic fodder for existential

contemplation, conventional wisdom suggests, whereas charismatic leadership is instead a very

real, observable socio-historical and political phenomenon. As an enduring rhetorical feature of

our discourse on leadership, the myth of the charismatic *ubermensch* persists because it reflects

our very real anxieties about leadership and power. MacIntyre (1987) insists that "there is no

way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of

stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources" and, since we can therefore quite sensibly

view "human beings as characters in enacted narratives," he is left to conclude that "Mythology,

in its original sense, is at the heart of things" (216-7). Narrative has long been a fundamental

mode of human knowledge and understanding, and has even been theorized as a paradigm of

human communication distinct from logical processes of analytic reasoning.[1] "As a spectator or

voyeur looking into a realistic fictional world, the reader interprets what happens much as we do

in ordinary life," Martin (1986) observes, because "the problem is not just one of inferring an

interpretation from a sequence of events we understand, but of understanding exactly what

happened -- fitting actions, characters and motives together in an intelligible plot or story" (155-

6). Some recurring public narratives and archetypal characters elicit powerful emotional

resonance and gain cultural currency across time as popular articulations of a shared socio-

cultural identity, which elevates these archetypal dramas or characters to mythological status.[2]

Whereas MacIntyre (1987) identifies the Machiavellian manager as the prominent character of

Western narratives, Jewett & Lawrence (2002) find it is the messianic Superhero who dominates

American political fantasies. Because myths never truly die, these mythic narratives of the

Machiavellian manager and the charismatic *ubermensch* therefore merely wait in the wings to be

rhetorically invoked in times of dramatic crisis.

A promising method for examining the constitutive rhetoric of charismatic myth-making

is Ernest Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis. Bormann theorizes that rhetorical fantasies

provide a nexus of rational and irrational discourse, advocating Fantasy Theme Analysis as a

viable methodology for understanding the narrated cohesiveness of human groups and collective

culture. This method was inspired by the works of Freudian psychoanalyst Robert Bales, who

observed that groups under duress would share seemingly trivial stories that would evoke a chain

reaction of fantasy-sharing amongst group members. Bormann (1972) would insist upon "going

directly to the rhetoric rather than relying on inferences about psychological entities unavailable

for analysis" (407). Bormann (1985) has explained "the basic dynamic of the theory is the

sharing of group fantasies, which brings about a convergence of appropriate feelings among the

participants" through "the creative and imaginative shared interpretation of events that fulfills a

group with psychological or rhetorical need" (JOC, 130). Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT)

has been generally acclaimed for offering a humanistic theory which also fulfills the "twin

objectives of scientific knowledge" (Griffin, 1991, pp. 34-42). It's greatest strength, enthuses

Poole (1990), is that SCT "emphasizes a rich emotional and ritualistic side of group life that is

currently somewhat neglected in group communication research" (243).

Fantasy Theme Analysis offers a form of rhetorical criticism that examines how

"dramatizing communication creates social reality for groups of people" (Bormann, 1983: 397).

Recurring stories or anecdotes and even inside-jokes can point to the shared fantasies of group

members, says Bormann (1985), cued by a "trigger" that may be "a code word, phrase, slogan or

nonverbal sign or gesture" or "imaginary place or persona" which is able to "evoke anger,

hatred, love and affection as well as laughter and humor" (132). When individuals of a group

circulate shared stories and dramatic interpretations of characters or events, these fantasy

dramatizations encourage what Bormann (1983) calls Symbolic Convergence, "the way two or

more private symbolic worlds incline toward each other, come more closely together, or even

overlap during certain processes of communication" (ff&t, 336). Symbolic Convergence implies

that individuals have interpreted some aspect of their experiences in the same way through the

sense-making of a shared dramatic framework. "When a speaker selects and slants the

interpretation of people's actions he or she begins to shape and organize experiences," Bormann

explains.[3] Because the social world is often chaotic, fantasy themes provide an essential coping

mechanism for both individuals and groups, especially in times of crisis:

> Against the panorama of large events and seemingly unchangable forces of society at
> large or of nature the individual often feels lost and hopeless. One coping
> mechanism is to dream an individual fantasy which provides a sense of meaning and
> significance for the individual and helps protect him from the pressures of natural
> calamity and social disaster. The rhetorical vision serves much the same coping
> function for those who participate in the drama and often with much more force
> because of the supportive warmth of like-minded companions.[4]

Rhetorical visions create a shared symbolic reality because of their capacity to project narrative

form onto otherwise disordered sensory experiences and complex social phenomena. "People

gather in groups," Nimmo & Combs (1990) agree, "and through fantasizing create a satisfying

rhetorical vision of the world" (214). Bormann (1972) finds Fantasy Theme Analysis particularly valuable because it can "account for the development, evolution, and decay of dramas that catch up groups of people and change their behavior" (399).[5] Similar to Griffin's (1993) Dramatistic theory of social movements, this perspective emphasizes that "people do not want information about, but identification with, community life; In drama they *participate*" (193).[6] Bormann's Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) emphasizes the dramatistic participation of group memberships both within and through the sharing of fantasy.

Bormann provides a specific vocabulary to guide Fantasy Theme analysis. A *fantasy* is "the creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need" (Bormann, 1977: 8). For Bormann, fantasies are imaginative dramatizations shared by individuals involving "characters, real or fictitious, playing out a dramatic situation in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now transactions of the group" (1972: 379). When co-workers grouse about the leisurely three-martini-lunches of imagined CEOs at corporate headquarters while their working lunch consists of peanut butter crackers, or when an exceptionally gifted persuader is celebrated by devotees as being impossibly capable of selling shoes to a rattlesnake, a fantasy is being shared. As participants circulate and share fantasies, some will possess significant resonance to then "chain out" through the person-to-person communication of others.[7] Fantasy chaining by individuals encourages preferred *fantasy themes* to emerge, circulate and become widely accepted by members of a group.

Fantasy Themes are the dramatic elements or narrative components that provide the units for rhetorical analysis. These fantasy themes are shared, repeated and elaborated by group members over time and across variational interpretations or discourses. Foss, Foss & Trapp

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(1991) specify that "Fantasy Themes concerning *setting* tell where the action is seen as taking place in the rhetorical world; *character* themes name and identify the characteristics and motives of heroes, villains and supporting players; and *action* themes, which also might be called plot lines, tell what is being done in the rhetorical world or drama" (328). It is through fantasy themes that individuals form into group collectives, and the fantasy chain reaction stimulates individuals from an "I" into the emotionally-invested "we" of a collective identity. Bormann explains that a group's shared fantasy themes cultivate "a sense of community, to impel them strongly to action" and "provide them with a social reality filled with heroes, villains, emotions and attitudes" (1993: 212-13). Fantasy themes can sometimes be alluded to and thus detected within *symbolic cues*, which Cragan & Shields (1992) note "may include a code word, phrase, slogan" or "even a nonverbal sign or gesture" (200). The term charisma is itself a symbolic cue, I suggest, which is suggestive of a particular fantasy being invoked.

As group members come to share common interpretations through the chaining of recurring fantasy themes, a coherent *rhetorical vision* of their social reality, group identity and joint venture emerges to become more fully articulated. Rhetorical visions are the unified and unifying symbolic convergence of fantasy themes for setting, characters and action, says Bormann (1972), "the composite dramas which catch up large groups of people in a symbolic reality" (398). "As people seek to make sense of the environment and the events around them, these fantasy themes swirl together to provide a credible interpretation of reality," explains Foss, Foss & Trapp (1991, 327). This rhetorical process of symbolic convergence allows the formation of shared symbolic worlds into a coherent vision which creates and perpetuates collective values, beliefs, ideals, and norms. Bormann (1978) finds powerful emotions and

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motives for action are "cued" by the key symbols or themes within the rhetorical vision:

> A rhetorical vision is constructed from fantasy themes that chain out in face-to-face interacting groups, in speaker-audience transactions, in viewers of television broadcasts, in listeners to radio programs, and in all diverse settings for public and intimate communication in a given society... [Moreover,] once a rhetorical vision emerges it contains dramatis personae and typical plot lines that can be alluded to in all communication contexts and spark a response reminiscent of the original emotional chain. (398)

A rhetorical vision therefore provides a credible interpretation of social reality that elicits powerful emotional resonance for its adherents. Rhetorical visions may emerge organically within the group over time, or it may be synthesized by a rhetor mediating specific rhetorical situations, but will nevertheless supply "a unified putting-together of the various shared scripts that gives the participants a broader view of things."[8] "Through symbolic convergence," Griffin (1991) explains, "individuals build a sense of community or a group consciousness," which motivates individuals to "assume a joint venture" championed by a rhetorical vision (34). A rhetorical vision may also offer interpretations of an *organizational saga*, a historical dramatization of past origins which provides a "detailed narrative of the achievement and events in the life of a person, a group, or a community."[9] An organizational saga is often observed when the collective consciousness of a group identity is actively promoted by formal institutions to provide an "official" version of that organization's history and aspirations, but alternate rhetorical visions of a present reality may likely offer different interpretations of the past organizational saga.

Since the 1970s, Symbolic Convergence Theory and Fantasy Theme Analysis has stimulated widespread interest and applications. While Bale's notion of fantasy was limited to the analysis of small groups, Bormann's rhetorical methodology quickly expanded as a general

communication theory of Symbolic Convergence that examined interpersonal, socio-political, and mediated cultural phenomena. Two early studies set the stage for what would later become a bone of contention. Examining the Restoration Movement of the Disciples of Christ, Hensley (1975) found a secular rhetorical vision that set forth familiar Biblical themes with a unique emphasis for Western pioneers; winning the West was participation in the religious drama of winning the world for Christ. Kidd (1975) examined popular magazines between 1951 and 1975 to discover two major rhetorical visions, one a more restrictive "traditional" vision and another more fluid or "negotiated" visions of Women's roles in modern society. Whereas Hensley's study suggests that a rhetorical vision offers a unique synthesis of sacred and secular fantasy themes which disguise potential contradictions, Kidd's broader survey of cultural changes suggests some competing rhetorical visions develop antithetically due to such profound value contradictions.

A recurring problematic in the study of group fantasies, therefore, has been in evaluating the conflicting fantasies within and across group cultures in terms of their unconscious functions and subconscious emotional appeal. Bormann's (1977) study of different social movements examines the use of calamity as a rhetorical form fetching good from evil by pointing out the evil of a villainous enemy or situation, thereby motivating actions that will remove or reduce conditions causing guilt or anxiety. Such rhetorical visions offer coping mechanisms for an insufferable past or present status quo through the fantasy of a better tomorrow. In an extensive analysis of Cold War rhetoric, for example, Bormann, Cragan & Shields (1996) would subsequently extract three competing rhetorical visions contending for American political supremacy: the *One World* vision of post-WWII world peace through allied cooperation, the *Red*

Fascism vision of an insidious outside threat posed by Communist infiltration, and the *Power*

Politics vision of imposing American dominance upon the world to circumvent potential threats.

This tension between competing fantasies is one that Bormann (1972) posited as a central

problematic of fantasy analysis:

> When the authentic record of events is clear and widely understood, the competing visions must take it into account... [But] Whenever occasions are so chaotic and indiscriminate that the community has no clear observational impression of the facts, people are given free rein to fantasize within the assumptions of their rhetorical vision (405).

Bormann (1985) admits some rare rhetorical visions are conversions so all-encompassing that

they can collapse an individual's social reality into the *life-style rhetorical vision* of an alternate

rhetorical community. Considering the counter-cultural dynamics of social movements, Stewart,

Smith & Denton (1989) point out that "when listeners recognize the fantasy as one of their own,

they respond emotionally as well as cognitively" and "*they are bound to one another both by the*

shared vision and by the process of creating it" (195). The archetypal charismatic situation of

personal alienation, social crisis, or spiritual anomie therefore seem particularly ripe for the clash

of competing rhetorical visions offering very different interpretive dramatizations of social

reality.

Although the Symbolic Convergence Theory of fantasy theme analysis posits rhetorical

visions as discursive mechanisms for creating a shared group consciousness, little attention has

been given to the psychological mechanisms from Bales Freudian framework while more focus

has been afforded to the nebulous concept of culture. Particularly encouraged by works of

mediated cultural analysis, Bormann (1982) admits that issues of cultural contextualization have

created definitional ambiguities even while suggesting exciting new directions:

After we had documented the relationship between sharing fantasies in the small group and the development of group culture, the discovery of rhetorical visions raised research questions about the relationship between messages and the rhetorical visions of larger communities of people. Soon it became apparent that this line of inquiry would examine the relationship between rhetoric and culture and the rule of rhetoric in generating social knowledge ("Ten Years Later," 297).

The more intriguing examinations using fantasy theme analysis, we might conclude, posit a dynamic interplay between conflicting fantasy types and competing rhetorical visions engaged in symbolic battle for dominance over the hearts and minds of cultural memberships. The fantasy themes of specific groups, it seems, interact with and are influenced by cultural fantasies.

An important distinction arises between the fantasy themes of groups and the fantasy types of culture. Bormann (1993) would later concede the fantasy themes upon which rhetorical visions rely are often achetypal variations of enduring *fantasy type*s, "a recurring script in the culture of a group" which is "essentially the same narrative frame but with different characters and slightly different incidents" ("Symbolic Convergence," 110). A fantasy type, says Bormann (1985), may also be a "stock scenario repeated again and again by the same or similar characters" ("Force of Fantasy," 7). Bormann, Cragan & Shields (1994) differentiate fantasy themes as "the content of a dramatizing message that sparks the fantasy chain," whereas a fantasy type is a "general scenario that covers several of the more concrete fantasy themes" (281). Fantasy types therefore offer variations of a mythic script circulating within a broader cultural context apriori of individual fantasies or group rhetorical visions which draw upon these familiar archetypes. "The presence of a fantasy type in the communication of participants in a rhetorical vision indicates that they have shared the fantasy themes that comprise the *type prior to* the time they drew the comparisons," remarks Bormann (1982c, 295, emphasis mine). We may here conclude that rhetorical visions are specific occurrences *within groups or rhetorical*

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communities, fantasies are expressed and "chained" *by individuals*, and mythic fantasy types are rhetorical variations of an overarching archetype which circulates as an *enduring myth across a broader cultural collectivity*.

Like mythic archetypes, fantasy types are a rhetorical resource for different groups or even competing rhetorical communities. Nimmo & Combs (1990) suggest mythic fantasy types often reify the dominant cultural mythology but, in rare instances, express new variations:

> Many fantasies that will not die, that endure through generations of chaining, enter the realm of myth. A myth is a credible, dramatic, and socially constructed picture that people accept as permanent, fixed, unchanging reality. The genius of the Founding Fathers, the greatness of Abraham Lincoln, the Manifest Destiny of America are all examples of myths. Fantasy themes may combine to support enduring myths; at the same time, fantasies conforming to a nation's mythology endure and continue chaining out because of that mythology... [and can thereby] become the taken-for-granted, unquestioned stuff of politics. (14)

Bormann (1982) acknowledges that studies suggest competing "mirror-image" fantasies can clash within organizational contexts, pointing to a need "to study the formal and informal small group cultures and rhetorical visions of various rhetorical communities within the organization, and to find the extent to which members share a common organizational saga" (56). As critics challenged the utility and overlapping definitions of the method, Bormann (1983, 1986) would distinguish the symbolic convergence of group identity through strategies of consciousness creating, consciousness raising, and consciousness sustaining. "Being social creatures, people tend to define themselves in terms of group consciousness in which they participate," Bormann (1985) remarks, "so the attacks on self-definition are often attacks on the core fantasies of old visions" (13-14).

Discovery of "mirror-image fantasies" in group counter-cultures, therefore, alludes to the possibility (or perhaps inevitability) that competing mythic fantasy types within a group culture

could result in profound communication standoffs between rival rhetorical visions or opposing group sagas. Of particular interest to this study is Hart's observation that fantasy themes are in fact "mythic shorthand," since "if myths are the prized tales of humankind in general, fantasy themes are the local variations wrought on these [mythic] themes."[10] Fiske (1990) affirms that although "there are myths, there are also counter-myths" that circulate within sub-cultures to critically challenge the hegemonic meanings and dominant values of a status quo (90). Following Max Weber, however, we should emphasize that the counter-myths of charismatic authority are distinct from traditional or bureaucratic authority because the charismatic fantasy themes will challenge the status quo power arrangements of institutionalized conventions, tradition, or bureaucratic processes. Past fantasy theme analyses have observed a cultural tension within visions of the "American Dream" between Restoration fantasy types that fluctuate between institutional reform and social revolution. Bormann (1982b) finds "the restoration fantasy type has been a powerful and continuing religious form" since the first Puritan settlers, although successive rhetorical communities can vary greatly in their rhetorical visions of restoring the "American Dream" because of modifications to previous visions (139). Foss (1996) confirms that sometimes more than one rhetorical vision can be found within rhetorical artifacts, an attempt to unify or demonize conflicting rhetorical communities. Campbell (1979) contends that the fantasy themes of charismatic rhetoric have "sharply opposed bureaucratic authority and repudiated involvement with the status quo" through transcendent identifications, like those of Jimmy Carter who invoked Christian theology alongside the Founding Fathers during his presidential bid during America's Bicentennial, which 'reified the revolutionary element of our rhetorical vision" (185). Bell (1996) has also insisted upon distinctions "between

the revolutionary illegitimacy of pure charisma and what I term the institutionalized, or extra-legal, illegitimacy of the late twentieth century political hero" (58). Bell demands we acknowledge differences between manufactured pseudocharisma and revolutionary charisma, making distinctions "between that anti-institutionalist authority figure who challenges the established power arrangements or seeks to overthrow them and the institutionalist who seeks only to acquire them" (69). The pressing issue for fantasy critics of charisma, it seems, is to examine the significant differences underlying what may appear mere variations of a similar fantasy.

Recasting fantasy types as archetypal variations of a pre-existing cultural mythology is valuable because it acknowledges criticisms by Mohrmann (1982) and Gunn (2003) that fantasies often obscure the ideological motives, unconscious desires, and unacknowledged double meanings conflicting within the collective unconscious of group cultures. [11] Stone (2002) also points to studies suggesting that rhetorical visions may offer "a blend" of master analogues via the "archetypal deep structures" which they invoke (230). Due to Fundamental Attribution Error, the "tendency to assign more noble motives" to one's own behavior, Stone reports that adherents of a rhetorical vision tend to "identify with fantasy types that are largely 'righteous' in nature" since such self-idealizing motivations are "easier to reconcile within themselves than more 'pragmatic' motives" of naked self-interest or utilitarian effectiveness which may also be motivational factors (238). "In truth," Jackson (1999) admits of the group membership who are swept up in fantasy, "we would probably see a full spectrum of commitment ranging from cynical disgust through to casual interest to manic devotion" (364). In order to plumb the unconscious and ideological functions of fantasy, and gain a fuller appreciation of how a fantasy

may emotionally attract diverse audiences, we will need to consider the rhetorical functions of mythic rhetoric.

THE FANTASY SCRIPT OF CHARISMATIC RHETORIC AND CULTURETYPES OF CHARISMATIC REDEEMERS

In order to clarify and qualify the functions of myth for fantasy theme analysis, however, useful distinctions must be made between archetype and culturetype, as well as between the spiritual and ideological functions of mythic fantasy rhetoric. Steven Walker (2002) explains that Jungian psychoanalysis distinguishes the archetypes of the unconscious and instinctual structures of the human psyche from the specific archetypal image and motifs that are culturally elaborated and expressed within myth. "If myths present such astonishing diversity, it is because of the various ways of representing them culturally as images of the psyche," Walker notes, although "every myth, however peculiar or exotic, contains the potential for revealing indirectly some unforeseen or neglected aspect of the human psyche" and "collective unconscious" (4-5). Thus, Walker says, discerning theorists now "distinguish between myths of the *cultural unconscious*—myths which are tied to their own particular time and culture—and myths of the *collective unconscious*—myths which are less specific and more universal" (154). As outlined in the previous discussion, the Weberian myth of charismatic leadership is commonly expressed in differing cultural manifestations of prophets, warlords, gurus, political saviors, and other variations of the *ubermensch* superhero fantasy. "It is thus 'creative fantasy'—the human imagination—that creates myths out of archetypal images," Walker explains, and it is "through a process of conscious, imaginative elaboration that spontaneously generated archetypal images become the specific culturally determined figures of mythology" (2002, 19).

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Rhetorical critics of myth have long advocated cautious discernment between the archetypal and ideological functions of our cultural mythologies. Roland Barthes recognizes that myth is indeed "a culture's way of understanding, expressing and communicating to itself concepts that are important to its self-identity as a culture" but, in doing so, myth circulates meanings which preserve dominant class interests, power relationships and hierarchies.[12] Roelofs (1976) agrees that myth politically sustains "a nationally shared framework of political consciousness by which a people becomes aware of itself as a people, as having an identity in history, and by which it is also prepared to recognize some governing regime within its community as legitimate" (p. 4). Eagleton (1991) explains that an ideological uses of myth "are generally more specific, pragmatic forms of discourse" that invoke mythic themes but "bring them to bear more directly on power" (188). Now recognizable is a *hegemonic function of mythic rhetoric*, what Lee & Lee (1998) call the "mythic-repair of ideology," in which rhetorical "advocacy repairs myths so that they may remain vital in the face of changing circumstances" and thus interpretively reinvigorates the mythic premises of a dominant ideology (2). The *Myth of Pseudocharismatic Leadership* that I described in chapter two illustrates this hegemonic function of mythic rhetoric, but we would do well to remember that "the lines of myth are fluid; they have no absolute beginnings or endings, only the punctuations we assign them for our own comprehension... myth is an ongoing saga."[13]

Even when used for ideological or political ends, however, the motivating force behind myth is transcendence. Janice Rushing provides a clarifying distinction between "ideological" cultural myths and "sacred" archetypal myths, which address an "omnipotent" exigence to "overcome a sense of separation from self, society and the universe."[14] Archetypal myths are

composed of "so-called universal symbols" which recur as "responses to shared human experience," while political/cutural myths are discursive interpretations specific to "the particular historical conditions in which it occurs" (Rushing & Frentz, 1991, pp. 389-390). Transcendent mythic archetypes provide glimpses into the ontological wholeness of a sacred cosmos, Mircea Eliade explains, since "every myth shows how a reality came into existence, whether it be the total reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment."[15] The religious is nothing less than a search for transcendent wholeness, Eliade continues, and when human beings recognize themselves within this interpretive framework "as a divine work, the cosmos becomes a paradigmatic image of human existence."[16] The transcendent is thus associated with religion and mysticism, because the cosmological wholeness which it conveys:

> ...is not arrived at by logical, rational operation. The transcendental category of height, of the superterrestrial, of the infinite, is revealed to *the whole man*, to his intelligence and his soul. It is total awareness on man's part... a symbol speaks to the whole human being and not only to the intelligence... [and] it is through symbols that the world becomes transparent, is able to show the transcendent.[17]

Joseph Campbell finds humanity's enduring transcendent truths cloaked in myth's symbolic clothing, the archetypes of religion and mythology historically serving as dynamic rhetorical devices which allow "the inexhaustable energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation."[18]

Now emerging is a neglected *spiritual function of mythic rhetoric*, what Rushing (1985) calls a "Rhetoric of Mythic Transcendence." Responding to the exigence of an alienating or fragmented cosmos, a rhetoric of mythic transcendence seeks to "reaffirm the centrality of the present as one chapter in an evolutionary and cosmological narrative that stretches into the past as history and into the future as spirit" (189), says Rushing (1985), while remaining mindful that

"true transcendence is open to human choice and *praxis* and this choice creates both responsibility and the necessity for rhetorical discourse" (191). Levi-Strauss (1955) posits that although our myths indeed reflect the ideological tensions and contradictions of this struggle by expressing them through 'universal' symbolic patterns of binary oppositions, interpretive variations can also evidence cultural insecurity about the meanings and consequences of conflicting social values. Fiske (1987) notes that myths therefore rhetorically provide "an imaginative way of coping with the conflict, which is a crucial mythic function, for the conflict itself can never be resolved" (132).

The transcendent yearning for a unified and unifying cosmos of spiritual wholeness is thus rife with paradox, Rushing & Frentz (1995) point out, since "the important myths of a society are complex blends of archetypal and rhetorical elements that are sometimes in concert and other times in conflict with one another" (46). Since a truly spiritual wholeness of cosmos challenges dichotomies in a mythic quest toward some transcendent synthesis, Rushing & Frentz find that mythic transcendence "opens up intellectual oppositions" to "allow the realization of the interrelationship among all things," and is symbolized paradoxically in order to "talk about that aspect of the self that connects the person with Spirit" (38). While myths can "dramatize the larger meaning of life as lived," this self-reflexivity is spiritually essential because "it is when myths are unconsciously lived that they lead toward regressive wish-fulfillment or take on a sinister cast" (46). Rushing & Frentz contend that "an introverted movement is the necessary counterbalance," and feel that "interest in myth and the Self, in spirituality and inner awareness, should be welcomed" (221). Thus, Rhetorical Transcendence defies status quo dichotomies of Being to imagine a new cosmos of mutually interdependant social relationships, embracing the

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mythic ambiguity which opens self-reflexive dialogue on cultural values in conflict. This

spiritual function of mythic rhetoric therefore invites self-reflexive critique of a hegemonic

meanings since "a myth's purpose is, rather, the communication of spiritual meaning" (46). In

short, the ideological function of mythic rhetoric preserves how things are by maintaining a basic

collective sense of who we are, while the spiritual function of mythic rhetoric challenges how

things are by inviting us to question what we are collectively becoming.

Mythic narrative thus begins to emerge as a viable venue for exploring the irrational,

transformative and revolutionary characteristics of charisma. MacIntyre insists that "there is no

way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of

stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources," and concludes that "Mythology, in its

original sense, is at the heart of things" since we can quite sensibly view "human beings as

characters in enacted narratives" (216-7). MacIntyre explains:

> ...what is specific to each culture is in large and central part what is specific to its
> stock of *characters*... Both individuals and roles can, and do, like characters,
> embody moral beliefs, doctrines and theories, but each does so in its own way...
> [The] chain of reasoning, the context which makes the taking of each step part of an
> intelligible sequence, is that particular individual's history of action, belief,
> experience and interaction... The character morally legitimates a mode of social
> existence. (28-9)

The implications of MacIntyre's narrative conceptualization of social identity and selfhood is

twofold. First, mythic characters and narrated individuals are the subjects of a history or story

made meaningful by "movement toward a climax or *telos*" (217). Second, asking or giving

accounts for any history of actions is a crucial part of constituting self-narratives because the

"narrative of any one life is part of an interlocking set of narratives," those mutual relationships

and interdependant social identities negotiated through shared *practices* with other characters

(218). "It is the individual in his or her role, representing his or her community, who is as in

epic the dramatic character," MacIntyre asserts, although "in some important sense the

community too is a dramatic character which enacts the narrative of *its* history" (145). Although

MacIntyre correctly identifies the Machiavellian Manager as a dominant myth impacting the

narrated social identities of Western culture, I suggest that the charismatic leader is a counter-

mythic fntasy which also exerts tremendous influence upon the popular imagination.

     If charisma is a mythic archetype that spans both time and cultures, then specific cultural

variations of charismatic leadership may be more productively understood as fantasy

culturetypes that serve both spiritual and ideological rhetorical functions. Michael Osborn

contends that, as "the counterpart of archetypes," culturetypes "are culture-specific symbols that

resonate important values" (1990: 123).   He finds "archetypes and culturetypes brace and

complement each other, culturetypes expressing the special values and meanings of a society,

archetypes anchoring the cultural system in enduring meaningfulness" (1990: 123).

"Culturetypes remind us of what it means to be an American," Osborn explains, and "archetypes

of what it means to be human" (1990: 123). Overall, says Osborn, a culturetype "signifies the

timeliness and specificity of their power [as special symbols] in contrast with the timelessness

and cross-cultural power of archetypal symbols" (1986: 82). For Osborn, "culturetypes receive

their charge of special symbolic meaning through narratives that are heavily freighted with social

significance" (1990: 123). "To the extent that they compress and resonate stories that explain

the origins and purposes of a society, culturetypes may come to function as implicit myths. As

expressions of mythos, they may constitute a source of proof in rhetoric that rivals logos, ethos,

and pathos" (1986: 90). Osborn insists that "rhetorical fantasies and narratives" are "very much

related to the work" of mythic culturetypes, which "often derive their power from fantasies and folk tales in which they are embedded, fiction which often passes for history" (1986: 90). Culturetypes, Osborn observes, thus "express an underlying ideology in which they are grounded and which they constantly express and promote" (1986: 82). Because ideology is a site of struggle over symbolic meanings, conflicting culturetypes vie for supremacy. Lucaites and Condit (1995) argue that the counter-cultural revolutionary as culturetypal rhetor "has culturally authorized characterizations and narratives in place which link and support the community's key values" (1995: 462). Rhetorical inspections of culturetypes thus need "to include sacred narratives and characterizations as well" (1995: 473). As Rushing & Frentz (1995) point out, "the important myths of a society are complex blends of archetypal and rhetorical elements that are sometimes in concert and other times in conflict with one another" (46).

This study will therefore use fantasy culturetypes to operationalize the myth of charisma into discrete units for rhetorical analysis. Charisma is here understood as a mythic culturetype, a recurring fantasy "script" in a cultural collectivity that offers essentially the same narrative framework but with fantasy variations in the scenes, characters, and actions adapted to the highly contextual needs of particular cultural audiences. Boss (1976), Campbell (1979), and Lewis (1988) have identified the recurring rhetorical features typical of this mythic script of charismatic leadership, now understood as a fantasy culturetype, which we may summarize as follows: (1) a heroic leader exhibiting superhuman or extraordinary "gifts of grace or favor" by acting as a miracle-worker, magician or shaman; (2) alienation or anomie arising from an important social crisis of meaning and/or identity; (3) a visionary message for revolutionary change that challenges status quo tradition, convention and institutional practices; (4) appeals to

emotions or sentiments through dramatic portrayals of polarized aggression between good/evil or just/unjust forces; (5) a saga of collective identity positing a shared history and a future-present mission as an idealistic quest or moral crusade; (6) idolatrous followers mobilized as devoted apostles and co-propagators of a leader's rhetorical vision; and, (7) successful results in achieving individual transformation and/or significant social change. This script for revolutionary charisma bears striking resemblance to what Jewett & Lawrence (2002) have identified as the redemptive Monomyth of the American Superhero:

> Although there are significant variations, the following archetypal plot formula may be seen in thousands of popular-culture artifacts: A community in harmonious paradise is threatened by evil; normal institutions fail to contend with this threat; a selfless superhero emerges to renounce temptations and carry out the redemptive task; aided by fate, his decisive victory restores the community to its paradisiacal condition; the superhero then recedes into obscurity... [This American Monomyth] secularizes the Judeo-Christian dramas of community redemption that have arisen on American soil, combining elements of the selfless servant who impassively gives his life for others and the zealous crusader who destroys evil. The supersaviors in pop culture function as replacements for the Christ figure, whose credibility was eroded by scientific rationalism. But their superhuman abilities reflect a hope for divine, redemptive powers that science has never eradicated from the popular mind. (6-7)

Their central concern is that "democratic entertainments should, with significant frequency, create stories expressing a strong democratic ethos, stories of ordinary heroes and heroines rather than of superheroic redeemers who employ fascist methods in a futile effort to redeem a democratic society" (350). These authors disturbingly conclude that "American superheroes, in their striving to redeem corrupted republics or instantly adjust psychological problems, typically reflect values that are antithetical to democratic processes" by instead favoring violent vigilante redemption (351).

The anti-democratic premises in this Monomyth of the American Superhero pointedly illustratrates Gunn's (2003) concern that "fantasies obscure motives and desires" by rationalizing

unconscious drives or disguising ideological contradictions through "highly opaque, misleading significations" (51-2). That is, fantasies tend to offer groups a self-portrait that is both utopian and benevolent, yet such self-idealizations also tend to repress the "dark side" of unquestioned presuppositions, unexamined motivations, and the inherent potential for unintended if not tragic consequences. The corrective of mythic culturetypal analysis as applied to fantasy theme analysis acknowledges these rhetorical visions as "manifestations of the activity of the unconscious part of the mind" and, as Walker (2000) suggests, charges the rhetorical critic to examine mythic fantasy rhetorics in an attempt to "balance the one-sided activities and attitudes of ego-consciousness" (19). Understood as promoting mythic fantasy culturetypes, charisma and its "dark side" are opened to rhetorical examinations of its unconscious allure and potentially sinister effects when unreflexively enacted as leadership. Gunn (2003) finds that "the key limitation of fantasy theme analysis" has been that "symbolic convergence was defended as an entirely conscious endeavor," although "fantasy may be in more control of the participants than they supposed" (52).

There may indeed be an inherent danger in rhetorical visions that substitute the comforting oversimplifications of a monomythic fantasy metanarrative for the complex and contradictory realities of political organization and human behavior. "Because it is shared, a group fantasy takes on an aura of truth that the private fantasies of individuals do not," observe Nimmo & Combs (1990), since "the proof of the validity of a group fantasy lies simply in the fact that it is shared" (11). Nimmo & Combs (1980) worry that the increasing popularity of the charismatic superhero fantasy within popular media could be both nobilized and mobilized rhetorically into a religiously-charged political force of considerable consequence, as it has in

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times past:

> Such fantasy is understandable but is potentially dangerous. The bulk of the superheroes depicted get their authority to act from translegal sources that supercede normal legal precepts. Typically, they are charismatic, pure outsiders, and they succeed because of their moral and technological power, oftentimes by violence. They are attractive because they offer a clearcut distinction between good and evil, simplify the ambiguities in life, and overcome obstacles quickly and neatly. It need hardly be added that these superheroic characteristics can take on a demonic form in political life. Napoleon, Hitler, and, to some extent, Lenin and Stalin were exalted as political superheroes who derived their authority from translegal sources; followers perceived them as charismatic, pure, outsiders (e.g., Napoleon was Corsican, Hitler Austrian); they offered simple solutions by violence; and they succeeded because of alleged moral superiority and technological skill (e.g., military and propaganda). The belief that someone can and should have that kind of power to save has had popular appeal-- and truly devastating results. (154)

Their concern is that effective rhetorical visions can exhibit all the characteristic traits and pitfalls of what is known in organizational studies as *Groupthink*, "the danger that the shared illusion will not be penetrated by any discomfirming messages" as decision-making groups prefer "to have around themselves like-minded" participants who prize cohesion over conflict (1980, 215). "If what provoked the fantasizing in the first place is of sufficiently widespread interest," observe Nimmo & Combs (1990), "conditions are ripe for another key stage of fantasy development where mass communication enters, spreading a single fantasy shared by broad segments of a population to mass audiences" and thereby come to "constitute *the* reality for a group faced with a problematic situation" (12). They are most concerned that mass-mediated rhetorical visions might become "the single symbolic reality created for an entire population," reducing the complexities and contradictions of some crisis to the monological reality of a dominant metanarrative: "For those who share them, fantasies are real, the reality is fantasy" (12-13). This "ultimate fantasy" of a singular reality "has tyrannical implications," they warn,

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because such groupthink substitutes living in "a world of plural possibilities" for the reductiveness and certainty of metanarrative logic (228-32). Eagleton (1991) similarly cautions that as a register of ideology, "myths have mistaken their symbolic worlds for literal ones and so come to naturalize their own status," yet are "clearly a piece of rhetoric, designed to foster solidarity and self-affirmation" when invoked within ideologically-interested political discourse (191). Instead of fantasy serving as a dramatistic oversimplification of a complex social reality, mass-mediated rhetorical fantasy can itself *become* reality for a rhetorical community if the mythic map becomes mistaken for the complex social terrain.

The fantasy type of the charismatic superhero, however, does indeed exhibit significant mythic variations in the fantasy culturetypes of leadership and membership which it narratively sanctions. As Weber so often emphasized, charismatic authority is "routinized" very differently according to salient historical, bureaucratic and cultural contingencies. If the American Monomyth of the Charismatic Superhero is a fantasy that dominates our contemporary cultural landscape, then it does so by demonstrating surprising adaptability in its archetypal variations. It is these variational routinizations of charismatic leadership which are to be the focus of this study. Following Jewett & Lawrence (1977), Nimmo & Combs (1980) find within American collective consciousness at least four major types of redeemer figures. First is the *Heidi redeemer*, or what I call the **Transformational Prophet**, "a morally pure exemplar" or *ubermensch* articulating "an appeal to moral transformation" who "endeavors to tap wellsprings of goodness in us all" and thereby "transcend interest and calculation for principle" (241). Second is the saintly **Servant Superhero** as *royal redeemer*, a "mythic hero who, because of noble background or accomplishment" subscribes to the aristocratic "tradition of *noblesse*

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oblige" or "duty of the priveledged" in which "the benevolence of an elite is our path to salvation" through their virtuous exercise of power rather than the moral conversion of the people (241-2). Third is the **Empowered Superteams** of *technocratic redeemers*, who "does not appeal to moral transformation" nor "have elite claims" but instead believes that "problems are really questions of technique and that they can be solved through the concerted efforts of scientists, engineers, and other experts" who constitute teams skilled at "technocratic engineering" (242). Fourth is the **Messianic Prince**, or what they label as the *demonic redeemer*, "someone messianic and vengeful who can mobilize hate and fear, identify scapegoats, and promise a restored Eden of community, security, and authority," yet this revenge quest hero "represents a punitive principle" which is "not limited by the democratic tradition" but instead "justified by the gravity and threat of the evils that beset us" (242-3). If charisma as a fantasy type does indeed exhibit relatively stable rhetorical characteristics as a recurring mythic script, then these differing fantasy themes of "redeemer figures" would seem to offer significant culturetypal variations in the constitutive rhetoric of membership being narrated. The primary focus of this study is to therefore explore the rhetorical features of these conflicting American fantasy themes of charismatic leadership and memberships.

This review of fantasy theme analysis and culturetypal criticism therefore yields several significant conclusions regarding the constitutive rhetoric of charismatic leadership. First, the myth of charisma evidences fairly stable dramatic characteristics as a mythic script or recurring fantasy type that circulates within American popular culture. Second, this monomythic fantasy type of the charismatic superhero is ambiguous enough to allow competing "mirror image" fantasies of charismatic leadership to be articulated as counter-mythic culturetypes. Some

perceive charismatic leadership as benevolent, for example, while others may perceive the same dramatis personae as malevolent if not demonic. Third, these counter-mythic culturetypes of charismatic leadership via variational redeemer figures warrant further examination into the mythic memberships and power relationships being rhetorically constituted. The culuretypal critic should thus what kinds of rhetorical communities and charismatic *memberships* become encouraged when these counter-mythic fantasy themes are invoked as mass-mediated rhetorical visions, and what are the potential dangers if such visions dominate as cultural groupthink.

This study will therefore explore the mythic pay-off and price of these four dominant fantasy culturetypes of charismatic leadership by examining "management gurus" and their models for "empowered memberships" for discursive traces of the Transformational Prophet, the Virtuous Superhero, Empowered Superteams, and the Pseudocharismatic Prince. We now turn to the texts for analysis and a brief overview of the "management guru" phenomenon.

TEXTS FOR ANALYSIS: VISION QUESTS OF MANAGEMENT GURUS

Even when the mythmakers of business management do not invoke the term "charisma" directly, their idealizations nonetheless crave the magic, transcendence, and transformational vision that have long distinguished mere management from the emotional and spiritual inspiration of "real" leadership. Bennis and Nanus (1985) distinguish management from leadership by invoking the almost magical qualities of charisma:

> By focusing attention on a vision, the leader operates on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization, on its values, commitment, and aspirations. The manager, by contrast, operates on the physical resources of the organization, on its capital, human skills, raw materials and technology… Great leaders often inspire their followers to high levels of achievement by showing them how their work

> contributes to worthwhile ends. It is an emotional appeal to some of the most fundamental of human needs: the need to be important, to make a difference, to feel useful, to be a part of a successful and worthwhile enterprise… If there is a spark of genius in the leadership function at all, it must lie in this transcending ability, a kind of magic, to assemble out of a variety of images, signals, forecasts, and alternatives a clearly articulated vision of the future that is at once simple, easily understood, clearly desirable, and energizing. (92)

In evidence here are some of the characteristic rhetorical elements of the charismatic fantasy script as described in the previous sections. "Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality," observes Burke (1966), "by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality" (45). So, too, does the social science of leadership often denounce and disavow the idea of charismatic leadership even as it wishes aloud for a shamanistic savior who will concoct an elixir for the ailing spirit of an alienated corporate workforce amidst rapid change. As Burke has noted, observes Rueckert (1963), "Scientism needs to be counter-balanced by a stress on 'intuition,' 'imagination,' 'vision,' and 'revelation'" (38). By extension, bureaucratic management needs periodic charismatic renewal.

The longing for charismatic leadership can easily be found within countless popular books and theorists touting the necessity for a "paradigm shift" in organizational leadership. House and Shamir (1993) delineate the common features shared by Transformational, Charismatic, and Visionary Theories that have begun to displace managerial methods with inspirational strategies. Putnam and Mumby (1993) similarly critique the prevailing view of emotions within organizations as rooted in a "myth of rationality," a paradigm in which "emotions are constantly devalued and marginalized while rationality is privileged as an ideal for effective organizational life" (40). Pitcher (1997) condemns such technocratic rule in

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organizations as "the triumph of 'instrumental reason,' 'disengaged reason,' dispassionate logic, or the dominant idea that reason divorced from emotion is the guarantor of sanity, 'objectivity' and good judgment" (190). These authors and others decry mechanistic paint-by-numbers leadership formulas to proclaim, as do Belasco and Stayer (1993), "the awful truth about leadership—each person must write his or her own personal cookbook" (26).

Little wonder, then, that popular books on business leadership would themselves become big business as managers struggled to refine their own leadership styles in the hopes for a more enthusiastic mobilization of subordinates. The business of providing executive training is now estimated to be a $800 million industry, according to *BusinessWeek* estimates.[19] Michael Macy wonders in *Administrative Science Quarterly*: "Why would bright, well-educated managers under intense pressure to "get it right" line up like lemmings to jump on one sure-fire, can't-miss panacea after the other?" He marvels, "Despite the contagious enthusiasm these movements seem to inspire, numerous surveys show that about three out of four managers end up disappointed with the results. What is most puzzling is that this disappointment only seems to whet their appetites for the next hot innovation."[20] According to *Forbes* magazine ("Business books are still big business," 10/2/02), although there had been occasional business leadership bestsellers, the genre was not firmly established as a full-fledged trade publishing category until the Reagan-era boom of 1982 made books like *Megatrends, In Search of Excellence*, and *The One-Minute Manager* subjects of boardroom buzz. The phenomenal success of Lee Iacocca's 1984 autobiography showed business books could dominate the best-seller lists as revenues from the consumer book market expanded to $726 million in 1997, $911 million in 2000, and $851.8

million by 2001. "By the time the boom of the 1990s rolled around," James Surowiecki says, "CEOs had become America's superheroes."[21]

In the 80s and 90s, the notion of charisma made a comeback amidst this corporate superhero worship. Harvard business professor Rakesh Khurana (2002) identifies the Iacocca biography as a watershed moment in the rise of a new ideology, "the new counter-cultural capitalist ethos in which work has been transformed into an intellectual and spiritual calling," thereby changing "the definition of an effective CEO from that of competent manager to charismatic leader" who imbues a "moral dimension" to "quasi-religious" corporations (70-1). The irrational quest for a corporate savior within most companies, he argues, carries a price:

> Despite the lack of a convincing link between the CEO and corporate performance, firms continue to buy into the mythology that the key to improving long-tem firm performance (over and above whatever short-term boost to the stock price they hope to achieve by this means) is hiring an external savior… Yet the obvious fallacy involved in attributing the performance of any large, complex organization (functioning, as it does, by the interdependent effort of thousands) to the contribution of any single individual turns the CEO into a kind of demigod compared to mere mortals… The turn to charismatic leadership represents an attempt to find an individual who will provide a guiding vision for the organization. Yet the vision of a charismatic leader is a poor organizing principle for contemporary firms, which increasingly depend for their success on the sharing of intelligence and the dispersal of decision-making authority across all levels of the organization. For one thing, charismatic leadership, intentionally or not, necessitates strong centralized rule. Charismatic authority often professes a love of egalitarianism and empowerment, but such noble-sounding declarations—like the dictator's professions of "love" for his people—can and frequently do, turn out to be self-deluding or manipulative… The problem lies in the fact that charismatic authority discourages criticism… Without being able to hear any critical, questioning voices, however, the charismatic leder in a large, complex organization has no way even of knowing whether he or she is being effective. (190, 195-6)

Nevertheless, the fantasy mythos of the charismatic leader persists because of continued fascination with the success stories of enlightened corporate rulers. "Written from the point of

view of a single CEO protagonist—as are many leadership cases," complains Khurana of

leadership models currently taught in business schools, "our pedagogical tools can subtly

reinforce the charismatic orientation that dominates contemporary discussions of leadership,

particularly the assumptions that leadership exists primarily at the CEO level… at the top of the

organizational hierarchy" (214). This leader-centric bias in leadership studies is particularly

troubling in light of a recent survey of leadership coursework within America by William

Howell (1997), who found that the disciplinary base of leadership researchers and faculty is

dominated by the behavioral and social sciences, of which business management encompasses

the single largest sector of leadership classes taught and charismatic-transformational leadership

models were emphasized in all but five courses. Nicholas Philipson, executive editor for

Perseus' business books, confirms in *Forbes* magazine: "Business now permeates the culture"

(10/2/02).

A casual trip to the bookstore suggests this irrational quest for a charismatic superhero

continues to thrive in populist leadership tomes as well, evidenced in the latest best-selling

leadership titles on success formulas for eliciting enthusiastically mobilized subordinates: *The 48*

Laws of Power, Jesus Christ CEO, Successful Habits of Visionary Companies, Reengineering

the Corporation, and *Charisma: Seven Keys to Developing the Magnetism that Leads to Success*,

to name but a few ("The 20 most influential business books," *Forbes*, 9/30/02). "In extreme

circumstances," *Forbes* magazine admits, "corporate mentalities can begin to resemble

religions" ("History of Cults: A Trail of True Believers," 4/02/01). In his book *Corporate Cults*,

professor of management Dave Arnott (1999) warns that today's employees are at risk of

becoming members of a corporate cult as would-be-charismatic managers seek to instill

enthusiastic devotion to an organization by aspiring to fulfill personal and emotional needs,

traditionally found within the relational bonds of community and family, with an all-consuming

workplace identity. The marketing and organizational development book by Kunde and

Cunningham (1999), *Corporate Religion*, instead praises such techniques of "internal

motivation" as positive future trends for instilling "brand loyalty" to a company. Theorists

studying new religious movements, notes David Bromley (2001), encounter a similar political

impasse in studying cults:

> Scholars have divided into two camps, offering what appear to be dramatically
> different interpretations of the same organizations, actors, and events… The dispute
> centers on individual-group relationships, specifically the appropriate nature and
> degree of individual embeddedness in religious organizations. Conversion is a
> symbolic designation that positively sanctions embeddedness while brainwashing
> negatively sanctions embeddedness… At the end of the day, both sides are endorsing
> individual autonomy, voluntarism, and self-directedness. In the brainwashing camp
> this means resisting embeddedness that undermines those qualities, while in the
> conversion camp it means endorsing embeddedness as precisely the means for
> realizing those qualities. (318-19, 346-7)

Particularly interesting for the purposes of this study is the notion that "culted" memberships of

charismatic leaders, whether they be religious or corporate varieties, may be rhetorically

constituted by these competing fantasies to either reject or endorse organizational embeddedness

as the avenue to self-actualization. Bell (1996) has similarly insisted that scholars distinguish

revolutionary charisma from manufactured pseudocharisma, making careful discernments

"between that anti-institutionalist authority figure who challenges the established power

arrangements or seeks to overthrow them, and the institutionalist who seeks only to acquire

them" (69). In other words, rhetorical critics should wonder, as does a headline of a *Business

Week* book review, "Have Management Gurus Made Us Slaves or Superheroes?" (10/8/99).

Ironically, until recently there has been little meta-analysis of this emerging industry of management advice and self-help leadership books, one of the world's fastest growing literary markets. Several writers have recognized that, with the widespread adoption of management fashions such as TQM, reengineering, and the learning organization, the corporate community's affinity for management gurus and the management fashions they promote is a matter that warrants serious scrutiny (Abrahamson, 1996). For better or worse, this "new wave" of management theory (Wood, 1989) or "guru theory" (Huczynski, 1993) has impacted the quality of working lives for employees at all levels within the organization in both material and symbolic terms. Abrahamson (1997) identifies five different types of "employee-management rhetorics" spreading through US managerial discourse over the last century that can be classed as either "rational rhetorics" which hold that work processes can be formalized and rationalized to optimize labor productivity, or "normative rhetorics" which assume that employees can be rendered more productive by shaping their thoughts and capitalizing on their emotions (Barley and Kunda, 1992). Clark and Salaman (1998) find many affinities between the management guru and shamanistic witchdoctors, concluding that "the guru's success with their clients lies in their capacity, in partnership with the client, to address and manipulate *through myths and stories*, symbolic issues of great pertinence and salience to senior managers: managers' own *roles and identities* within the 'new' organization" (215, emphasis mine).

Rhetorical inquiry is thus needed to better understand how the myth of the charismatic superhero shapes the roles and identities of diverse organizational memberships. Bradley Jackson (1999), insisting that "we need a broader and deeper appreciation of the forms and functions of rhetoric in creating the social order," uses Fantasy Theme Analysis to understand

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the rhetorical appeal of major gurus and their managerial fashions (354). Jackson (2001) finds

that the prescriptions offered in popular business best-sellers correspond with the three fantasy

theme "master analogues" as identified by Bormann: the "business process reengineering" of

Hammer and Champy promotes a "pragmatic" rhetorical vision ("These techniques are effective

and essential for survival"), the "learning organization" approach of Peter Senge reflects a

"social" rhetorical vision ("this process is best for everyone in the organization"), and the human

universals identified in Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* promotes a

"righteous" rhetorical vision ("These principles mandate morally right things to do"). Arguing

that the management gurus' "rhetoric actively creates knowledge which, in turn, creates reality

and truth," Jackson confirms the "quasi-religious function" of "contemporary visions that have

seized the popular imagination within the corporate community" (1999, 371-2). The pseudo-

religious role played by these management gurus and consultant witchdoctors is found to be

particularly troubling as they gain popularity and displace the role of academic researchers.

The current study undertaken in subsequent chapters expands upon Jackson's study by

addressing two shortcomings of his fantasy theme analyses. First, Jackson examines the

rhetorical visions of management gurus primarily in terms of their rhetorical appeal to managers,

giving scant attention to explaining the appeal of such fantasies for the diverse "empowered"

memberships who also subscribe to these management fashions. "Leadership exists only

through communication," Patricia Witherspoon observes, as "an interactive journey that humans

share as they enact a communal vision and pursue individual dreams" (204). This study will

therefore attend to the fantasy payoff and mythic price that these rhetorical visions offer to

individuals who are subject to managerial authority. Second, Jackson fails to fully assess the

"quasi-religious function" within these managerial rhetorical visions overtly predicated upon utilitarian and pragmatic "effectiveness" for supervisors. This study will be far more interested in the prophetic and evangelical mythic undertones that may point to more "empowering" fantasies of charismatic superheroes within emergent leadership models. If Khurana (2002) is correct that professional business education and the business media "tacitly support the orientation toward charismatic leadership on the part of executives, investors, and other corporate constituents by the way they shape and reinforce existing thought and discourse" (213), then an examination of the fantasy rhetorics of charismatic leadership should take such intertextual dynamics of this dramatis persona into account. After all, few CEOs announce themselves as charismatic figures, but are instead "anointed" as such by analysts or devotees.

The analyses in following chapters will therefore offer a composite portrait of gurus rhetorical visions as promoted within the popular press and business writers by devoted disciples who loosely comprise their rhetorical communities. The texts chosen for analysis in the following chapters represent a wide array of successful management gurus, who nonetheless share an overt aversion to the concept of charismatic leadership in their egalitarian and "empowering" leadership models. To build off Jackson's (2001) fantasy analysis, Steven Covey's model of *Principle Centered Leadership* will first be examined for characteristic features of the charismatic fantasy script and culturetypes. Dr. Covey is perhaps best known as the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, which is ranked as a No. 1 bestseller by the *New York Times*, having sold more than 13 million copies in 36 languages throughout the world. The book's message has created lasting impact, its sales keeping it on numerous best-seller lists for years and securing Covey's almost legendary status as one of the most sought after

leadership consultants. In 2002, *Forbes* named *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* one of the top 10 most influential management books ever, and a survey by *Chief Executive* Magazine recognized *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* as one of the two most influential business books of the twentieth century as his follow-up book *Principle-Centered Leadership* achieved sales exceeding one million and long-running best-seller status at Amazon.com, and was still ranked #5 according to *USA Today* as of January 16, 2004. Covey has been recognized with the Thomas More College Medallion for continuing service to humanity, the Sikh's 1998 International Man of Peace Award, the 1994 International Entrepreneur of the Year Award, *Inc.* magazine's Services Entrepreneur of the Year Award, the 1996 National Entrepreneur of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award for Entrepreneurial Leadership, and has been awarded seven honorary doctorate degrees. Covey has also been recognized as one of *Time* magazine's 25 most influential Americans and one of *Sales and Marketing Management*'s top 25 power brokers.

A relative newcomer, Jim Collins began his research and teaching career on the faculty at Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he received the Distinguished Teaching Award in 1992. In 1995, he founded a management research laboratory in Boulder, Colorado, where he now conducts multi-year research projects and works with executives from the private, public, and social sectors. Jim has served as a consultant to senior executives and CEOs at corporations that include Starbucks Coffee, Merck, Times Mirror, Patagonia, American General, W.L. Gore, and hundreds more. He has also worked with organizations in the non-corporate sector such as the Leadership Network of Churches, Johns Hopkins Medical School, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Non-Profit Management. Collins has co-authored four books, including the classic *Built to Last* and *Good to Great: Why Some*

Companies Make the Leap ... And Others Don't, recognized by Amazon.com as one of its Best of 2001. Still a #2 *New York Times* bestseller in hardcover as of Decmber 2003, *Good to Great* also remains a #1 bestseller with the *Wall Street Journal,* the #3 business book bestseller at *USA Today*, and a long-time bestseller with *Business Week*. Like Covey, Collins was voted one of the most influential business gurus in a 2003 survey of corporate executives and CEOs by *Business Week*. His work has been featured in *Fortune*, *The Economist*, *USA Today*, *Industry Week, Inc.*, and *Harvard Business Review*. Collins' notion of the "Level 5 Leader" is arguably the most recent management fashion to attract American CEOs, and will be examined in chapter five.

Chapter six explores the rhetoric of "SuperLeadership," which has gathered acclaim within emerging empowerment theorists and human resources professionals. Charles Manz and Henry Sims, Jr. pioneered the concept of "self-leadership" in their bestselling book *SuperLeadership,* and their expanded sequel *The New SuperLeadership* elaborates a radically new leadership paradigm advocating managers to tap into the innate leadership potential that lies within every employee. *SuperLeadership* has sold well over 100,000 copies, won the Stybel-Peabody literary prize, and became an Executive Book Club feature selection. Charles C. Manz is the Nirenberg Professor of Business Leadership at the University of Massachusetts and former Marvin Bower Fellow at the Harvard Business School, and Henry Sims, Jr. is Professor of Management and Organization at the Maryland Business School. The authors have served as consultants for General Motors, Motorola, American Express, Prudential, Procter & Gamble, The Mayo Clinic, the U.S. and Canadian governments. In addition to having widespread influence in the emerging management theories of empowerment, and voted the winner of the 1989 Styble-Peabody Award as best book in human resources for *SuperLeadership*, their works

have also been featured in publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Fortune*.

Whereas charismatic leadership has traditionally emphasized the extraordinarily gifted leader, the contemporary models of empowerment being popularized today find charisma to be a latent potential within us all. "If the perception of charisma is the result of communication behaviors, then we all have the potential to act as charismatic leaders," enthuse Hackman & Johnson (1991), "through shaping the symbolic focus of the group, generating perceptions of confidence and competence, communicating high expectations and inspiring others" (190). In the following chapters, we will explore this potential for latent crypto-charisma within the empowered memberships of these "management gurus" and their models of leadership.

ENDNOTES

1. Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value and Action* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987). For a critical overview of this perspective see Foss, Foss & Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* (Waveland, 1991), pp. 331-3. Also see R. Branham & B. Pearse, "Between Text and Context: Toward a Rhetoric of Contextual Reconstruction." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985): 19-36.

2. Bruce Lincoln (1989) provides a useful distinction between fable, legend, history and myth which classifies these narratives "not by their content, but by the claims that are made by their narrators and the way in which those claims are received by their audience(s)." Highlighting the dynamic possibility that "reclassification of any individual narrative from one class to the other is always possible should the story either gain or lose credibility," Lincoln contends "myths can be employed to construct new or unfamiliar social formations" through the radical "deconstruction of established social forms" (24-26). Lincoln's argument is that the acceptance of truth claims offered within a story is dependent upon *audiences*, rather than some quality inherent within a speaker or message or even social context itself, and this acceptance or rejection is what distinguishes some particular narrative's denigration to fable or ascension to history. Myth, however, is portrayed by Lincoln as a nebulous purgatory for "a small class of stories that posses both credibility and authority," providing simultaneously a "model of" and a "model for" historical reality which possesses "the status of *paradigmatic* truth" (24). Even when the "facts" of the story may be questionable, the "truth" expressed through enduring myths

nevertheless remains credible and emotionally resonant for audiences. See also:

3. Ernest Bormann, "Fantasy Theme Analysis and Rhetorical Theory." In James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist an William E. Coleman (eds.), *The Rhetoric of Western Thought.* Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1993, p. 368.

4. Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality." In John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields (eds.), *Applied Communication Research: A Dramatisitic Approach*, p. 20. Prospect Height, IL: Waveland Press, 1981.

5. Ernest Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985): p. 213.

6. William L. Gardner & Bruce J. Avolio (1988) advance a similar perspective in "The Charismatic Relationship: A Dramaturgical Perspective."

7. Ernest Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair: A Fantasy Theme Analysis." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (1973), 143-160.

8. Bormann, "Fantasy Theme Analysis and Rhetorical Theory," 368.

9. Bormann, "Symbolic Convergence," 115.

10. Roderick P. Hart (1990), 251.

11. For criticisms of the methodology and utility of fantasy theme analysis, see: G.P. Mohrmann, "An Essay on Fantasy Theme Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68 (May 1982), 109-32; G.P Mohrmann, "Fantasy Theme Criticism: A Peroration," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68 (May 1982), 306-13; Stephen E. Lucas, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (book review), *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* 16 (Summer 1986), 199-205; Charles E. Williams, "Fantasy Theme Analysis: Theory Vs. Practice," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 17 (Winter 1987), 11-20; and Joshua Gunn, "Refiguring Fantasy: Imagination and Its decline in U.S. Rhetorical Studies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 89 (February 2003), 41-59.

12. Tulloch (1990), p.8.

13. Rushing and Frentz (1995), p.4.

14. Janice Hocker Rushing, "E.T. as Rhetorical Transcendence," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985), 188-203.

15. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959), pp. 95-97.

16. Eliade (1959), p. 165.

17. Eliade (1959), 119-130.

18. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 3

[19] "Rating the Management Gurus," Business Week (15 October 2001).

[20] Michael Macy. "Management Gurus and Management Fashions," (book review). *Administrative Science Quarterly*, September 2002.

21. James Surowiecki, "Did Iacocca Ruin American Business?" *The Guardian Unlimited*, 23 July 2002.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROPHET MOTIVE IN STEVEN R. COVEY'S "PRINCIPLE-CENTERED LEADERSHIP"

INTRODUCTION

If sales and longevity are any measure of success, then Stephen Covey is one of the undisputed heavyweights of the management gurus. Although Covey has attracted modest scholarly attention, there has been little rhetorical analysis beyond identifying his evangelical style (Abrahamson, 1997; Clark and Salaman, 1998; Jackson, 1999). This chapter will explore Covey's gospel of "the character ethic" and principle-centered empowerment as characteristic of an emissary prophet offering a transcendent mythic formula for both spiritual self-actualization and organizational success. As messenger for a universal covenant transcending both individuals and history, Covey cloaks himself in the rhetorical role of the Prophetic persona. Just as the Old Testament "prophets addressed a people whose vision had been clouded by the material benefits of a settled and agrarian lifestyle," a scene where individuals had become complacently "at ease" in a spiritually corrupt status quo, Covey's prophetic rhetorical vision for corporate suburbanites seeks to similarly "reassert the terms of a covenant to a people who had fallen away" from sacred principles and thereby "restore a sense of duty and virtue amidst the decay" (Darsey, 1997: 18).

This rhetorical analysis will proceed as follows. First, major fantasy themes within Covey's rhetorical vision of "Principle-Centered Leadership" will be identified. Second, the rhetorical vision of Covey's born-again fantasy will be examined for the setting, character, and action themes that characterize his transformational saga. Next, Covey's prophetic persona will be analyzed in terms of its faithfulness to the charismatic

fantasy script and mythic culturetypes. Finally, the conclusion will consider how

Covey's fantasy of Principle-Centered Leadership (PCL) invites identification from

popular audiences through his constitutive rhetoric of empowered crypto-charismatic

memberships. I will argue that the widespread rhetorical appeal of Covey's PCL fantasy

is attributable not only to the symbolic convergence of audiences to the charismatic

fantasy script, but is also a consequence of the symbolic divergence of culturetypal

counter-fantasies which appeal to different constituencies for very different reasons.

THE PRINCIPLE-CENTERED PARADIGM

Covey's book begins by explaining that his seminars invite people "to share their

toughest problems or ask their hardest questions" in order to identify their "conflicts or

dilemmas that can't be resolved using conventional approaches," such as: balancing

personal and professional areas of life amidst constant crisis and pressures, finding

genuine happiness in the successes and competencies of others, maintaining control while

giving people the freedom and autonomy needed to be effective in their work, and

internalizing the principles of total quality and continuous improvement at all levels of an

organization when most employees have become "cynical in the wake of all the past

programs of the month" (13). Immediately portrayed here is a scene of personal and

organizational crisis, which reflects the internal landscape of conflicts and dilemmas

facing individual agents who experience alienation and anomie. Elsewhere, Covey

directly addresses this crisis as it impacts managers:

> In every field of endeavor we make assumptions regarding the ultimate
> nature of reality. If the fundamental assumptions or premises are wrong,
> the conclusions will also be wrong, even when the reasoning process from
> those premises are right… I'm suggesting that executives may need to rid
> themselves of some false assumptions about human nature and simplify

their organizations before they can make full use of their human resources and experience the benefits of increased effectiveness… (190-91)

The answer to such problems, Covey consistently claims, requires "an understanding of the basic principles of effective leadership" (14). This familiar refrain is punctuated by the well-know Christian platitude, also prominently emblazoned on the book's cover: *Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime*. Without explaining the inserted adage, Covey continues on. "With understanding you will be empowered to answer these and other tough questions," he says; "Without understanding you will tend to use hit-and-miss, seat-of-the-pants approaches to living and problem-solving" (14). Referring then to the seven habits of *ineffective* people who regress along what he calls "an immaturity continuum" (cleverly inverting the principles within another of his best-selling books, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*), Covey then wonders for his readers, "How can you and I escape the pull of the past and re-create ourselves and achieve meaningful change in our personal lives and in our organizations?" Having made clear the self-transforming purpose for his audience, Covey previews the organization of his book. "In the first section, I deal with the personal and interpersonal applications of the principles of effectiveness; in section 2, I deal with the managerial and organizational applications" (14-15). Covey then rounds out his preface by providing more examples of the problem, explaining the solution as personal alignment with unchanging natural principles (or "the law of the farm"), and then identifying 4 dimensions of "leadership by compass" (which is his principle-centered "paradigm shift"). It is here within the book's introductory chapters that we will attend to the "fantasy cues" being established by Covey.

As promised, the problems described by Covey are wide-ranging in the types of relationships they cover, and decidedly critical of the societal status quo. "Let me share with you some examples of the problem we all face in personal and professional life," Covey offers, "Then I will suggest a principle-centered solution" (15). "Because of the social and political environment inside their organizations and the fragmented markets outside," Covey finds that ethics and principles often take a backseat to profits when "some people" who "justify heavy-handed means in the name of virtuous ends" misguidedly "think they can abuse relationships at will and still get results" (15). The result, Covey finds, is a cynically self-centered culture looking for self-gratifying short-cuts. A head coach laments that some of his players don't "pay the price in the off season," parents don't pay the price with their kids "thinking they can fake it for the public image" as "their teenage kids experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex to fill the void in their lives," students who procrastinate and cram because they think "all of life operates on the same short-cut system," while organizations with a "paternalistic, dependant culture" have misguidedly "managed people as things" (16). As one might expect, Covey draws extensively upon his own experience and expertise as a consultant to illustrate. "I see people trying to do it all over a weekend – trying to rebuild their marriage on the weekend, trying to rebuild an alienated relationship with their son on a weekend, trying to change a company culture on a weekend. But some things," Covey reminds us, "just can't be done on a weekend" (16). Here we find Covey's condemnation of the sanctioning agent causing so much sad dissatisfaction and dysfunctional behavior for people: self-centered lives. Our all-too-common habits of ineffectiveness, Covey believes, "are rooted in our social conditioning toward quick-fix, short-term thinking"

(17). This problem is social and cultural, he makes clear, while the solution he offers is the decidedly personal choice of changing ourselves.

The solution explained by Covey is a personal re-alignment with unchanging natural principles, which he explains as a profound "paradigm shift" to rediscover what he calls *the law of the farm*. "The quick, easy, free, and fun approach won't work on the farm because there we're subject to natural laws or governing principles," Covey insists, which "operate regardless of our awareness of them or obedience to them" (17). Just as a farmer cannot go two weeks without milking their cows in some plan to later recover that lost production in a single day of vigorous labor, nor can she forget to plant in the spring and goof-off all summer while expecting to bring in the harvest for the fall, then neither can corporate suburbanites neglect the cultivation of important aspects of their personal lives and expect to feel fulfilled or happy. As Covey expounds:

> The only thing that endures over time is the law of the farm: I must prepare the ground, put in the seed, cultivate it, weed it, water it, then gradually nurture growth and development to full maturity. So also in a marriage or in helping a teenager through a difficult identity crisis – there is no quick fix, where you can just move in and make everything right with a positive mental attitude and a bunch of success formulas. The law of the harvest governs… If I try to use manipulative strategies and tactics to get other people to do what I want – while my *character* is flawed or my *competency* is questionable – then I can't be successful over time… But if we learn to manage things and lead people, we will have the best bottom line because we will unleash the energy and talent of people (17).

Covey's model emphasizes individual character and personal integrity with 'competency' as central concepts for his "new" model for organizational change. Rather than waiting for change and improvement to come from the outside in, says Covey, we must realize that life-affirming transformation comes instead "from the inside out." These "significant breakthroughs often represent internal breaks with traditional ways of thinking," what Covey explains as revolutionary and self-revolutionizing "*paradigm shifts*" (17-18).

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Covey's inside-out approach for a paradigm shift away from flawed traditional thinking emphasizes the twin notions of principles (integrity) and effectiveness (competency). "Principle-centered leadership introduces a new paradigm – that we center our lives and our leadership of organizations and people on certain 'true north' principles," Covey reiterates, since "effectiveness is predicated upon certain *inviolate principles* – natural laws in the human dimension that are just as real, just as unchanging, as laws such as gravity are in the physical dimension." Such principles, he insists, "are not invented by us or society; they are laws of the universe that pertain to human relationships and human organization" founded upon "such basic principles as fairness, equity, justice, integrity, honesty, and trust" (18). To "subordinate oneself to higher purposes and principles," Covey asserts, is both "the true test and manifestation of our maturity" and "the paradoxical essence of highest humanity and the foundation of effective leadership" (19). Utilizing another recurring metaphor within his works, Covey explains that these transcendent principles "are like compasses: they are always pointing the way" and "if we know how to read them, we won't get lost, confused, or fooled by conflicting voices and values" (19). "Individuals are more effective and organizations more empowered when they are guided and governed by these proven principles," says Covey, and when applied consistently over time they "become behavioral habits enabling fundamental transformations of individuals, relationships, and organizations" (19). The causal link being made is that inviolate 'true north' principles, when disciplined as behavioral habits, will result in both personal happiness and professional effectiveness. Whereas our values are undependably subjective as internal 'maps' for the shifting "realities of the territory" and "things as they really are," Covey explains, a "principle-

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centered compass provides invaluable vision and direction" as a "leadership and empowerment tool" which enables individuals to be "liberated from old perceptions and paradigms" (19-20). As Covey explains:

> Centering life on correct principles is the key to developing this rich internal power in our lives, and with this power we can realize many of our dreams. A center secures, guides, empowers. Like the hub of a wheel, it unifies and integrates. It is the core of personal and organizational missions. It's the foundation of culture. It aligns shared values, structures, and systems. (20)

This transformational process for discovering inner power is true not only for the layperson, but characteristic of all genuine leaders as well. "One of the central characteristics of authentic leaders is their humility," observes Covey, "evident in their ability to take off their glasses and examine the lens objectively, analyzing how well their values, perceptions, beliefs and behaviors align with 'true north' principles" in order to "make adjustments to realign with greater wisdom" (20).

Covey identifies four dimensions that are "four internal sources of strength" for leadership by principle-centered compass: security, guidance, wisdom, and power (21). Each of these operates on a continuum of maturity, Covey explains, yet are also interdependent since they emanate from the principles upon which we center our lives. When our focus fluctuates inconsistently between "alternate centers" like work or possessions or family, says Covey, "we empower circumstances and the opinion of others to guide and control us" or "repeat past mistakes" because we "react to external conditions and internal moods" (21). "Centering on principles," by contrast, "provides sufficient security to not be threatened by change, comparisons, or criticism; guidance to discover our mission, define our roles, and write our scripts and goals; wisdom to learn from our mistakes and seek continuous improvement; and power to communicate and

cooperate, even under conditions of stress or fatigue" (22). Whereas people who are low on the maturity continuum tend to suffer from emotional dependencies and selfish life-styles, and in the middle of the continuum are those who tend to rely on the "social conscience" of tradition and institutional relationships, the high end of the continuum for Covey represents instead "the spiritual conscience" of guidance from "inspired or inspiring sources" that reflect a "sage perspective on life, a sense of balance, a keen understanding of how the various parts and principles apply and relate to each other" within "a oneness, an integrated wholeness" (22). By adhering to the natural laws and universal principles that govern true character and skill development, "we gain the strength to break with the past, to overcome old habits, to change our paradigms, and to achieve primary greatness and interpersonal effectiveness" (29). Interpersonal effectiveness and leadership is thus indicative of "secondary greatness," Covey believes, which flows from the "primary greatness" of a spiritually mature person of principle-centered integrity.

For Covey, effectiveness emanates from our individual spiritual growth from dependence to personal independence and finally into the maturity of interpersonal interdependence. Principle-centered integrity becomes effective, therefore, when our personal character is demonstrated through relational competence. Influence occurs only by "creating and maintaining trustful relationships with other people," Covey insists, and personal leadership is possible only when we "become effectively interdependent with others" by practicing "empathy and synergy in our efforts to be proactive and productive" (30). Covey repeatedly calls principle-centered leadership "a breakthrough paradigm—a new way of thinking that helps resolve the classic dilemmas of modern living" with

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"effective personal leadership," and "this new understanding will empower you to resolve these and other tough questions by yourself" (30-1). Covey's self-revolutionizing return to an agrarian 'character ethic' seeks to empower readers with the primary greatness of personal integrity, which in turn enables the secondary greatness of relational effectiveness and influence in leadership. Covey insists that self-mastery in harmonizing these four internal sources of strength can "create the great force of a noble personality, a balanced character, a beautifully integrated individual" (23).

Covey's principle-centered model, the heart of his paradigm, is practiced "from the inside out" on four concentric levels which operate on the basis of specific master principles. The 'personal' level is a relationship with one's self aligned with the principle of 'trustworthiness,' which is based on the character and competence of an individual executive or employee. Emanating from this inner core is the principle of 'trust,' which orients the second 'interpersonal' level of relationships and interactions with other people. Next is the 'managerial' level of styles and skills in which the principle of 'empowerment' guides interdependent responsibilities and accountability. Lastly, the principle of 'alignment' guides the 'organizational' level of decision-making structures, systems, and strategies.

In the first half of the book, Covey develops the foundational principles of trust and trustworthiness within the first two levels of personal and interpersonal effectiveness, while the last half of the book considers the development of managerial empowerment and organizational alignment as consequential of those fundamental inner levels of trust. "Trust – or the lack of it – is at the root of success or failure in relationships," Covey concludes in his introduction, "and in the bottom-line results of business, industry,

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education, and government" (31). "When you find something out of alignment," Covey later recommends, "work on it developmentally at all four levels from the inside out on the basis of the four key principles" (156). The principle-centered paradigm of Covey therefore begins and ends with personal integrity and individual trustworthiness. "It is character that communicates most eloquently," Covey believes, since "what we are communicates far more eloquently and persuasively than what we say or even what we do" (58).

Now that we have identified the 'fantasy cues' being established in Covey's introductory chapters, we can proceed into an analysis of the interwoven fantasy themes that develop Covey's rhetorical vision for principle-centered leadership. As we shall see, the rhetorical vision being promoted by Covey exhibits textual characteristics that closely follow the fantasy script for crypto-charismatic memberships.

THE BORN-AGAIN FANTASY OF PRINCIPLE-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

> One of the ongoing debates is whether leaders are made or born. I believe most are reborn, through some kind of mentoring—learning and applying correct principles. That's why great leaders serve as mentors and help bring about a whole new generation, a total transformation. But the personal price of doing it is tremendous… that is, you may have to sacrifice and suffer enormously to make significant changes. (169)

The rhetorical vision articulated by Covey, a devout elder in the Mormon church, is perhaps unsurprisingly one that closely resembles that of religious conversion. "The six major world religions all teach the same basic core beliefs," Covey asserts, advocating timeless aphorisms like "You reap what you sow" and "Action speak louder than words" as principles expressing "a universal belief in fairness, kindness, dignity, charity, integrity, honesty, quality, service and patience." "People may argue about how these principles are to be defined, interpreted, and applied in real-life situations," Covey admits

dismissively, "but they generally agree about their intrinsic merit" and "want to be managed by them" as universal socio-economic laws "just as real, just as unchanging and unarguable, as laws such as gravity are in the physical dimension" (95). Indeed, Covey insists that these transcendent 'natural' principles surface time and again in history, "and the degree to which people in society recognize and live in harmony with them moves them toward either survival and stability or disintegration and destruction" (95). As messenger for a universal covenant transcending both individuals and history, Covey cloaks himself in the rhetorical role of the Prophetic persona. Just as the Old Testament "prophets addressed a people whose vision had been clouded by the material benefits of a settled and agrarian lifestyle," a scene where individuals had become complacently "at ease" in a spiritually corrupt status quo, Covey's prophetic rhetorical vision for corporate suburbanites seeks to similarly "reassert the terms of a covenant to a people who had fallen away" from sacred principles and thereby "restore a sense of duty and virtue amidst the decay" (Darsey, 1997: 18). In short, Covey prophetically insists, individuals must be spiritually reborn into the principle-centered Agrarian paradigm.

This "Prophet Motive" fueling Covey's principle-centered fantasy is brought into sharp relief when surveying the fantasy themes that recur in his works. A synopsis of these themes is offered below (Table 4.1), with one significant variation from the excellent fantasy-theme analysis already offered by Jackson (1999, 2001). Jackson correctly observes that Covey's fantasy "presents his followers with an ideal person" whom "we can admire and measure up to" (1999: 371), and thus orients his investigation to the potential rhetorical transcendence within the heroic character themes. This analysis will instead attempt to track the subtle hierarchical mystifications at work in the

action themes of Covey's fantasy, since the transcendent 'ideal person' imagined by

Covey is also constitutive of subtly different crypto-charismatic memberships.

Table 4.1: FANTASY THEMES OF COVEY'S RHETORICAL VISION

Fantasy Theme	Type	Fantasy cues	Burkean Motive
Reborn to Agrarian Paradigm	Setting themes	Law of the Farm The golden goose From swamp to oasis Fishing the stream	Identification
'inside-out' Transformation	Action themes	Abundance mentality Mission by compass Win-Win agreements Emotional bank account 3 roles & script conflicts	Transcendence
'true north' Stewardships	Character themes	Visionary Meta-Leader Missionary Manager-Leader Empowered Producer-Champions Self-Centered Adversaries	Hierarchy

In what follows, I will explore how Covey's fantasy for 'empowered' principle-centered

memberships tacitly scripts the very thing he purports to debunk: faith and devotion to

the charismatic leadership of a Transformational Prophet.

SETTING THEMES: REBORN TO AN AGRARIAN PARADIGM

Most striking in the setting themes being established in Covey's introductory

chapters is a scene of crisis. "To the degree people recognize and live in harmony with

such basic principles as fairness, equity, justice, integrity, honesty, and trust," Covey

prophetically warns, "they move toward either survival and stability on the one hand or

disintegration and destruction on the other" (18). As we've already seen, there is little

doubt that Covey views most people and organizations as sliding toward self-serving

oblivion and in need of personal salvation. "Chronic individual problems become

chronic organizational problems as a 'critical mass' of people bring these problems with

them through the gates each day and as social values encourage instant gratification and

quick solutions to deep and difficult problems" (165). Although particularly true of

America, Covey's own international experience as a consultant convinces him that many

chronic "problems are universal" to organizational cultures: "The one thing people don't

want to change is their life-style, but they generally must change if they want to deal with

the chronic nature of their most serious problems" (165). "To value oneself and, at the

same time, subordinate oneself to higher purposes and principles," Covey explains, "is

the paradoxical essence of highest humanity and the foundation of effective leadership"

(19). By learning to walk the principle-centered path and live daily by the Law of the

Harvest, Covey assures us, each person can "transcend one's autobiography" and

discover an "inviolate self, our true identity" (116). The principle-centered person "must

have a new birth," Covey attests, and "must get so deeply involved in the new value

system that they get reprogrammed by it" with correct principles becoming "the new

constitution to their own personal life" (169).

Covey's fantasy setting closely mirrors that of the charismatic fantasy script:

personal alienation and anomie, a social crisis of meaning and identity, and a history

critical of bureaucratic institutions and the cultural status quo. Covey criticizes that,

"inside many corporations with lofty mission statements, many people are being mugged

in broad daylight in front of witnesses" (93). The fundamental problem is found in the

tacit acceptance of 'the Mechanical Paradigm' for bureaucratic organization rather than

the 'Agricultural Paradigm' of interdependent relational ecosystems (212). Like the fable

of the goose who laid the golden egg, the "current North American management and

leadership paradigm is that people are things," emphasizing production over the

producers while treating both as commodities to be strictly controlled (264). Many if not

most individuals and organizations, Covey observes, mistakenly operate according to a

limited view of human nature that neglects every person's innate spiritual potential:

> "Many companies and their managers are not transforming with the trends. For example, our society values democracy, yet most companies practice autocracy; our society values capitalism, but many organizations practice feudalism. While our society has shifted to pluralism, many companies seek homogeneity. Perhaps the most fundamental need is to understand man's full nature. Motivational theory has shifted its organization from stomach (physical and economic) to heart (good human relations, good treatment) to mind (identify, develop, use, recognize talent) to spirit (a sense of transcending purpose or meaning). An enlarged concept of man's nature triggers another shift in the role of the manager from hero to developer, from commander to consultant, from order giver to mentor, from decision maker to value clarifier and exemplar… We might think of this 'paradigm shift' in terms of a continuum, with external control on one side and internal control or commitment on the other side… It's almost axiomatic to say that personal change must precede or at least accompany management and organizational change… Life's imperative is to grow or die, stretch or stagnate." (284)

This saga criticizes the absence of 'an enlarged concept of man's nature.' The spiritual

function of leadership, to offer a sense of transcendent purpose or meaning, is used to not

only distinguish Covey's self-revolutionizing paradigm from other managerial models,

but to also convey a sense that his 'revolutionary' model is also logically evolutionary.

The organizational saga offered here is a historical paradigm shift encompassing all

organizations, used by Covey to assert that the management of meaning and identity will

transform organizational cultures from a swamp to an oasis.

This universal saga is bolstered in Covey's discussion of Principle-Centered

Power (chapter 9) and Shifting Your Management Paradigm (chapter 16). The "more

fruitful approach is to look at followers, rather than leaders," is Covey's very Weberian

observation, "and to assess leadership by asking why followers follow" (101). In his self-

help section for individuals, Covey simplistically identifies three types of power (101-8).

The first type is *coercive power*, or "the big stick" approach, where people comply "out

of fear of potentially adverse consequences." The second is *utility power*, "based on a sense of equity and fairness" and "the useful exchange of goods and services." "Leaders are followed because it is functional for the followers," Covey says of utility power, since they gain "access to what the leader controls, through position, expertness or charisma" (103). As the only time it is mentioned in the book, Covey's notion of charisma is a form of utility power that "tends to look more like influence than control" and "tends to be positive rather than negative," although it also tends to promote "individualism rather than teamwork and group effectiveness" (103). The third type of power, and obviously preferable in Covey's view to the more authoritarian types, is *principle-centered power*. As Covey enthusiastically explains:

> "Real leadership power comes from an honorable character and from the exercise of certain power tools and principles… Principle-centered power is rare. It is the mark of quality, distinction and excellence in all relationships… Principle-centered power is not forced, it is invited, as the personal agendas of both leader and follower are encompassed by a larger purpose. Principle-centered power occurs when the cause or purpose or goal is believed in as deeply by the followers as by the leaders… [Thus,] control is not external; it is self-control." (101, 104)

Despite having described principle-centered leadership in terms that are arguably synonymous with several depictions of charismatic leadership, Covey oddly lumps charisma in with characteristics that most leadership theorists would ascribe to its conceptual antithesis: Transactional Leadership. Charismatic leadership is thus displaced by Covey with the far less troublesome notion of principle-centered leadership (PCL).

The individual's pseudo-religious quest for a transcendent purpose and spiritual meaning, long overlooked by mechanistic managerial models which dominate today, is precisely the void that Covey's PCL paradigm seeks to address. "Meaningful projects have a healing influence on people," Covey observes; "We all need to be engaged in a

good cause. Without such projects, life loses its meaning… Life is sustained by tension between where we are now and where we want to be—some goal worth struggling for." (128) Covey's power types are returned to later when he explores the historic saga of evolving management paradigms, "finding them fundamentally flawed because they are based on false assumptions about the nature of people" (176). In Covey's view, the dominant paradigms of managerial motivation by stomach (scientific authoritarian) or heart (benevolent authoritarian) and mind (Human Resource development) fail to acknowledge the spiritual needs of a holistic human being. The PCL paradigm, in contrast, recognizes that "people are not just resources or assets, not just economic, social and psychological beings," Covey explains, but "also spiritual beings; they want meaning, a sense of doing something that matters," they want "purposes that lift them, ennoble them, and bring them to their highest selves," they "want to be part of a mission and enterprise that transcends their individual tasks" (178-80). And to those who might be initially daunted by the almost priestly spiritual function that PCL now intimates for managerial leadership? "Once you have the principle-centered paradigm, you will produce the evidence to support your new perceptions of people," Covey assures; "People live up to the expectations of them" (179). In other words: have faith. "You will discover what a self-fulfilling prophesy positive energy is," Covey promises (35).

The spiritual function of PCL thus requires something that most other managerial improvement programs seemingly do not: a leap of faith. Yet the practical application and proven utility of PCL does not depend upon acts of faith alone, however, as we shall see in the development of Covey's action themes for his managerial fantasy script. Because of the revolutionary changes to the traditional and institutionalized practices of

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management that PCL proposes, Covey goes to great lengths to demonstrate that his

model is both practical and possesses many affinities with emergent management theory.

ACTION THEMES: "INSIDE-OUT" TRANSFORMATION

Covey's books are chalk full of laundry lists, each of his 31 chapters oriented

around "seven habits," "three resolutions," "six days of creation," "seven deadly sins,"

"thirty methods of influence," "seven chronic problems," "six conditions of

empowerment," and the like. The first half of the book, self-improvement chapters

dealing with personal integrity and interpersonal trustworthiness, insist that individuals

can transcend identities derived from ineffective habits. "We can make and break our

habits" and "need not be a victim of conditions or conditioning," Covey insists; "We can

write our own script, choose our own course, and control our own destiny" if we can

"gain a certain sense of self-mastery" (48-9). "Self-mastery and self-discipline," Covey

explains, "are the roots of good relationships with others" (57). The second half of

Covey's book, management chapters for effective shareholder empowerment and

organizational alignment, weaves personal anecdotes with familiar business figures and

theories to offer a blueprint for principle-centered policy. PCL's "long-term quest for

excellence," Covey explains, is "in your struggle for true maturity (courage balanced with

consideration) and for integrity… Choose to be your best self, and that choice will arrest

your ambivalence and renew your determination" (77). But this act of conversion to the

PCL quest scripts not only an individual's actions, but also their interpretation of actions

by others.

> Principle-centered people don't overreact to negative behaviors, criticism,
> or human weaknesses… They believe in the unseen potential of all people.
> They feel grateful for their blessings and feel naturally to compassionately

> forgive and forget the offenses of others… Truly, believing is seeing. We must, therefore, seek to believe in the unseen potential. This creates a *climate for growth and opportunity*. Self-centered people believe that the key lies in them, in their techniques, in doing 'their thing' to others… Either way it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. (354)

Our 'faith' in the unrealized mythic potential within human nature, Covey suggests, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because we then act benevolently upon those beliefs. The behavioral characteristics of the principle-centered leader as portrayed by Covey, unwaveringly virtuous and pure of heart, could easily qualify the principle-centered leader for sainthood in numerous religions. The faith of the principle-centered leader in an 'abundance mentality' recognizing every person's innate spiritual potential for growth, however, is starkly contrasted with the rampant faithlessness of 'self-centered' people and their adversarial, manipulative techniques for self-gratification.

It is here that Covey tacitly invokes one of the action themes of the charismatic fantasy script, appealing to emotions and sentiments via a dramatizing plotline of agonistic forces for good and evil or right and wrong. Within his works, Covey regularly differentiates the actions that are legitimated by the "abundance mentality" of his Agrarian PCL Paradigm from behaviors indicative of the "scarcity mentality" of the Mechanical Paradigm. "Most people are deeply scripted in the scarcity mentality," observes Covey, "the dominant paradigm of outside-in" subscribed to by "unhappy people who feel victimized and immobilized, who focus on the weaknesses of other people and the circumstances they feel are responsible for their own stagnant situation" (62-3). Self-centered people with a scarcity mentality "are looking out for number one, anxious to get their 'piece of the pie' and protect their 'turf'" through "self-centered activity," Covey continues, which "springs from a belief that resources are limited" and views "life as a 'zero-sum' game" because people "tend to think in adversarial or

competitive ways" (158). The self-serving and adversarial scarcity script encourages 'either-or' dichotomous thinking rather than 'win-win' problem-solving, and is generally indicative of immaturity, insecurity, and emotional dependence upon 'social mirror' comparisons with others. Yet Covey is always cautious to emphasize that the "scarcity script" is a mentality rather than a person: "In my life," Covey admits, "I've gone through many cycles of abundance and scarcity thinking" (158). "Some of these expectations may be quite romantic, meaning they aren't based on reality," Covey says of the adversarial scarcity script, but rather "picked up from media or from some fantasy" (204).

If actions derived from the scarcity script are the result of misguidedly subscribing to a distorted fantasy, then choosing to act in accord with the abundance mentality of Covey's PCL paradigm promises to align individuals with true reality. To take our first steps on this quest for self-actualization, however, individuals must be born again into the PCL paradigm and learn to align their behaviors accordingly. Once converted to the abundance mentality of PCL, participants sharing the PCL 'compass' can negotiate a collaborative mission statement and win-win performance agreements, then periodically reevaluate those relational commitments based upon 'deposits' of trustworthy behaviors within 'emotional bank accounts.' The earlier chapters of Covey's book sketches the trustworthy behaviors of principle-centered integrity which, as Jackson (1999) notes, "would invite the envy of all but the beatified" (369). Covey, in offering a concise summary of these PCL action themes, also emphasizes that individuals and organizations can profit from a re-evaluation of their mythic expectations:

> In every field of endeavor we make assumptions regarding the ultimate nature of reality… I'm suggesting that executives may need to rid themselves of some false assumptions about human nature and simplify their organizations before they can make full use of their human resources

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and experience the benefits of increased effectiveness. As Lee Iacocca suggests, maybe we should study motivation before we set up structure… To motivate people to peak performance, we must find the areas where organizational needs and goals overlap individual needs, goals, and capabilities. We can then set up win-win agreements. Once these are established, people could govern or supervise themselves in terms of that agreement. We would then serve as sources of help and establish helpful organizational systems within which self-directing, self-controlling individuals could work toward fulfilling the terms of the agreement. Employees would periodically give an accountability of their responsibilities by evaluating themselves against the criteria specified in the win-win agreement. (190-2)

Once converted to the abundance mentality of PCL, participants sharing the PCL 'compass' can negotiate a collaborative mission statement and win-win performance agreements, then periodically reevaluate those relational commitments based upon 'deposits' of trustworthy behaviors within emotional bank accounts. By pointing out that organizational systems and structures tacitly draw upon some mythic premises regarding human nature and even presumptions about the nature of reality itself, Covey invites metaphysical reflection on both self and society in order to rewrite reality according to the script of a PCL paradigm (67). "Ultimately," explains Covey, "the leadership style one adopts springs from one's core ideas and feelings about the nature of man" (69).

The transcending act of inside-out transformation to an Agrarian abundance mentality is therefore premised on acts of faith. "To affirm a person's worth or potential," Covey admits, "you may have to look at him with the eye of faith and treat him in terms of his potential, not his behavior" (59). This spiritually enlightened attitude of earlier chapters takes a decidedly different tone, however, in later chapters addressing managerial empowerment and organizational alignment. "Within the framework of accountability," in which Covey would have self-supervision via win-win performance agreements replace organizational methods of control, "*work efforts are aligned with the*

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needs of the organization, and the organization has the ability to monitor and support individual and group performance" (214, emphasis mine). Rather than adopt a stance of forgiving patience toward the behaviors of individuals, as principle-centered people are urged to do, principle-centered managers instead enforce accountability for performance and behaviors that are not properly 'aligned' with organizational needs. The managerial imperative for an organizational mission based upon continuous improvement and spiritual growth is to "either improve or perish" (253), Covey says, and self-centered scarcity thinkers who are "[p]olitically oriented people will either shape up or ship out" (280). "Life's imperative is to grow or die, stretch or stagnate," Covey coolly warns, especially for those without the principle-centered abundance mentality whose "duplicity and double-mindedness will breed cynicism and instability" (284). Conversion to the PCL paradigm becomes not just an act of faith, but a matter of organizational survival.

But for those who might resist the leap of faith into an abundance mentality, Covey's plotline also offers up an eclectic collection of sanctioning agents. The actions and behaviors positively associated with the PCL paradigm are repeatedly bolstered by Covey's invocation of popular management theories and the familiar sagas of successful businesses. Covey makes mention of bestsellers like *In Search of Excellence* (173), *Managing* (218), *Megatrends* (282), and invokes successful companies like General Electric (191), General Motors (202), Sony (240), Pillsbury (289), and Disney (291). Throughout his works, Covey is fond of showing how his PCL paradigm 'enriches' the methods and theories of popular models like Empowerment (190), Total Quality (250) and Transformational Leadership (281). The secret underlying these successful methods for organizational self-transformation "are foundational principles that, when applied

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consistently in countless specific practices, become behaviors enabling fundamental transformations of individuals, relationships, and organizations" (265). But, says Covey, "Not only must personal change precede organizational change, but personal quality must precede organizational quality" (265). The action themes in Covey's PCL paradigm, crudely stated, could be summarized as: have faith in the PCL abundance mentality, cultivate self-mastery in your personal integrity and behaviors of interpersonal trustworthiness, and then effectiveness inevitably follows as your circle of influence expands. Conversion to the PCL paradigm, although premised on a leap of faith accepting an abundance mentality, also translates into behaviors and strategies based upon sound management philosophy and 'proven' techniques.

By retroactively associating the PCL paradigm with successful past innovations and innovators, Covey is also tacitly meeting another element of the charismatic fantasy script: successful results in the transformation of individuals and/or society. Covey more broadly ascribes 'timeless' principles as the creative spark for revolutionary innovations in science (quoting Einstein or Newton) and politics (invoking Founding Fathers like Jefferson or social reformers like Gandhi) as well as industry (through figures like Lee Iacocca and Jack Welsh). These revolutionary innovations and successful personalities are invoked as 'proof' that effectiveness naturally emanates from the timeless principles of the PCL paradigm. These revered action heroes from history, often used to illustrate the visionary leadership 'role' that Covey identifies as central to the PCL paradigm, are also constitutive of the fantasy *dramatis personae* that begin to emerge in accord with the three roles of producer, manager and leader. It is to these character themes that we may now turn.

CHARACTER THEMES: "TRUE NORTH" STEWARDSHIPS

Emerging from the action themes of Covey's PCL paradigm is an orientation

around three roles: the Producer, the Manager and the Leader. In "Eight Ways to Enrich

Marriage and Family Relationships," Covey asserts that spouses and parents play these

three interdependent roles while most relational problems "rise out of conflicting role

expectations or script conflicts" (132). "The producer does the things necessary to

achieve desired results" and "tend to think the solution to most problems is to put their

hand to the plow and get the job done," Covey says, whereas "The manager understands

the need for structure and systems—particularly training, communication, information,

and compensation systems," and in this role "the parent may delegate various jobs" and is

"bureaucratic, methods-oriented, and systems-minded" (133). Leaders in families,

however, inspire their children to become Champions. "The leader's role is to provide

direction through modeling and vision, to motivate through love and inspiration, to build

a complementary team based on mutual respect, to be effectiveness-minded and focused

on results rather than on methods, systems and procedures" (134). While Covey admits

that "both partners must play all three roles," especially in the early stages of marriage,

"the leader role becomes the most important" as children mature and carry more

responsibility (134). "I'm confident that enlightened leaders can cure these seven chronic

problems, not just treat symptoms, and create better societies," Covey says, but their

charismatic task is "to change hearts, build trust, revise the structure and systems" (172).

In later chapters for organizational management, Covey revisits the idea that

"people usually perform one of three essential roles: producer, manager or leader" (244).

But whereas marriage and parenting requires that participants play all three roles,

corporate organization somewhat oddly delegates these roles to different levels of the

bureaucratic hierarchy. In Covey's ambiguous reformulation for managers:

> Leadership deals with vision—with keeping the mission in sight—and with effectiveness and results… Management organizes resources to serve selected objectives to produce the bottom line. Of course, management and leadership are not mutually exclusive; in fact, it might be said that leadership is the highest component of management… The basic role of the leader is to foster mutual respect and build a complementary team where each strength is made productive and each weakness made irrelevant. The essential role of a manager is to use leverage to multiply the work and role of the producer. A producer rolls up his sleeves and does what's necessary to solve problems and get results. (246)

As described here, these roles seem to neatly fold into existing corporate hierarchies of

executive management, middle management, and the more vaguely defined lay

workforce. The power and class differentials in the PCL organization are largely ignored

by Covey, however, since he believes that "[a]s long as people have the same goals, its

not important that they have the same roles" (246). Although Covey's language is

couched in the most altruistic of sentiments, one cannot help but get the impression that

the Empowering Manager has the unenviable task of being equal parts motivational guru

and enforcer goon for the company bottom-line.

The tacit hierarchy of these PCL 'roles' is therefore mystified as 'true north' PCL

stewardships, and further perpetuated by Covey's increasingly blurred distinctions

between paternalistic corporate management and the enlightened egalitarianism of

visionary leadership. The same strategies for parents to make champions of their

children, Covey says, "also apply to making champions of the people you employ,

manage or lead" (144). Yet Covey later condemns such a paternal view as indicative of

outdated authoritarian models where the "benevolent autocrat is like a kindly father," a

flawed assumption that "still leaves management in charge, still making the decisions and

giving the commands" (177-8). Enlightened PCL leaders instead "realize that we can no

longer supply and supervise methods if we want to hold people responsible for results,"

so the transformed managerial task is "to build teams and to identify goals that have

meaning to all the people involved" (228-9). Covey vaguely insists elsewhere that

"management must become empowering leaders," repeatedly hinting that managers

become leaders by empowering employees to be creative in choosing their methods for

attaining desired results (265). Because the "universal mission statement generates a

sense of stewardship with respect to people and other resources," the "meta leadership"

of the CEO is instead accountable "to think ecologically about all stakeholders" and fish

the stream of changing realities (300-1). The utopian flattened hierarchy of PCL thus has

visionary CEOs adapting structures and systems to facilitate missionary stewardships,

while empowering managers keep individual producers aligned with the 'mission' of

win-win performance agreements.

In Covey's view, none of the PCL techniques can translate into long-term

effectiveness without integrity and an abundance mentality at all levels of an

organization. "In fact, I would like to see a new organizational chart: in the center of the

chart are correct principles and on the perimeter would be the different stewardships,"

Covey concludes, a flattened hierarchy oriented around a shared mission where the

"chairman and everyone else are accountable to those principles" (300). As Covey

relates from his experience as a consultant, "when the senior executives want to blame

everybody and everything else for those problems—we have them look in the mirror to

identify one of the primary sources" (171-2). "The climate control" for organizational

culture, Covey is indeed convinced, "is in the hands of the chief executive" (222). In the

end, Covey therefore embraces the notion that visionary leadership is something that is modeled from above and flows down the bureaucratic hierarchy, while his repeated insistence that collaborative win-win mission statements must emerge organically from the bottom-up seem appropriate to the manager-leader. "Principle-centered leaders create a common vision and a set of principles and work on decreasing the restraining forces," says Covey; "Managers focus primarily on increasing the driving forces" (280). For better or worse, it is the CEO who assumes the parental role of providing visionary "Meta leadership" for different organizational "stewardships" (300), while the Empowering Manager acts as the "transformational leader" who negotiates win-win agreements and holds Producer-Champions accountable for attaining results while honoring their stewardships of the principle-based mission statement (279-87).

Here we begin to discern the character themes of the charismatic script: a heroic leader gifted with supernatural powers or extraordinary abilities, and converted disciples mobilized as devoted missionaries for a leader's rhetorical vision. "It takes an exceptional chief executive to expose himself voluntarily to external scrutiny," Covey admits, since most managers and CEOs "don't want to face some realities" but "would rather see themselves clothed with position, power, and robes of respectability" (232). Covey believes that "great servant leaders have that humility," the self-discipline and sacrifice born of "a contrite spirit," which is "the hallmark of inner religion" and very rare: "I know a few CEOs who are humble servant leaders—who sacrifice their pride and share their power—and I can say that their influence both inside and outside their companies is multiplied because of it" (92). But Covey acknowledges that for those in positions of power, "it is almost impossible not to resort to force when a leader is in the

middle of a crisis" (105). "Many executives," frowns Covey, "reward feudalism" or "behave in ways that value closeness, hidden agendas, and politicking" (168), while "[f]ew managers are really willing to pay the price of empowerment" (184). In starkly contrasting his ideal PCL leader with the adversarial scarcity script guiding most people and managers, Covey finds that "principle-centered power occurs when the cause or purpose or goal is believed in as deeply by the followers as by the leaders… [which] elicits a willingness to risk doing the right things because they are valued, they are modeled by the leader, and they are sanctioned by *the vision clarified by the leader*" (104-5, emphasis mine). A visionary leader of character and competence, in Covey's view, acts as sanctioning agent for PCL stewardships acting as missionary disciples.

Covey's PCL leader, as clarifier of vision and role model for a missionary purpose, is expected to prophetically inspire within devotees a deeper sense of spiritual meaning and the clarity of a reborn self-identity. "Meaning is the challenging need of the modern worker" and "the essential ingredient in modern times to organizational success," Covey insists; "A mission statement helps people achieve success," since becoming "the kind of person you want to be and doing the things that you desire to do actually define success" (291). Covey's ideal principle-centered leader is a rare breed indeed, functioning as a visionary spiritual healer, exemplary hero of inspiring integrity, and managerial genius expert at communication without coercion. "In the upper echelons of the company," Covey explains, those enlightened with the PCL paradigm can shift their energy "to training and development, counseling, coaching, and responding to requests for guidance" (322). The idealized benevolence of Covey's PCL 'Meta-leadership' seemingly offers charismatic leadership without its troubling dark side. In the concluding

discussion, I will next consider the payoff and price of charismatic leadership as scripted within the rhetorical vision of Covey's PCL fantasy.

"PROPHET MOTIVE" AS RHETORICAL VISION: THE GIFT OF GRACE

On the surface, Covey's aversion to charismatic leadership is consistent with his condemnation of authoritarian control in favor of principle-centered empowerment. As the following quote indicates, however, the pseudo-religious fantasy-themes in the admittedly spiritual paradigm of PCL mark the abundance mentality's "gift of grace" and the would-be-leader's "primary greatness" of character as centrally important catalysts for personal trustworthiness, interpersonal trust, managerial empowerment and organizational alignment.

> As we give grace to others, we receive more grace ourselves. As we affirm people and show a fundamental belief in their capacity to grow and improve, as we bless them even when they are cursing or judging us—we build primary greatness into our personality and character. You can't have empowerment without first having trust… In aligned organizations, everything serves to help the individual be productive and effective in meeting the objectives of the win-win performance agreement… If there is misalignment of structure and systems, you will not have empowerment or trust… If owners and managers lack character and competence, they won't give power and profit and recognition to others… Until individual managers have done the inside-out work, they won't solve the fundamental problems of the organization, nor will they truly empower others, even though they might use the language of empowerment… We must work on character and competence to solve structural and systemic problems. (65-66)

Charisma, the "gift of grace or favor" for the ancient Greeks, thus rears its head even as it goes unacknowledged within Covey's rhetorical vision.

This chapter's fantasy-theme analysis suggests that the differences between charismatic leadership and principle-centered empowerment may be a difference in name only, a sleight-of-hand in fantasy vocabulary: the benevolent authoritarianism of "trustworthiness" and "empowerment" are notions that replace/displace the more

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troublesome concepts of "charisma" and "authority." Although Covey is conceptually

hostile to the authoritarian connotations of charismatic power, his PCL fantasy

nevertheless scripts precisely those conditions which give rise to charismatic leadership:

belief, faith, and devotion to a heroic myth of virtuous leadership.

As explained earlier, this study departs from earlier research by examining the

membership fantasies that are being tacitly evoked rather than attending to the overt

leader fantasy and one-sided leadership rhetoric alone, as is more commonly practiced

within "guru theory" (Huczynski, 1993a; Clark & Salaman, 1998). The Prophet Motive

underlying Covey's rhetorical persona is often dismissed by skeptics as what Wolfe

(1998) incredulously calls "white magic," an ability to "persuade people that things

which are perfectly obvious, even completely known to them, can nonetheless be

revealed to them" (30). In accounting for the undisputed success and continuing appeal

of the PCL paradigm, however, Jackson's (1999) insightful fantasy theme analysis

identifies three attractive features of Covey's PCL paradigm for business executives and

corporate management: 1) the onus for change is firmly placed on the employee and not

the organization; 2) PCL encourages employees to deflect the blame for things like

downsizing, reorganization and re-engineering from senior executives onto him or

herself; and 3) Covey's programs offer a comprehensive recipe for conservatism rather

than radical corporate change (368-9). Jackson's explanation for the countless employee

"Producers" who embrace the teachings of Covey, however, are cautiously concluded to

be a "quasi-religious function" of "the charismatic leadership that Covey himself has

exhibited to powerful effect" (373). My analysis therefore begins where Jackson's

suggestively ends, by exploring the charismatic magic of Covey's fantasy for converted

memberships who subscribe to his mythically charged rhetorical vision.

My analysis indicates the rhetorical vision of Covey's PCL fantasy exhibits all the

rhetorical earmarks of the fantasy script for charismatic leadership. According to Weber

(1968), the charismatic hero demonstrates "specific gifts of body and mind" and, as

anointed leader, inspires "personal devotion" and "enjoys loyalty and authority by virtue

of a mission believed to be embodied by him"; Charismatic authority thus "manifests its

revolutionary power from within" as the internalized mission of the gifted hero-leader

functions as a catalyst for the "collective excitement produced by extraordinary events

and from surrender to heroism of any kind" (1112-21). Covey's view of power seems to

closely parallel Weber's view of charismatic authority, and well worth repeating:

> "Principle-centered power is not forced, it is invited, as the personal
> agendas of both leader and follower are encompassed by a larger purpose.
> Principle-centered power occurs when the cause or purpose or goal is
> believed in as deeply by the followers as by the leaders… Control is
> apparent with principle-centered power, but the control is not external; it is
> self-control. *Power is created when individuals perceive that their leaders
> are honorable, so they trust them, are inspired by them, believe deeply in
> the goals communicated by them, and desire to be led.* Because their
> sense of purpose and vision, and what they represent, leaders can build
> principle-centered power in their relationships with their followers… and
> principle-centered power elicits a willingness to risk doing the right
> things, because they are valued, they are modeled by the leader, and they
> are sanctioned by *the vision clarified by the leader*… And what a leader is,
> beyond what the leader can do to or for followers, ultimately determines
> the depth of principle-centered power he has." (104-5, emphasis mine)

Covey's conceptualization of principle-centered power, with slight modifications in

terminology, offers up Weberian charisma in all but name. As prophet of the PCL

paradigm, Covey's inside-out model is instead presented as a missionary quest to

empower the heroic 'gifts of grace' latent within others. Yet Weber's model of

charismatic leadership is insinuated by Covey, intentionally or not, to convert missionary

disciples to his PCL cause by "scripting" a fantasy of empowered memberships who wait expectantly for a charismatic leader who will prophetically fulfill the messianic PCL role. In short, whereas Weber identifies the leadership script for charismatic domination as *authority*, Covey offers a membership script for crypto-charismatic participation as *empowerment*. The charismatic rhetoric of Covey's PCL leader is one that unleashes the charismatic gifts latent within others.

A brief summary of Covey's principle-centered fantasy may help clarify the crypto-charismatic memberships being constituted. The setting that Covey portrays is a crisis of meaning (anomie) and identity (alienation) for corporate suburbanites who have difficulty finding balance between their professional, familial and personal needs. This scene for Covey is caused by the self-centered scarcity mentality of a Mechanical Paradigm, while the solution is personal conversion to the principle-centered abundance mentality of an Agrarian Paradigm. Whereas the outside-in adversarial scarcity script is the cause of both angst and human evil (the "Hitler Problem," p. 95), says Covey, the inside-out 'character ethic' of the PCL abundance script is the compass that promises to guide individuals to an oasis of virtue and happiness. The action themes of Covey's PCL paradigm urge a saintly asceticism of self-mastery by humbly aligning oneself with timeless universal principles, a missionary quest that can then revolutionize individual identity, personal relationships, managerial structures and organizational systems as one's influence expands. This plotline for transformational change through proven relational methods is bolstered by the saga of past effectiveness, modeled by an eclectic collection of heroes from religion, politics, science and industry. These principle-centered *dramatis personae* are starkly contrasted with the dominant mechanistic paradigm of an adversarial

scarcity script, a mentality encouraging the feudalistic Machiavellianism of self-centered management and authoritarian control for those wielding power rather than cultivating empowerment. Covey preaches personal conversion to the PCL paradigm and advocates the transformational Meta-leadership of an empowering visionary as the means for transforming controlling structures, mechanistic systems, and stagnant social institutions.

Scripted within this rhetorical vision of Covey's PCL fantasy, however, are crypto-charismatic 'stewardships' that bear striking similarities to the mythic redeemer archetypes of the American Superhero (Lawrence & Jewett, 2002; Nimmo & Combs, 1980). The visionary Meta-Leadership that Covey both promotes and exemplifies himself is that of the Visionary Prophet, who articulates "an appeal to moral transformation" with the conviction that "moral conversion rather than power is the path to community redemption," and thus by nonviolent "psychological manipulation […] endeavors to tap wellsprings of goodness in us all […] to transcend interest and calculation for principle" (Nimmo & Combs, 1980: 241). In the "personal note" at the conclusion of his book, the devout Mormon Covey makes clear that God is the ultimate moral authority in the universe, the 'true north' to which all his prophetic principles point (324). This prophetic rhetorical persona is consistent with Jacksons's (1999) fantasy analysis of the material, existential and spiritual impulses that motivate managers and others to follow management gurus, a righteous analogue offering a transformational life-style rhetorical vision so compelling that adherents proclaim themselves "disciples" of Covey and his teachings while cynical commentators label it the Cult of Covey. "What emerges is an essentially pragmatic stance to a potentially thorny theological problem," Jackson observes, since "the consumer is given full sovereignty" to "move in and out at

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leisure, selecting the attractive elements of the vision and adding them to the highly

individualized pastiche of spiritual, religious and quasi-religious beliefs and tenets that

form the basis for defining self and identity in late modernity" (373). Thus, Covey's

rhetorical vision radiates charismatic appeal to different audiences for different reasons.

The Visionary Prophet is less mythic hero than the heroic myth-maker of others, suggest

Lawrence & Jewett (2002), a pied piper of selfless love and virtuous cheerfulness who

taps "the archetypal power of the story to cast an Everyman in the role of community

savior" (35). The appeal for different audiences is perhaps explained by the archetypal

appeal of the interdependent 'stewardships' being invoked by Covey's PCL fantasy.

By attending to the mystified memberships within Covey's action themes and

character themes, my analysis suggests that the other Redeemer Archetypes of the

American Superhero are attractively 'scripted' within the PCL paradigm as missionary

'stewardships' subordinate to the 'meta-leadership' of the Visionary Prophet. Following

the concentric circles of Covey's model, at the level of personal trustworthiness is the

Servant Superhero, whose ascetic self-mastery of character and integrity is accomplished

by becoming a disciple of the PCL paradigm through faith in the abundance mentality.

"Those striving to be principle-centered see life as a mission" (34), Covey says, since

"selfless service has always been one of the most powerful methods of influence" (121).

As we've seen, Covey offers himself up as a heroic exemplar of this PCL stewardship

along with an eclectic group of heroic business giants (Lee Iacocca and Jack Welsch),

management revolutionaries (W. Edwards Deming is called "the economic Isaiah of our

time," p. 252), religious luminaries (Moses and Jesus Christ) and even sainted social

reformers (Gandhi, whose ideas and words are frequently invoked). Through

identification and narrative association, Covey's textual persona is made consubstantial with an eclectic group of luminaries who different groups may consider charismatic heroes worthy of imitation.

The levels of interpersonal trust and managerial empowerment are the more nebulous realm where Technocratic Superteams, different 'stewardships' subordinated to a shared mission, must collaboratively 'synergize' win-win performance agreements. By putting a personal spin on management-labor relations between Producer-Champions and Empowering Managers, Covey's "essentially transactional approach to human relationships is blended skillfully into the well-worn and hackneyed human relations concepts of 'win-win' and 'synergy' which, like an old pair of slippers, provide the audience with a feeling of comfort and security based on years of familiarity" (Jackson, 1999: 368). One explanation for this odd discrepancy between transformational and transactional elements may be that character is central to the individual 'self-help' sections, while competence becomes more important for sections on organizational management. "We sometimes focus too much on integrity and not enough on personal competence and professional performance," Covey says in his management section; "Honest people who are incompetent in their area of professed expertise are not trustworthy" (171). Covey's Managerial Superhero, who both inspires and models by saintly example the transformational leadership of virtuous PCL stewardships, is also expected to competently coordinate empowered Producer Superteams. "But we do not deal in methods," Covey tells business executives and managers, because if "the win-win agreement is set up properly, they will do whatever it takes to accomplish the desired results within the guidelines" (194-5). This 'by any means necessary' view of methods,

however, becomes ethically problematic when contextualized by the creative accounting practices of an Enron or Worldcom.

It is here that we find the repressed Shadow archetype of Covey's purely benevolent PCL fantasy in the Messianic Prince, "someone messianic and vengeful who can mobilize hate and fear, identify scapegoats, and promise a restored Eden of community, security, and authority" when "there are no limits, moral or institutional, placed on the hero's quest"; this power-wielding Ruler is one who "represents a punitive principle" and whose "ferocity and even diabolic actions are justified by the evils that beset us" (Nimmo & Combs, 1980: 243). In granting the consumer full sovereignty to pick-and-choose from the archetypal buffet within the PCL fantasy, Covey inadvertently offers the Machiavellian Princes of corporate execs 'plausible deniability' for abuses and failures because lower level stewardships are both responsible for methods and accountable for desired results. As a Canadian critic observes in the *Edmonton Sun*:

> "The bible of leadership books is, of course, Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*… [But] effectiveness and morality aren't necessarily the same thing. Ask any CEO. On second thought, don't. These days, most of them aren't good at either. But they're the ones who popularized this nonsense, force-feeding it to middle management like it was manna from heaven. The trouble with lists like these (not to unduly pick on Covey, who I'm sure means well) is that they're open to interpretation. The habits mean whatever the person with the most power wants them to mean." ["Seven Habits of a Highly Unethical PM," 3/26/02, p. 11]

The organization of Covey's book is telling on this point. Because the self-help section on personal trustworthiness and interpersonal trust are assumed within the management advice section on empowerment and organizational alignment, the hodgepodge of 'proven' techniques and relational methods advocated by Covey become mere indicators rather than necessary predictors of the principle-centered leadership espoused.

Largely unaddressed in Covey's enthusiastic gospel of the "character ethic" is how the PCL paradigm can seduce management execs and would-be leaders into a self-righteous fantasy that rationalizes the very benevolent authoritarianism which Covey denounces. When Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue made Covey's book "Principle-Centered Leadership" required reading for all state department heads, he insisted that the book reflected his vision of a "new Georgia" where honesty, trust, and respect would be the hallmarks of his gubernatorial tenure. "Its just the governor's way of showing us his leadership style," noted the director of the Georgia Technology authority after Covey spoke to about 400 state workers and the press, "so we can all drive this from the top down" ("Georgia capitol Staff Gets Principles Pep Talk," Atlanta Journal Constitution, 2/26/03). This top-down paternalistic style of rulership, presuming a messianic quest to save unenlightened subordinates from themselves, is tacitly embedded within Covey's relational view despite his repeated cautionary insistence on reflexive self-mastery and empathetic listening. Journalist Michael Skapinker, in a *Financial Times of London* interview with Covey about his methods, finds that "Some of it is slightly spooky." During one meeting with his nine children to revisit the family mission statement hanging on their wall, Covey remembers turning to them and demanding, "Who wants to pay the mortgage? Who wants to pay for the insurance? The food? The cars?" Since his was the only hand that went up, Covey then asked his children what they were going to do since their parents were putting in 60-hour weeks. When his seven year-old son volunteered to look after the yard, father Covey imposed his mission statement for its care: "See our neighbor's yard is green and clean? That's what we're after, green and clean." The win-win agreement and 'shared' mission being exemplified here is an eerie case-study of the

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benevolent authoritarianism as practiced by most bureaucratic managers, which Covey condemns as the traditional autocratic control typical of the adversarial scarcity mentality.

The archetypal shadow of the Messianic Prince lurks within Covey's PCL paradigm precisely at those points dealing with conflict, malcontents, or anyone who might challenge the pure benevolence of those in positions of power. "To elicit from every employee his or her deepest commitment, continued loyalty, finest creativity, consistent excellent productivity, and maximum potential contribution toward achieving the mission of the organization," enthuses Covey, "is the challenge of leadership" (276). People are discouraged from the "cynical" adjustment of "finding their primary satisfactions off the job" (118), and urged to reject "dichotomous thinking" in "the idea that there is a conflict" between personal and organizational goals (212). "Within the framework of accountability, work efforts are aligned with the needs of the organization," says Covey, "and the organization has the ability to monitor and support individual and group performance" (214). As we've seen, those who resist the benevolent authoritarianism of the shared mission are charged to improve or perish, shape up or ship out. The darker potentials for manipulatively 'aligning' individuals with organizational needs goes largely overlooked, as does the unquestioned presumption that the feudalistic model of the managerial Prince is something to be accepted with the faith and hope of future salvation. Of PCL leaders who rise from the middle or bottom of organizations as a catalyst for the transformation of entire cultures, Covey tells the *Training Journal* (1999) that "the more they understand and talk the language of the executive decision maker and the bottom-line orientation in the marketplace, the more they will succeed in

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getting noticed," since "it puts them in the throne room, and once there, […] they can become extremely powerful change agents."

The PCL 'empowerment' fantasy has inherent attractiveness to executive power-brokers since it offers plausible deniability for questionable methods or undesirable results, a dangerous blind spot which even Covey himself is not immune. In responding to inquiries regarding an impending SEC investigation of employee loans in his $7million Franklin Covey training company, Covey shrugs: "I don't get involved in the management side of things." Covey is far more interested in discussing his American Indian talking stick, which he has used to bring positive energy into many fraught situations like Northern Ireland negotiations, and the simplicity of positive results that flow from leaders who proceed from principles and trust their people. Observing Covey's story-telling style in action during a motivational seminar for a packed auditorium of electrified devotees, Skapinker comments:

> "They know the story. They know the Punchline. It is in the book…
> When he asks them to point north nearly everyone points in the same
> direction: arms raised, straight ahead. It would look like a Nuremberg
> rally, except that there is no menace in the room, and little sense of
> urgency." ("Straight from the stick: Interview with Stephen Covey,"
> *London Times*, 5/2/02, p. 13)

As an executive CEO, it is interesting to note how Covey himself can comfortably retreat into a self-righteous rationale that the bothersome details of problematic organizational structure and systems is not his concern but those of middle management. It is also interesting to note that as inspirational prophet of the PCL paradigm, Covey attracts enthusiastic disciples because his folksy stories and common sense wisdom evokes an inspiring fantasy of benevolent authoritarianism oblivious to the troublesome devils often lurking within the details. The risk of both 'meta-leaders' and 'producer-champions' is

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therefore comfortably displaced onto middle management, Superheroes given the nigh-impossible task of acting as both transformational visionaries and corporate missionaries.

In conclusion, The pseudo-religious 'Prophet Motive' fueling Covey's PCL fantasy is constitutive not of trust, but faith. If trust is a relationship forged from the ethos of demonstrating a history of credibility, trustworthiness and good will, then Covey's "paradigm shift" is a fantasy leap of faith that is required prior to building up such a relational history. The 'empowerment' within Covey's PCL paradigm taps the 'Prophet Motive' of charisma-hungry audiences longing for virtuous leadership without disrupting the 'Profit Motive' of organizational systems desiring more commitment and responsibility from devoted workers. As a self-help prophet, Covey places the power for transformation in the hands of individual self-discipline and free will but, as business management guru, Covey preaches that self-actualization be channeled through the management of meaning and the overlap of individual needs with organizational needs. Boje (2000) labels this as a post-spiritual capitalism within postmodern organizations, a new "guru-spiritualism" of employee empowerment that encourages individuals to narrate a spirituality quest story into their work lives and corporate identities. Boje's concern is that the aura of spiritual transformation of work and society often masks the material conditions of capitalistic exploitation. "When the overarching goals of the organization is only profit and the increase of shareholder wealth, it is difficult to create a spiritual framework," notes Marcic (1997), "for as soon as the bottom line is threatened, love goes out the window as an expendable commodity" (21).

This analysis has attempted to explore the fantasy pay-off and mythic price within Covey's rhetorical vision of Principle-Centered Leadership. By rhetorically evoking the

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fantasy script of charisma, the rhetorical vision of Covey's PCL paradigm taps the 'Prophet Motive' of charisma-hungry audiences yearning for a virtuous leader who can rescue them from alienation and anomie. Yet this analysis suggests that the widespread rhetorical appeal of Covey's PCL fantasy is attributable not only to the symbolic convergence of audiences to the charismatic fantasy script, but is also a consequence of the symbolic divergence of archetypal counter-fantasies which appeal to different constituencies for very different reasons. As I've suggested here, the mythic ambiguity within Covey's fantasy of benevolent authoritarianism is rhetorically pliable enough to accommodate the four archetypal counter-fantasies of the Visionary Prophet, the Servant Superhero, Empowered Superteams, and the Messianic Prince. By articulating the other counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership as 'stewardships' subordinate to the Meta-leadership of the Visionary Prophet, Covey offers an attractively inclusive fantasy that masks what may eventually emerge as profound antagonisms in archetypal expectations between conflicting rhetorical communities. Ironically, the very archetypal qualities that explain the widespread rhetorical appeal of the PCL fantasy may be those very same attributes which lead to its own undoing, as battles over institutionalizing some procedural bureaucratic orthodoxy exacerbates underlying ideological differences within the mythic expectations of leaders and led.

This study also suggests two very important implications for the rhetorical study of charismatic leadership in succeeding chapters. First, although Covey's fantasy script is strikingly reminiscent of the charismatic fantasy script, it is most notable in its constitutive rhetoric of empowered crypto-charismatic memberships. That is, rather than articulating a fantasy that overtly casts himself in the role of charismatic superhero,

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Covey instead insists that the charismatic 'gift of grace' is a latent potential encrypted within every human being and that these individual gifts or endowments can be unleashed if we only believe and have faith in our own empowerment. Future chapters will therefore examine whether this fantasy of empowered crypto-charismatic membership is an emergent variation of the charismatic fantasy script. Second, this analysis also suggests that the symbolic convergence of the charismatic fantasy script may be the result of a mythic ambiguity that integrates the symbolic divergence of competing archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership. If Covey's PCL fantasy is any indication, it may be that other emergent leadership fantasies may demonstrate amenities to the very different mythic expectations of the Visionary Prophet, the Servant Superhero, the Messianic Prince, and the Empowered Superteams. In the next analysis chapter, I will look for rhetorical traces of these Redeemer Archetypes within the work of another business guru, Tom Collins, who has very publicly insisted on the need for completely abandoning the outdated ideal of a charismatic leader.

CHAPTER 5

STATISTICAL MYSTICISM IN JIM COLLINS'
"LEVEL 5 LEADERSHIP"

INTRODUCTION

"If managerialism is today's all-conquering religion," observes *Management Today*, "it is hardly surprising that there is a steady and constantly refreshed supply of priests and prophets of the new creed" as "business leaders look to gurus for inspiration and enlightenment."[1] The ascension of Jim Collins to the coveted status of "management guru" is almost solely attributed to the enduring popularity of his best-selling books *Built to Last* and *Good to Great*, which continue to top the best-seller lists of the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. Unlike the evangelical Stephen Covey, Collins is a hardcore empiricist academic who prefers hard data over folksy anecdotes when exploring the dynamics of good to great companies. Yet Collins' meteoric rise as the newest darling of business gurus is in large part due to his radical message for change in how managerial leadership should be practiced. Collins has made his career as a management guru by boldly heralding the long-overdue death of charismatic leadership.

Similar to Covey's displacement of charismatic leadership with the more purely benevolent paradigm of principle-centered leadership, Collins offers his own revolutionary model for what he calls "Level 5 Leadership," a self-described "revelation" that emerged unexpectedly from years of statistical data. This study will examine Collins' fantasy of Level 5 Leadership (L5L) in order to assess the affinities and departures of its rhetorical vision from the charismatic fantasy script and culturetypal counter-fantasies of crypto-charismatic membership.

THE DATA SPEAKS

The work of Jim Collins is perhaps one of the least likely places of all to look for charisma. In the October 1997 issue of *Inc.* magazine, reiterating the core idea that has fueled his meteoric rise as business guru in the online article "The Death of the Charismatic Leader (And the Birth of an Architect)," Collins insists that "the charismatic-leader model has to die… a charismatic leader is not an asset; it's a liability companies have to recover from. A company's long-term health requires a leader who can infuse the company with a sense of purpose, instead of his or hers, and can translate that purpose into action through mechanisms, not force of personality." Collin's rise to gurudom was fueled by his surprise best-seller in 1994, *Built to Last*, a five-year research project co-authored with his mentor at the Stanford Business School about companies that maintained a level of greatness over decades of turbulent change.

One of Collins' most provocative and controversial insights from *Built to Last* was that America's most successful corporations don't stay successful decade after decade because of some great founding idea or charismatic leadership. Rather, companies like Procter & Gamble, Walt Disney and Wal-Mart remain great over the long haul because the 'core ideology' of their strong organizational cultures are capable of surviving no matter who is CEO or how markets change. The book in its first seven years had sold well over one million copies in 17 languages, points out Kevin Maney in his 10 September 2001 article for *USA Today*, "staying on Business Week's best-seller list for a phenomenal 66 months." "It won Collins an army of disciples," Maney reports, with so many CEOs clamoring for speaking engagements and a peek at the book's galleys for his follow-up book that the "first print run of *Good to Great* is 100,000 – astronomical for a business book." Within five months, *Good to Great* skyrocketed to 18

printings and 250,000 copies in North America alone. Many other business books "sound like so much management-guru hot air, but Collins enjoys an extraordinary level of credibility among executives," Maney explains, since he is "more of a research scientist" while his communication style "has always been [that of] a strident mystic, given to profound insights stated with emphatic confidence and often spiced with dry humor." Collins' paradoxical guru status as a "statistic mystic" was cemented with *Built to Last's* surprising number two ranking in *Forbes* magazine's 2002 list of "The 20 Most Influential Business Books" among business executives (9/30/02).

In stark contrast to the devout Mormon faith of fellow management guru Steven Covey, Collins is a hardcore empiricist who launched his research and teaching career at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Founding his own 'management laboratory' in 1995 after the breakaway success of *Built to Last*, Collins undertakes multi-year research projects using a team of graduate students to develop practical tools for applying concepts that emerge from meticulously analyzed data. Collins confesses in interviews that the research findings of *Good to Great (G2G)* have not only profoundly influenced changes in his own life, but has also changed how he interacts with his team of graduate student research assistants, whom he affectionately calls his 'chimps.' "Before anything goes onto my own schedule—writing an article, interacting with a company, or accepting a speaking engagement—it first has to pass a council vote," Collins says; "Embedded in the irony of *Good to Great* is that in contrast to empowerment—the 'you can do anything' view of the world—we came away with a more sober view: You can do remarkable things, but you can't do all things remarkably." The empirically-minded

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Collins believes "there is a science to make companies healthier," but "[y]ou don't change organizations, you change people" (*T+D*, vol. 56, no. 8, August 2002; pp. 22-31).

Collins' data-driven, long-term view of business arcs has attracted lucrative consulting jobs with companies like Hewlett-Packard, McKinsey & Co., Starbucks Coffee, Merck, Sears, or Johnson & Johnson, but he also consults non-corporate firms like the Leadership Network of Churches, Johns Hopkins Medical School, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and the Peter F. Druker Foundation for Non-Profit Management. "Over the years," says Geoff Williams in the May 2002 issue of *Entrepreneur*, "he's become something of an entrepreneurial icon." Aside from his well-earned ethos as a profitably self-employed professor, Collins message is also inherently attractive to his CEO and senior executive audiences. Blurbs the *Wall Street Journal* on the *G2G* jacket: "With both *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*, Mr. Collins delivers two seductive messages: that great management is attainable by mere mortals and that its practitioners can build great institutions. It's just what us mortals want to hear." The ten years of research represented within *Good to Great* points to the antithesis of charismatic leadership as predictive of organizational success, a concept he calls 'Level 5 Leadership' (L5L). As Collins' website jimcollins.com insists, "There is perhaps no more corrosive trend to the health of our organizations than the rise of the celebrity CEO, the rock-star leader whose deepest ambition is first and foremost self-centric." Collins has become the best-selling bard of the unsung managerial Everyman, those unassuming Level 5 successors who are eclipsed by the charismatic shadow of innovative founders or corporate visionaries. His works often champion the iron will of invisibly unassuming corporate executives like Wal-Mart CEO David Glass who, Collins dryly observes, was

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dismissed by most as "a leader who had seemingly undergone a charisma bypass" (*Fast Company*, June 2003, iss.71; p.74). Abe Lincoln is often invoked by Collins as the archetypal exemplar of L5L unencumbered by the liability of charisma.

Collins finds that Level 5 Leaders, and those they inspire, channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great organizational culture. Level 5 Leaders are a paradoxical blend of iron will and personal humility, typically characterized in Collins' studies as self-effacing, reserved, unassuming, and even shy, yet also relentlessly fanatical in their drive to turn an organizational culture of greatness into a world-class institution. "Instead of a cult of personality, you should aim to build a cult-like culture around your core business," Collins evangelizes to corporate executives in an interview with Entrepreneur.com (1 October 2001). Although the Statistic Mystic would chafe at being labeled charismatic himself, "I've tried to evolve into a Level 5," Collins humbly admits. In an August 2002 interview with *T+D,* a Business Management and Practices journal, Collins replied when asked which answers arising from his almost 10 years of research that he likes least:

> I consider the whole Level 5 leadership finding to be very challenging. When I look at it, I feel overwhelmed. It's such a [high] standard and so contrary to what I've been brought up in culturally. I know its going to be a long, hard road in my own case to try to evolve towards anything resembling Level 5. So, that finding- which is true, and I believe in it deeply- is disturbing because it's a challenge to think about becoming Level 5.

Collins further elaborates in a 23 September 2002 interview with *BusinessWeek* that his findings on Level 5 Leadership were all the more shocking because:

> I so badly didn't want to have a leadership answer… I genuinely believe that leadership answers are sloppy and dangerous. Whatever the equation for output, the key plug becomes leadership. We reached a point where that plug figure was 90% of the answer… [T]hrough the power of

evidence, I wanted to give the unlikely heroes hope. Stop looking out there for the leader, the savior, whatever, and look inside… It's entirely possible to be a Level 5 leader and not succeed… It's also an arrogant extrapolation to say the only people who get great results are Level 5. Others do too, I don't think it lasts as long, that's all… All the leaders we studied saw leadership as a tremendous responsibility and a tremendous burden… I think of these people as corporate artists.

Although Level 5 leadership is for Collins the conceptual antithesis to charismatic leadership, he nonetheless invokes many historical examples of Level 5 organizational artists who have traditionally been labeled as exemplars of charisma, figures like Gandhi and Jesus of Nazareth. "I have absolutely no religious background at all, which gives me more confidence in the findings," Collins explains to ChristianityToday.com; "The kind of leaders who took companies from good to great match up with the findings of the great leaders of the world religions. That gives it so much power. It would be one thing if I came from that point of view to begin with. But I didn't believe this would be true, and yet the evidence led us to it" (10 March 2003).

THE CHARISMATIC FANTASY SCRIPT OF *GOOD TO GREAT*

From these initial fantasy cues recurring across both Collins' comments and works, a familiar pattern begins to emerge. Like Covey's displacement of the troubling paradoxes within charismatic leadership with his more purely benevolent notion of Principle-Centered Leadership, Collins concept of Level 5 Leadership also seems to exhibit some of the characteristic rhetorical earmarks of charisma by attracting devoted disciples, articulating a revolutionizing message for profound socio-cultural change, and a near-mystical appeal which is both universal in scope and personally transformational in application. Table 5.1 presents a summary of the fantasy themes located within Collins' rhetorical vision of Level 5 Leadership, which offers transcendence through hard

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science rather than faith. We therefore now turn to examining *Good to Great* in terms of the fantasy script of charismatic leadership by demonstrating that L5L, similar to Covey's PCL, offers new leadership wine in the very old rhetorical bottle of charisma.

Table 5.1: FANTASY THEMES OF COLLINS' "L5L" RHETORICAL VISION

Fantasy Theme	Type	Fantasy cues	Burkean Motive
Good to Great Odyssey	Setting themes	The Physics of organization Dogs that didn't bark Inside the black box Chaos to Concept Built to Flip	Transcendence
'Level 5' Flywheel	Action themes	First who, then what Faith & brutal facts Finding a Hedgehog concept A culture of discipline The Flywheel & Doom Loop	Hierarchy
Creators vs Reactors	Character themes	Self-directed L5 Architects the Malleable Masses Conscious Opportunists Architects of Evil	Identification

SETTING THEMES: THE ODYSSEY FROM GOOD TO GREAT

The most striking feature of the setting themes within Collins' fantasy is that they are firmly rooted in the cosmos of scientific rationalism and empirical deduction. Collins insists that his book *Good to Great* "is about *the question* – Can a good company become a great company and, if so, how? – and our search for timeless, universal answers that can be applied by any organization" (5). Collins and 20 business school students analyzed data on 1,435 companies that were on the Fortune 500 list from 1965 to 1995, looking for this basic pattern: companies that demonstrated fifteen-year cumulative stock returns at or below the general stock market, punctuated by a transition point, then cumulative returns at least three times over the market over the next fifteen years. Their task was to determine what "the good-to-great companies share in common that

distinguished them from the comparison companies" who didn't make the leap from good to great (7). Only 11 companies make the cut. "It is important to understand that we developed all of the concepts in this book by making *empirical deductions directly from the data*," Collins insists, and "did not begin this project with a theory or test to prove" (10). The sheer volume of data analysis and meticulous number crunching undertaken by Collins and his graduate research 'chimps' is staggering, reflected in the 42 pages of appendixes at the back of the book documenting his team's methodology and correlations. "I like to think of our work as a search for timeless principles—the enduring physics of great organizations—that will remain true and relevant no matter how the world changes around us," Collins explains (15). Treating his readers as fellow research scientists, the Statistic Mystic ends his conclusion with an odd mixture of grandeur and humility:

> This might come as a surprise, but I don't primarily think of my work as about the study of business, nor do I see this as fundamentally a business book. Rather, I see my work as being about discovering what creates enduring great organizations of *any* type… I just happen to use corporations as a means for getting inside that black box… That good is the enemy of great is not just a business problem. It is a human problem… I offer everything herein for your thoughtful consideration, not blind acceptance. You're the judge and jury. Let the evidence speak for itself. (15-16)

Particularly striking in the scene established by Collins is its universal scope and reliance upon scientific method to provide the omniscient Buddha-eye of objectivity and revelation.

Rather than a prophet acting as spokesperson for a deity, the overwhelming scope of the scene provides evidence that speaks to us for itself in a revelation of timeless truths through a method man. And speak the evidence does. Collins beams of the resulting 11 companies that "if you invested $1 in a mutual fund of the good-to-great companies in

1965, holding each company at the general market rate until the date of transition, and simultaneously invested $1 in a general stock market fund, your $1 in the good-to-great fund taken out on January 1, 2000, would have multiplied 471 times, compared to a 56 fold increase in the market" (3). Lest we mistake these stunning figures as proof positive that Collins has discovered the philosopher's stone for corporate profitability, however, one should recall that his rigorous methodological selection process filtered out companies who did not handily outperform the stock market. To the untrained rhetorical eye, however, such methodological wizardry could easily lull one to excitedly mistake methodological hindsight for prophetic foresight. Exhibiting a dramatic flair for empirically validating his frequently counter-intuitive findings, Collins identifies several "dogs that did not bark" (a reference to a Sherlock Holmes mystery) that turn many assumptions about leadership and organizations on its head: larger-than-life charismatic saviors are negatively correlated with taking a company from good to great, nor was long-term strategic planning or corporate vision centrally important; good-to-great companies paid scant attention to managing change and motivating people, while revolutionary leaps in performance were largely a matter of a conscious choice to achieve greatness rather than the product of a revolutionary process. Regarding these tantalizing results, Collins marvels for his audience, "we were frequently just as astonished at what we did *not* see as what we did" (10-11). These examples illustrate that, as a self-styled scientist and data-driven stoic, Collins is indeed a "statistic mystic" who is also a gifted showman and a talented practicing rhetorician in his dynamic presentation of data.

The first scenic element of the charismatic fantasy script here emerges, an appeal to emotions or sentiments via the dramatizing saga of agonistic forces. "Good is the

enemy of great," Collins boldly asserts in the very first sentence of the book (1). Our society doesn't have good schools principally because we have good schools, we don't have great government because we already have good government, and the "vast majority of companies never become great, precisely because the vast majority become quite good – and that is their main problem" (1). Good, Collins insists, is an invitation to mediocrity and stagnation. Collins explains that although *Good to Great* is chronologically a sequel to *Built to Last*, it is in his mind a prequel because companies do not last until they first make the leap from good enough to a relentless drive to become great. "We came to think of our research effort as akin to looking inside a black box," Collins says, and each round of data analysis "was like installing another lightbulb to shed light on the inner workings of the good-to-great process" (9). Sounding like equal parts investigative detective and methodological magician, Collins would gather the research team for weekly debates over articles, interviews, research analysis and data coding. "I would make a presentation to the team on [a] specific company, drawing potential conclusions and asking questions," Collins recalls; "Then we would debate, disagree, pound on table, raise our voices, pause and reflect, debate some more, pause and think, resolve, question, and debate yet again about 'what it all means'" (9-10). This team microcosm of the scientific process, a fantasy mythos of the empirical quest for meaning, reflects the struggle of right versus wrong, fact versus fiction, received wisdom versus scientific revelation, and the triumph of empirical verification over accepted tradition. Yet the driving force behind this task of enlightenment is Collins himself and his own unique gifts. "We all have a strength or two in life," Collins muses, "and I suppose mine is the ability to take a lump of unorganized information, see patterns, and extract order from the

mess – to go from chaos to concept" (11). Wielding the scientific method like a magic

wand, the statistic mystic Collins offers sight to those blinded by conventional wisdom

and their own misguided presumptions.

Intertwined with this dramatizing saga of the battle between scientific fact and

fantasy fiction is a scene of social crisis, the second element of the charismatic fantasy

script, which articulates the anomie of collective meaning and the alienation of social

identity. "We have a terrible mix-up between the concepts of celebrity and leadership,"

Collins complains in the 14 January 2002 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* (v132,

n1: 34). Collins reveals in *G2G* that "at the very heart of what motivated us to undertake

this huge project in the first place" was "the search for meaning, or more precisely, the

search for meaningful work" (208). Reflecting on the latest round of corporate scandals

from industry giants like Enron, Worldcom, and Tyco while sitting in his rocking chair

filing newspaper clippings, Collins reveals that he experienced a moment of insight:

> Here's what I realized: all of these stories were connected by one underlying theme: the built-to-flip ethos. I began to see that the dotcom IPO bubble was just one particular strain of a larger pattern, a reflection of a deeper trend in American corporate culture. We didn't just have a built-to-flip IPO bubble; our entire business culture had become a version of built to flip. We became a built-to-flip economy, perhaps even a built-to-flip society… The issue here isn't just one of fraud and corruption. The issue is an entire built-to-flip mindset… And we are paying the price today… Here's the essential truth of our current situation: the real problem has stayed the same, regardless of the direction of the market. First we went through a spiraling-up phase, and people lost their bearings as they got caught up in the melee of opportunity. Now we're in a downward spiral, and people have lost their bearings in a scramble of uncertainty. It's the exact same pattern in reverse: people merely reacting to circumstances, rather than doing anything fundamentally creative. The distinction isn't between a market that's going up and a market that's going down. It's between people who are fundamentally creators and people who are only reactors, who take their cues from the outside world. (*Fast Company*, October 2002; p. 88)

This post-*G2G* revelation is couched in a mythic metaphysics of human being within an ontological scene, but this otherwise mystical insight is couched within the materialistic rationality of economic cycles, corporate culture, and capitalist acquisition. At the center of this ontology, however, is the human agent and their unchanging inner struggle with a faulty "built-to-flip" mindset that limits their own self-actualizing power of agency. Collins is convinced that true self-actualization can only occur when discovering "what they are genetically encoded for" and, although they "are more likely to face the problem of *too much opportunity* in their lives, not too little," "those who go about their lives and work with the passion to create and build in pursuit of self-created goals are the only ones who will find meaning in the end—regardless of whether the dice roll their way" (*Fast Company*, 10/02). One senses here the familiar challenge to command our own destiny, to become our own self-actualizing *ubermensch*.

For Collins, the potential for transcending the 'built-to-flip' mindset and create something 'built to last' ultimately rests in the salvation offered by scientific command and methodological control. "Stock performance might not seem like the best yardstick of corporate excellence, given the whims of investors," admits Joshua Macht in the September 2001 issue of the online webzine Business 2.0; "But Collins maintains that using other measurements, such as employee satisfaction or impact on society, unfairly reveals the biases of the researchers" (www.business2.com). The empirical revelations that make it possible to become ubermensch masters of our own destiny is revealed to both Collins and his readers through his *Good to Great* research findings, the data-driven gospel of Level 5 Leadership which points to "the timeless principles of good to great" (15). It is to the revelatory action themes of Level 5 Leadership that we must now turn.

ACTION THEMES: ARCHITECTURE OF LEVEL 5 LEADERSHIP

The often counterintuitive and unconventional actions required to take an organization or company from good to great are often encapsulated by Collins by the notion of Level 5 Leadership. Early on in his book, Collins offers an overview of what he calls the "framework of concepts" that comprise the transformational process of good to great. "Think of the transformation as a process of buildup followed by breakthrough," Collins suggests, "broken into three broad stages: disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action" (12). Rather than view transformational leadership as a person or principled purpose, Collins identifies transformational leadership as a predictable process that operates under an empirically verified hierarchy of progressive discipline. "Wrapping around this entire framework is a concept we came to call the flywheel," notes Collins, "which captures the gestalt of the entire process of going from good to great" (12).

This transformational process articulates a hierarchy of actions that distinguishes the merely good from the unquestionably great, and begins with the rare and exotically elusive qualities of Level 5 leadership. "We were surprised, shocked really, to discover the type of leadership required for turning a good company into a great one," Collins confesses. Compared to the charismatic corporate saviors and CEO superheroes who are in vogue today as business celebrities, he marvels that "the good to great leaders seem to have come from Mars." "Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy—these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will," Collins reveals, and "more like Lincoln or Socrates than Patton or Caesar" (12-13). At this point it is worth bearing in mind that Collins fixation on institutional CEO leaders blurs some very important

distinctions between headship or rulership and more relationally volitional forms of leadership. As the conclusion will consider more fully, Collins Level 5 leadership is in many ways a kinder, gentler version of Machiavelli's Prince. For Collins, however, the Level 5 CEO champions a larger purpose beyond just making money and tends to be a more attentive listener than their more "charismatic" counterparts who are pejoratively coded as flamboyant, publicity-hungry, and egotistically self-aggrandizing. Michael Skapinker paraphrases Collins' pejorative view of charisma in a *G2G* book review for London's *Financial Times,* voicing concern that "[w]hen chief executives rely on force of personality, people become more worried about impressing them than doing what is best for the company" (10 October 2001, p. 15).

The actions of Level 5 executives, in stark contrast, are first and foremost motivated by concern for the company and a relentless ambition for enduring organizational greatness rather than one's own wealth or personal renown. Following the plotline of the charismatic fantasy script, articulating a shared history and future-present crusade or quest for revolutionizing changes in the status quo, Collins evangelizes that readers aspiring to Level 5 should be "doing something they really care about, about which they have great passion" or "feel a crusader's purpose" emanating from "the inner quest for excellence" (209). As Collins explained during an interview previewing his keynote address to the 2001 Leadership Assembly of the NACS:

> One of the things we learned in the research for Built to Last was that these great companies had great parenting. Their founders were terrific leaders who were visionary in their field and committed to their company's destiny. So, in essence, these companies had great business 'genes' that were evident at the outset… Conventional wisdom tells you to look for what these companies did to understand the transformation. We found that the answer was in what they didn't do [during periods of transition]… You would expect that they would have brought in a

charismatic leader from the outside to set a new course and lead the organization to this new journey. Wrong. In 10 of the 11 good companies that made it to great, the leaders were insiders. Moreover, they are not charismatic nor are they celebrities… They are often shy and very humble. We call these leaders 'Level 5 leaders.' This is the highest level in our pyramid of leadership. Most leaders stop at level 4; and at this stage, they are hard charging, charismatic and fit the mold of someone like Lee Iacocca. Level 5 leaders are differentiated from other levels of leaders in that they have a wonderful blend of personal humility combined with extraordinary professional will… [T]hey realize that the most important step they must make to become a Level 5 leader is to subjugate their ego to the company's performance… Conversely, in the good companies that didn't make the journey to great, there were an abundance of leaders saying 'I have the direction, let's go this way'. (NACS.com, 2/01)

There are two important observations here worth highlighting. First, Level 5 leadership involves discernible behaviors that are oriented to the promotion, maintenance, and development of an existing bureaucratic organization or institution. The actions of Level 5 leaders, first and foremost, typically subordinate their own needs to those of the organization. Like Machiavelli's patriotic Prince, the needs of both leaders and subjects are subjugated to the collective needs of the realm, the nation or, in this case, the capitalist institutions and corporate power structure. This orientation favoring power-maintenance may help explain the second observation, that more charismatic visionaries or revolutionary founders are dismissed to level 4 of Collins' leadership pyramid, a notion which will be explained further under an exploration of L5L character themes. More important to the empiricist Collins is the "genetically" hard-wired actions or intuitive behaviors of an enduring good to great culture.

Following the second action theme of the charismatic fantasy script, successful results in transforming individuals and/or society, Collins empirically identifies only 11 companies who made the leap from good to great. Collins offers a human genome project of great organizations, empirically proclaiming his action themes of good to great

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with an almost scientific determinism.   The single most important action theme that

Collins uses to characterize succesful L5L behaviors, and the one he admits has been

most life-transforming for himself, is the notion of "First Who… Then What." "We

expected that good-to great leaders would begin by setting a new vision and strategy,"

Collins teases, but "found instead that they *first* got the right people on the bus, the wrong

people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats—and *then* figured out where to

drive it" (13). "In my daily life, I now change everything to a 'Who' question," Collins

confesses to *USA Today* about finding the right builder for the world-call climbing wall

in an old garage behind his Colorado home (9/20/01, p. 5B). Once the right people are in

the right seats and the bus is moving, G2G executives unflinchingly "confront the brutal

facts" of company under-performance while paradoxically maintaining faith that they can

change the company for the better. "Every good-to-great company embraced what we

came to call the Stockdale Paradox: You must maintain unwavering faith that you can

and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties," Collins explains, "AND at the

same time have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality,

whatever they might be" (13). "We learned that people are *not* the most critical asset; the

right people are," Collins enthuses to Christianity Today, "So much so that great

companies will put picking the right people ahead of picking the right strategy." Collins

admits "these great companies were bipolar—they were great places to work for the right

people, but they were terrible places to work for the wrong people." "It's one of the most

demeaning, barbaric things to think of human beings as a lump of inert coal," Collins

fumes; "If they're only motivated because someone motivated them, they're the wrong

people. The key in management is not to de-motivate people who are motivated"

(3/10/03). It may be little wonder that such a leadership quality is so exceedingly rare, since these L5L execs also tend to kick the loosely-defined "wrong" people off the bus when it is precisely those employees who often provide the critical feedback necessary for avoiding the dysfunctional dangers of *groupthink*.

Rather than explore the complicated role of communication climate within good-to-great organizations, Collins celebrates what he labels "The Hedgehog Concept." Invoking a famous essay by Isaiah Berlin based upon an ancient Greek parable, Collins divides the world into clever foxes who know many things and dowdy hedgehogs who eschew complexity for simplicity. "No, hedgehogs aren't simpletons," Collins explains of hedgehogs like Freud, Einstein, Darwin, and Adam Smith, "they have a piercing insight that allows them to see through complexity and discern underlying patterns… [to] see what is essential and ignore the rest" (91). Hedgehog companies like Walgreens and Wal-Mart avoid becoming scattered, confused and inconsistent by similarly channeling resources according to "a simple economic idea, profit per customer visit" (92). The focus of a Hedgehog Concept comes from the intersection of three questions: What are you deeply passionate about? What can you be the best in the world at? And what drives your economic engine? "If you could drive toward the intersection of these three circles and translate that intersection into a simple, crystalline concept that guided your life choices," Collins insists, "then you'd have a Hedgehog Concept for yourself" (96).

These actions together are generative of what Collins calls a Culture of Discipline, which he unapologetically characterizes as cult-like. "When you have disciplined people, you don't need hierarchy" and "you don't need bureaucracy," says Collins; "When you have disciplined action, you don't need excessive controls" because

by combining "a culture of discipline with an ethic of entrepreneurship, you get the

magic alchemy of great performance" (13). Collins explains that a cult-like culture of

greatness is successful when "fueled by creativity, imagination, bold moves into

uncharted waters, and visionary zeal" (121). A good to great company empowers

"freedom and responsibility within the framework of a highly developed system," Collins

reveals, which creates "*a culture full of people who take disciplined action*" that is

"*fanatically consistent with the Hedgehog Concept*" (124-5). The presence of absence of

a culture of almost fanatical discipline determines whether an organization then functions

according to the logic of "The Flywheel" or the "Doom Loop." Collins explains:

> Those who launch revolutions, dramatic change programs, and wrenching
> restructurings will almost certainly fail to to make the leap from good to
> great. No matter how dramatic the end result, the good-to-great
> transformations never happened in one fell swoop. There was no single
> defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary
> lucky break, no miracle moment. Rather, the process resembled
> relentlessly pushing a giant heavy flywheel in one direction, turn upon
> turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough and beyond… To
> make that final shift requires core values and a purpose beyond just
> making money… (14).

Collins is evangelizing an organization with visionary zeal and fanatically-driven actions

fueled by relentless self-discipline, an ideal that is fairly discomforting from a post-9/11

perspective informed by heightened awareness of terrorist organizations like Al-Quida.

"This was one of the most paradoxical findings from Built to Last—*core values are

essential for greatness, but it doesn't seem to matter what those core values are*," Collins

naively insists with characteristic scientific detachment toward the end of his book; "The

point is not what core values you have, but that you have core values at all, that you know

what they are, that you build them explicitly into the organization, and that you preserve

them over time" as "your core ideology" (195). Cult-like fanaticism is today an

obviously troubling ideal for organizational success, even if undeniably effective.

The scientific paradigm of Collins therefore subtly morphs within these action

themes into a pseudo-scientific rhetoric of "alchemy" and "magic," a discourse more

characteristic of the pseudo-religious aura of charismatic leadership than the oft-derided

scientific management which Collins seems to attempt recuperating. "When

[subordinates] see the monolithic unity of the executive team behind the simple plan and

the selfless, dedicated qualities of Level 5 leadership," Collins confidently asserts,

"they'll drop their cynicism" and "begin to feel the magic of momentum" as "the bulk of

people line up to throw their shoulders against the wheel and push" (178). "Enduring

great companies preserve their core value and purpose" as they "endlessly adapt to a

changing world," Collins finds, which "is the magical alchemy of 'preserve the core and

stimulate progress'" (195). Ironically, this "magic alchemy" wielded exclusively by

unusually gifted Level 5 corporate executives also renders Collins' rhetorical vision

vulnerable to the very same dark charisma of Machiavellian "executive kingship" that he

overtly denounces (29). These corporate Princes do not "aim to turn lazy people into

hard workers, but to create an environment where hard-working people would thrive and

lazy workers would either jump or get thrown off the bus. In one extreme case," Collins

brags, "workers chased a lazy teammate right out of the plant with an angle iron" (51).

While it is unfair to hold Collins accountable for insights that are disturbing for post-9/11

sensitivities, the discomforting parallels with Machiavellian-flavored fanaticism

nonetheless highlight the inherent dangers of championing what is essentially an

organizational cult of charismatic memberships who subordinate their needs to the

magical Level 5 management of an executive Prince. A defense of Collins against such

criticisms might be found, however, by looking to his post-9/11 comments and the

character themes that round out his rhetorical vision of L5L.

CHARACTER THEMES: CREATORS VS. REACTORS

Collins clearly believes that the enduring physics of great organizations remain

true and relevant no matter how the world has changed around us. "The truth is, there's

nothing new about the new economy," Collins asserts boldly, and "certain immutable

laws of organized human performance" are proof positive that "the best leaders have

adhered to certain basic principles, with rigor and discipline" (15). Even in today's fast-

paced technology-driven society, familiar character archetypes recur in the continuing

dialectic of built-to-last and built-to-flip. In a commentary for *Fast Company*, Collins

finds the latest round of corporate scandals in companies like Enron, Worldcom and Tyco

as indicative of the "built-to-flip ethos" and "a deeper trend in American corporate

culture." "The issue here isn't just one of fraud and corruption," Collins explains, but "an

entire built-to-flip mindset" during an unprecedented historical period of massive wealth

transference in which "a whole generation saw it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to

get in, get theirs, and get out before the bubble burst." Collins concludes that business

people and armchair investors "responded to that opportunity in four different ways,"

character themes along a continuum from Creators vs Reactors: Self-directed builders or

Level 5 Architects, the Malleable Masses, Conscious Opportunists, and the Architects of

Evil (10/22, 88).

At the 'Creator' end of the continuum are the self-directed people who ignored

the seductive allure of Bear markets and went about their daily tasks of building a

successful enterprise according to the principles of Level 5 leadership. These disciplined Level 5 Architects continued to build sustainability, create innovations that make contributions and add social value. Further along the continuum are the Malleable Masses, people who in the presence of opportunity were seduced, one step at a time, into questionable behaviors and practices. As Collins explains to *Fast Company*:

> If you told them 10 years ahead of time, 'Hey, let's cook the books and get rich,' they would never go along with it. but that's rarely how people get drawn into activities they later regret. When you are at step A, it feels inconceivable to jump all the way to step Z, if step Z involves something like a total breach of your values. But if you go from step A to step B, then step B to step C, then step C to step D… then someday, you wake up and discover that you are at step Y, and the move to step Z comes about that much easier… The malleable masses weren't bad at the outset. But through a series of gradual steps, they ended up in bad situations—in over their heads. (88)

The third category of characters are the Conscious Opportunists, Machiavellian-style courtesans who were willing to forego their principles because of the contextual environment for spectacular opportunity. "The distinction isn't between a market that's going up and a market that's going down," Collins opines, but "between people who are creators and people who are only reactors, who take their cues from the outside world… rather than doing anything fundamentally creative."

At the far end of this continuum are those whom Collins labels the Architects of Evil. "Just as there are heroic leaders who elevate others to a higher level, there are also evil leaders who take people into darkness" and "understand the power of A to B, B to C, and Y to Z." Collins finds these are figures "who are frequently charismatic characters whom people want to believe," and who "create situations where otherwise good people participate in awful things." The solution and our salvation, Collins suggests, is Level % leadership. "The leaders who built enduring great companies showed a creative inside-

out approach rather than a reactive outside-in approach" of "running about in frantic reaction to threats and opportunities," Collins explains. It doesn't matter to Level 5 leaders whether they face crisis or calm, since their fundamental drive to transform and build their organizations is internal and inherently creative. Collins insists that "architects of evil have always existed in our economic system" and government "cannot legislate them out of existence," nor should we "design our economic system in lurching reaction to the architects of evil." The prefered identification being offered here for audiences seems obvious, given the choice between aspiring to be ruled by a Level 5 leader-executive, a duped mob, an opportunistic power-player, or flat-out evil svengali.

It is interesting to compare this clearly demonic depiction of charismatic leadership to the L5L leadership pyramid of *Good to Great*, where Collins had elsewhere identified visionary charismatics as Level 4 leaders. In *Good to Great* (20), Collins identifies a Level 1 leader as a highly capable individual who makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills, and good work habit. A Level 2 leader is a contributing team member who contributes individual capabilities to the achievement of group objectives and works effectively in a group setting. A Level 3 leader is the competent manager who organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of pre-determined objectives. The Level 4 leader is the effective leader who catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision while stimulating higher performance standards. The pinnacle of Level 5 leadership is the executive, who builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. Again and again, Collins stresses that Level 5 Leadership is both objective and empirically sound, and as such all but incontrovertible.

> We were not looking for Level 5 leadership or anything like it. In fact, I gave the research team explicit instructions to downplay the role of top executives so that we could avoid the simplistic 'credit the leader' or 'blame the leader' thinking common today. To use an analogy, the 'Leadership is the answer to everything' perspective is the modern equivalent of the 'God is the answer to everything' perspective that held back our scientific understanding of the physical world in the Dark Ages… But with the Enlightenment, we began the search for more scientific understandings—physics, chemistry, biology, and so forth… Similarly, every time we attribute everything to 'Leadership,' we're no different from people in the 1500s. We're simply admitting our own ignorance. Not that we should become leadership atheists… Finally—as is always the case—the data won. The good-to-great executives were all cut from the same cloth… Furthermore, the absence of Level 5 leadership showed up as a consistent pattern in the comparison companies. Given that Level 5 leadership cuts against the grain of conventional wisdom, especially the belief that we need larger-than-life saviors with big personalities to transform companies, it is important to note that Level 5 is an empirical finding, not an ideological one. (21-22)

Yet, as we've seen in the action themes, the behavioral actions of Level 5 leadership are at times discomfortingly close to a kinder, gentler vision of Machiavelli's Prince as it might have been hyped if the old boy had a better book publicist. In an interview with the London *Financial Times*, Collins confirms that Level 5 corporate executives he studied "were ruthless about getting rid of those who did not fit in," and even "got rid of senior executives who did not conform" (10/10/01, p. 15). Only true-believers and savvy courtesans need apply.

These character themes closely adhere to the charismatic fantasy script in portraying heroic leaders gifted with miraculous magic, supernatural powers or extraordinary abilities. As we've seen, Collins frequently refers to L5L as "timeless, universal answers" (5), a "magical alchemy of great performance" (13), "enduring physics that can be applied by any organization" (15), a "magical combination" (195) or "magical mix" (202) within organizational culture. Collins also converts disciples who are transformed and mobilized as devoted missionaries for his scientific-minded

rhetorical vision. "If we can give learning professionals the understanding so they can say there is science to make companies healthier," Collins evangelizes in *T+D*, "they'll become the emissaries of such understanding in their organizations" (8/02; p.26). By methodologically privileging executive power-maintenance and economic profitability as objective indicators of greatness, however, Collins runs the risk of offering an updated corporate version of the King's divine mandate, a semi-divine *noblesse oblige* from privileged status atop the Level 5 executive hierarchy. "My hypothesis is that there are two categories of people: those who do not have the seed of level 5 and those who do," Collins says in offering the newest take on charismatically gifted 'born' leaders; "They exist all around us if we just know what to look for," and that is "situations where extraordinary results exist but where no individual steps forth to claim excess credit" (36-7). Collins admits in *Good to Great* that "Level 5 leaders are a study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless" (22). The paradoxes and dualities that Collins admits of his research findings may perhaps be explained by examining more closely the relationship between the charismatic fantasy culturetypes being invoked within his rhetorical vision of L5L.

A "GENETICALLY ENCODED" UBERMENSCH PRINCE BUILT TO LAST

Collins' ideas in several instances could easily be mistaken as paraphrasing the ideas of an earlier organizational guru, Nicolo Machiavelli, whose concern was also on power-maintenance and prosperity within large-scale organizations. As Collins sees it:

> Strong, charismatic leaders […] can all to easily become the defacto reality driving a company. Throughout the study, we found comparison companies where the top leader led with such fear that people worried more about the leader—what he would say, what he would think, what he would do—than they worried about external reality and what it could do to the company… The moment a leader allows himself to become the

> primary reality people worry about, rather than reality being the primary
> reality, you have a recipe for mediocrity, or worse. This is one of the key
> reasons why less charismatic leaders often produce better long-term
> results than their more charismatic counterparts… [A] towering,
> charismatic personality might deter bad news from reaching him in its
> starkest form… As the Nazi panzers swept across Europe, Churchill went
> to bed and slept soundly: "I had no need for cheering dreams," he wrote.
> "*Facts* are better than dreams." (72-3)

In a subtle rhetorical turn, Collins associates charismatic leadership with Nazism and

Churchill's penchant for cold hard facts as a natural realism. But whereas Machiavelli's

own cool objectivity advised would-be Princes on greatness in the pragmatics of nation-

building, Collins instead examines greatness in the long-term profitability of feudalistic

corporations and multi-national conglomerates. When pushed to consider whether it was

better for a ruler to be loved or feared, Machiavelli ultimately chose fear, yet he preferred

the collective appeal of *virtu* for instilling patriotic loyalty and manufacturing proper

team spirit. The same sense of *virtu* lurks within the greatness to which Collins aspires,

since the best Level 5 executive rulership is one that wields power invisibly.

But instead of crassly advising corporate executives to conceal a fist of iron will

within a velvet glove of humility, this modern day Machiavelli and Statistic Mystic

sincerely invokes scientific objectivity while inadvertently tapping into the more ancient

charismatic argot of "born leaders" and "divinely-sanctioned" rulers. As Collins

speculates, with considerable ambivalence, in the journal of business and management

practices *T+D* (August 2002):

> I refuse to accept the idea that people can't grow towards Level 5. If you
> don't believe people have that capacity, then you might as well shut
> everything down because the nature of being human is to be on a journey
> to a higher level. So if you help people figure out where they are on the
> Level 5 hierarchy, you can help them discover which pieces are missing
> and what they could do to progress towards having all 5 levels… [But]
> When I went off to college, I was excellent at math, so I majored in
> applied mathematics. Then I met people who were genetically encoded

for math… [and] there was no way I was encoded for math the way those people were… We learned from our research an almost stoic way of looking at things. Embedded in the irony of *Good to Great* is that in contrast to empowerment—the 'you can do anything' view of the world— we came away with a more sober view: You can do remarkable things, but you can't do all things remarkably… Fundamentally– as with the organizations in the book— there come points at which you have to confront the brutal truths about the company's genetic encoding, or your own, and accept it. That kind of stoic resignation, acceptance, and embrace of hard truths is where the real progress begins. (22-31)

Collins is here torn between viewing L5L as an innate potential for everyone or 'genetically encoded' within a chosen few. This ambivalence rejects 'empowerment' while favoring stoic resignation that most of us simply aren't 'genetically encoded' for leadership. Where this leaves us, however, is tacit acceptance of corporate rulership and expectations for individual submission to the routinized charisma of institutions.

Yet the ambivalence within the L5L of Collins is precisely what makes his model so amenable to the archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership, which may help explain it's broad appeal. The Level 5 "Executive" offers a more democratically palatable version of the Messianic Prince, a benevolent ruler who inspires loyalty to the collective while defending a people from architects of evil. The Level 4 "Effective Leader" invokes the Transformational Prophet, but these charismatic visionaries or founders are valued only insofar as they catalyze commitment to organizational institution-building and dangerously sinister when they assert any needs outside the group. The Level 3 "Competent Manager" and Level 2 "Contributing Team Member" tap into the fantasies of Empowered Superteams, but limit their value to the pursuit of group achievement, objectives, or goals and the submissiveness of individual needs to collective needs since the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. The fantasy of the Virtuous Superhero is banished to Level 1 as a "Highly Capable Individual," but

the virtues privileged are only those that make productive institutional contributions to the company; the hero is more Clark Kent, the solid company man, than the ubermensch Superman. In Collins' model, the ideal L5L is an ubermensch messiah whose benevolent *virtu* maintains a corporate kingdom built to last. But, as we have seen, the dark side to this fantasy is merely projected and displaced onto Evil Architects or belligerent Level 4 Transformational Prophets who dare challenge the pure benevolence of the status quo.

In conclusion, Collins Level 5 Leadership adheres to the charismatic fantasy script while also integrating the archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership as *memberships* subservient to the benevolent rulership of the Messianic Prince. Although the Virtuous Superhero is banished to the lower levels of Collins' hierarchy, the next chapter will explore the emergent fantasy of "Superleadership" as rehabilitating an *ubermensch* more amenable to democratic citizenship.

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CHAPTER 6

EMPOWERED SUPERTEAMS IN MANZ & SIMS'
"SUPERLEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

While Stephen Covey is the undisputed spiritual populist of the management gurus, and Jim

Collins is a statistic mystic quickly becoming the executive CEO guru *du jour*, the works of

Charles Manz and Henry Sims has garnered consistent acclaim from academics and practitioners

for their popularization of empowerment theories of self-leadership. "Their approach is

reminiscent of the management-coaching models that have emerged over the last 10 years,"

observes professor John Bunch in his book review for *Academy of Management Executive*, so

their prescriptive "strategies are not new by themselves." Nonetheless, "SuperLeadership" is

Manz & Sims popularized hybridization of many egalitarian trends in business management,

which:

> …involves listening more and talking less, asking more questions, encouraging
> learning, using less punishment, and exhibiting other behaviors that foster
> initiative in subordinates and colleagues. The approach calls for leaders to
> counsel others to take responsibility for solving problems rather than asking the
> boss… Rather than a specific set of defined tactics, they suggest the real core of
> superleadership is a managerial mindset that believes in, and respects, the skills
> and abilities of employees and encourages them to achieve their full potential.
> (148)

The revolutionary mindset championed by SuperLeadership, evangelizing the self-actualization

of the unrealized immanent potential within employee subordinates, is one that continues to

attract fans. "When we began research for our first edition back in the early 1980s, many

managers and organizations considered our ideas and recommendations to be radical," Manz

recalls for the U-Mass alumni magazine, *The Common Wealth*. "You might say that our first

edition, published in 1989, caught a rising wave that crested during the first half of the 1990s,"

Manz says, and "became required reading at Ford, Motorola, and other firms." The best of all

possible leaders, they observe in the October 2001 issue of *HR Magazine*, "is the one who helps

people so that eventually they don't need him or her" (160).

Overtly, SuperLeadership is profoundly hostile if not antithetical to charismatic

leadership. In his 1990 book review of their "very readable research-based book" for the *Journal

of Management*, professor Robert Marx praises the way they "challenge popular views of

leadership that emphasize the use of power, authority, or charisma to command others. Such

perspectives," Marx criticizes, "encourage hero worship, conformity, and compliance" (875).

SuperLeadership is often trumpeted as replacing the charismatic superhero with a new model for

the 21st century. In their 1991 article for *Organizational Dynamics* entitled "Superleadership:

Beyond the Myth of Heroic Leadership," Manz & Sims offer their bold new rhetorical vision for

leadership in the next century:

> Words like "charismatic" and "heroic" are sometimes used to describe a leader.
> The word "leader" itself conjures up visions of a striking figure on a rearing white
> horse who is crying "Follow me!" Many historical figures fit this mold:
> Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Washington, Churchill. Even today, the
> turnaround of Chrysler Corporation by Lee Iacocca […] is frequently thought of
> as "charismatic"… Our viewpoint represents a departure from the dominant and,
> we think, incomplete view of leadership. Our position is that true leadership
> comes mainly from within a person, not from the outside… Our focus is on a new
> form of leadership that is designed to facilitate the self-leadership energy within
> each person. This perspective suggests a new measure of a leader's strength—
> one's ability to maximize the contributions of others through recognition of their
> right to guide their own destiny, rather than the leader's ability to bend the will of
> others to his or her own. (18-19)

The heroic model of the charismatic visionary, they insist, needs to be replaced by the

empowering SuperLeadership of an organizational team-builder. "Despite the author's tendency

to overwrite and their liberal use of such words as 'facilitate' and 'enable,' which are teetering

on the brink of overuse among the HRD community," grouses the February 1990 *Training &*

Development Journal, "they do tell a good story" with "an action-oriented flow" of "useful

advice and a healthy dose of humor" (76). SuperLeadership is indeed a good story, a fantasy which casts the charismatic hero of old in the role of antiquated has-been if not the egomaniacal villain of the tale. The transformational teams of "knowledge workers" now assume center stage as the collective protagonists of SuperLeadership.

BEYOND THE MYTH OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

SuperLeadership has been a surprising success for Manz & Sims, described by the *Academy of Management Executive* as "the leading writers in the area of self-management." Manz is a Marvin Bower Fellow at Harvard Business School and Nirenberg Professor of Business Leadership at he University of Massachusetts, while Sims is a professor of organizational behavior at the University of Maryland who has held management positions at Ford, U.S. Steel and Armco Corporation. They have served as a consultants and speakers for organizations such as General Motors, Motorola, American Express, Prudential, Procter & Gamble, the American Medical Hospital Association, and the U.S. government. Their 1989 book *SuperLeadership* sold well over 100,000 copies, won the Stybel-Peabody literary prize, and became an Executive Book Club feature selection. Translated into Spanish, Japanese, and Korean, the book was recognized by *Library Journal* as a "Classic of the 1990s." "Because the authors are leading contributors to the organizational self-management literature, their explanations are based on a solid scientific foundation," notes Marx in his review for the *Journal of Management*, "yet their ideas are clearly articulated through a lively set of cases, vignettes, and SuperLeader profiles" which "flesh out the theoretical underpinnings of these concepts" (876). Called "the Holy Grail of leadership principles" in an Amazon.com review, their 2001 updated edition *The New SuperLeadership* is quickly surpassing the success of the original in both sales and acclaim.

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The New SuperLeadership is in fact a significantly revised opus, since it is less about

leadership than the transformational capacity of empowered Superteams. "Work roles in this

information age have become increasingly complex, changeable, and autonomous," Manz says in

rationalizing the significant changes to the latest edition; "In most of these organizations,

teams—increasingly empowered to make many of their own decisions—have become the norm

rather than the exception" (*The Common Wealth*, Winter 2001). The book insists that before one

can exercise SuperLeadership, managers and subordinates must both master self-leadership.

Manz & Sims (1991) imagine that beyond the heroic myth of charismatic leadership are those

leaders-in-waiting of the 21st century who will become hero-makers of others:

> The currently popular notion that excellent leaders need to be visionary and
> charismatic may be a trap if taken too far. Wisdom on leadership for centuries
> has warned us about this potential trap… It is time to transcend the notion of
> leaders as heroes and to focus instead on leaders as hero-makers… To discover
> this new breed of leader, look *not* at the leader but at the followers. SuperLeaders
> have Super Followers that are dynamic self-leaders. The Superleader leads others
> to lead themselves. (35)

Like Covey, their philosophy is frequently summed up with the well-worn axiom: Give a man a

fish and he will be fed for a day; Teach a man to fish and he will be fed for a lifetime. But like

Collins, they draw legitimacy from empirical academic studies of the team dynamics of

bureaucratic leadership. Manz & Sims utilize all the familiar trappings of the business self-help

genre, but their fantasy shifts from heroic leadership to the hero-making of teams.

THE CHARISMATIC FANTASY SCRIPT OF EMPOWERED SUPERTEAMS

The fantasy of SuperLeadership seemingly offers a clear continuation of the managerial

transition toward Superteams that would replace the antiquated myth of charismatic leadership.

But, as we will see in the following fantasy-theme analysis, SuperLeadership is surprisingly

faithful to the charismatic fantasy script. Table 6.1 presents a summary of the SuperLeadership

rhetorical vision, which offers transcendence through the latent charismatic gifts of self-

actualized memberships.

Table 6.1: THE RHETORICAL VISION OF MANZ & SIMS "SUPERLEADERSHIP"

Fantasy Theme	Type	Fantasy cues	Burkean Motive
Ghosts of Leadership	Setting themes	New Information Age Human Capital Optimistic Collaboration Self-influence & Commitment	Identification
Leading the One in the Mirror	Action themes	Behavioral Self-strategies Cognitive Self-strategies	Hierarchy
Empowered SuperTeams	Character themes	Strong Man Transactor Visionary Hero SuperLeader	Transcendence

SuperLeadership seemingly exhibits the characteristic rhetorical earmarks of charisma by

attracting an array of devoted disciples, articulating a revolutionizing message for profound

socio-cultural changes, and exhibiting a metaphysical appeal which is both universal in scope

and personally transformational in application. In what follows, I will explore how the

SuperLeadership fantasy of Manz & Sims tacitly perpetuate the very model they declare dead as

Nietzsche's God, inadvertently scripting the necessity for the empowering leadership of a

Charismatic Superhero.

SETTING THEMES: GHOSTS OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

In the opening sentences of their introduction to *The New SuperLeadership*, Manz &

Sims immediately establish their model as antithetical to charismatic leadership. "Be a strong,

even charismatic leader and followers will know where to go as long as you light their way,"

they paraphrase conventional wisdom, but "[t]each them to lead themselves and their path will

be lighted always" (1). Manz & Sims explain that their notion of SuperLeadership, leading

others to lead themselves, has "filled a critical void in understanding how leadership could help

meet the challenge of successfully putting empowerment into practice in organizations" as "the

call for a new kind of leadership is echoing through the virtual halls of the new knowledge-based

corporations" (1). The first scenic element of the charismatic fantasy script immediately

emerges with an appeal to emotions or sentiments via the dramatizing saga of agonistic forces.

"Visionary leadership based on charisma can create a system that is not able to function in the

absence of a leader, a system that collapses like a house of cards when the leader moves on,"

they warn, while "so-called charismatic or transformational leaders too often turn out to be a

smoothed out version of the dictatorial, autocratic leaders of past generations" (230).

Criticizing the time-honored charismatic hero model as both sinister and antiquated, Manz &

Sims boldly offer their own reformulation for the future:

> We begin with the idea that true leadership comes mainly from within a person, not from outside… This perspective demands we come up with a new measure of leadership strength—the ability to maximize the contributions of others by helping them to effectively guide their own destinies, rather than the ability to bend the will of others… SuperLeaders marshal the strength of many, for their strength does not lie solely in their own abilities but in the vast, multiple talents of those who surround them. In this sense, the word super has a different connotation than it does in comic books… It does concern bringing out the best— but mainly in others, not just the leaders… The SuperLeader does not try to carry the weight of a hyper-changing high-tech world alone, but shares this burden with others… We believe in the vast, often hidden capability within leaders and their followers. SuperLeadership taps the potential of each person to make the world a better place, if given the chance… [I]n a very real sense, everyone can be a leader. (4-5)

Theirs is call for a new kind of leadership within a highly complex world that is rapidly

changing, a benevolent SuperLeadership that empowers everyone with the latent potential to

become ubermensch captains of their own destiny. "We believe that the age of information will

require more and more investment in human capitol," they predict, "and that SuperLeadership is

the way to bring out the best in the people who inhabit our organizations of the 21st century" (6).

For them, SuperLeadership is no comic book fantasy, but a matter of corporate survival. "The SuperLeadership perspective," they insist, "transcends heroic leadership" (45).

Embedded within this dramatizing saga of the battle between the charismatic hero and SuperLeadership is a scene of social crisis, the second element of the charismatic fantasy script, which articulates the anomie of collective meaning and the alienation of social identity. "We are living on the cusp of one of those rare technological turning points in history," Manz & Sims proclaim, a time when the "revolution in information has substantial ramifications for our social systems." "Mankind," they marvel, "is becoming truly 'connected' and life will never be the same" (11). "We are in the midst of a vastly changing social fabric where technology is transforming business, family structures, schools, governments, and even religious institutions," the effects of which "will be extensive and profound" (12). Although rapid technological change and unprecedented social transformation breeds fear and uncertainty for many, Manz & Sims are resolutely optimistic of the emancipatory potential within this crisis of leadership:

> The industrial age with its hierarchical command-and-control form of organizing is past. The information revolution is causing the deconstrution of organizations. That is, hierarchy is no longer needed to filter and fascilitate the movement of information required for task integration. Instead, agents of the organization can now communicate directly and with greater speed, flexibility, and effectiveness… The true assets of organizations will no longer be bricks and mortar, but the knowledge invested in their human capital. And how do we lead these knowledge workers? We believe first that the ultimate control comes from within—that the essence of leadership in today's information age is to develop the capacity of people to lead themselves. The real challenge is to maximize the potential of human capital by unleashing this inner self-leadership. The most effective leader of the 21st century will be a SuperLeader who leads others to lead themselves in the information age. (12-13)

Unfortunately, "people are looking for identity, purpose, and meaning in their work, but very few are finding these things" (95). This crisis is optimistically viewed by the authors as an opportunity to realize a kinder, gentler form of collaborative leadership that will heal such

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anomie and alienation, although some might cringe at their persistent characterization of human beings as 'capital' to be maximized profitably if not inadvertently exploited.

The unbridled optimism for the purely benevolent SuperLeadership, however, leaves little room for contemplating the darker urges that this fantasy might unwittingly fuel. Instead, Manz & Sims trumpet unassailable democratic virtues like self-influence, collaboration, and mutual commitment. They insist upon "recognition of people as individuals and as uniquely valuable resources" (26), since their egalitarian philosophy of SuperLeadership "requires transfer of ownership of direction and motivation to those engaged in the pursuit" (36). Yet these democratic impulses first require a fundamental shift in perspective toward self-leadership, an idea central to *The New SuperLeadership*. "We have given special emphasis to the ideas of expressing self-leadership through seeking out the natural rewards in work, and by influencing one's own patterns of thinking," Manz & Sims explain. "Our current thinking and writing reflects a holistic, integrative perspective that recognizes the interrelated role of behavior, thought, and emotion for effectively leading ourselves. Self-leadership," they assure readers, "is truly the heart of SuperLeadership" (6). It is to these slightly mysterious fantasy action themes of SuperLeadership that we can now turn.

ACTION THEMES: LEADING THE ONE IN THE MIRROR

By seeking out what Manz & Sims refer to as the "natural rewards" of one's work, and by influencing one's own "patterns of thinking," today's knowledge workers can develop themselves into effective self-leaders. "The SuperLeader designs and implements the system that allows and teaches employees to be self-leaders," they explain, "a formidable yet fascinating challenge" that "applies to the manager and executive who has responsibility for leading others" (22). "Typically, organizational attempts at employee control do not recognize the important

role of the person's 'self,'" Manz & Sims observe, whereas SuperLeadership is "rooted in the

view that essentially all control over employees is *ultimately* self-imposed" and "the effect they

have depends on how these controls are evaluated, accepted, and translated by each employee

into his or her personal commitment" (23). "Commitment to excellence," they explain, "flows

from the powerful leadership potential within" (24). Both commitment and enthusiasm can be

unleashed through "a carefully designed game plan intended to capitalize on the long-term

potential of each person" (22). "The heart of SuperLeadership is follower self-leadership," Manz

& Sims proclaim, "the behavioral and cognitive strategies that each of us uses every day to

influence our own behavior" (49). But "self-leadership needs to filter down from the top" (59),

since SuperLeaders "play the pivotal role of shifting others from dependence to independence"

(60). Ironically, subordinates need a SuperLeader to facilitate their own self-SuperLeadership.

Following the plotline of the charismatic fantasy script, articulating a shared history and

future-present crusade or quest for revolutionizing changes in the status quo, Manz & Sims insist

upon the "vast potential for self-discovery within each person" (28). "Traditional control

methods will not allow this potential to be unleashed," they insist. "Achieving the ideal of

commitment calls for a new era of facilitating the internal energy and potential of people," and

"[s]triving to meet this challenge through SuperLeadership is at the heart of this important quest"

(28). "Lifelong learning is no longer a luxury," the authors warn, but "a requirement for

survival" (29). SuperLeaders are profiled as "undoubtedly on a mission," leading others through

self-motivation and lifelong learning "into the new millennium" (93).

The action themes of the SuperLeadership fantasy therefore involve a set of distinct

strategies for leading others to lead themselves. "The real challenge," says Manz & Sims, "is to

maximize the potential of human capital by unleashing this inner self-leadership" through the

"distinctive strategies of a SuperLeader" (13). The strategies of a SuperLeader, previewed in

chapter one (13-14), include:

> -- Listen more and talk less
> -- Ask more questions and give fewer answers
> -- Foster learning from mistakes, not fear of consequences
> -- Encourage problem solving by others rather than solving problems for others
> -- Share information rather than hoard it
> -- Encourage creativity, not conformity
> -- Encourage teamwork and collaboration, not destructive competition
> -- Develop committed self-leaders
> -- Lead others to lead themselves, not to be under control of others
> -- Establish organizational structures that support self-leadership, such as self-managing
>   teams, virtual teams, distance working
> -- Establish information systems through the Intranet and Internet that will support
>   self-leadership
> -- Establish a holistic self-leading culture throughout the organization

These strategies are implemented by a procedure that consists of (1) initial modeling, (2) guided

participation, and (3) gradual development of self-leadership so that "a shift is made from

external rewards to self-administered rewards" (62). Part two of the book, the self-leadership of

Leading the One in the Mirror, "focuses on effective action" through "strategies that use natural

rewards, and promote effective thinking and feeling" (78). Rather than relying on external

rewards and punishments from bosses or slipping into negative self-criticism, Manz & Sims find

that "introspective self-examination of a failure, trying to learn from it, providing constructive

self-corrective feedback and refocusing energy on feeling good about accomplishments,

represents a better alternative" (84). "Self-leadership," they explain, "is the influence we exert

over ourselves to control our own behavior and thinking, and especially to enhance our own

performance" (88). Much of self-leadership tends to flow from a positive attitude and can-do

mindset, building our own natural rewards into even the most unpleasant of tasks, which then

functions as "self-fulfilling prophesy" (67). Naturally rewarding tasks necessarily provide a

sense of competence, self-control and purpose that "enhances these feelings and thoughts" of

positive self-actualization (98). Such self-control empowers to people to practically redesign their own jobs, and is "the key to achieving feelings of purpose and meaning" (101).

The second action theme of the charismatic fantasy script, successful results in transforming individuals and/or society, is also discernable within SuperLeadership. The changes required to evolve toward SuperLeadership admittedly pose daunting challenges, since they represent a dramatic shift in both culture and patterns of thinking. "Empowerment is the key word," Manz & Sims reveal, "but this empowerment will represent something more advanced than the buzzword usually implies today," since "changes in structure require rather radical changes in the culture" and "the way people process and transform information" (20). SuperLeadership demands individual self-leadership in "managing our own beliefs, imagined experiences and self-talk." Self-leadership is a self-management of thoughts, emotions and feelings that is life-altering and more personally affirming:

> "Self-leadership of the mind is mainly concerned with the process of how individuals constructively manage patterns of thinking, which in turn influences action. Just as we develop habits in our behavior, we also develop habits in our thoughts, such as a tendency to dwell on opportunities or obstacles. The challenge is to manage our thought patterns in such a way that we increase our personal effectiveness in our work and life." (108)

Manz & Sims offer a helpful chart that maps action-oriented self-leadership strategies, self-leadership through natural rewards, and self-leadership of the mind (117). These action-oriented strategies of self-leadership are the crux of "how we manage information and knowledge to meet our personal and organizational goals" (118). Management now becomes the direction of mental habits and supervision of employee self-leadership.

It is important to note that the empowerment envisioned by Manz & Sims is one that locates charisma in followers rather than leaders. SuperLeaders are praised for "creating an environment where people can use their gifts and skills productively to help meet a need in

society" (33). Reflecting on *The New SuperLeadership*, the authors insist that "this book is about the diffusion of leadership throughout an organization, not just at the top" (39). This democratic impulse is the catalyst for their decidedly revolutionary redefinition of leadership itself that will transform the identities and roles of individuals from followers to self-leaders:

> By learning self-leadership skills, people bring new meaning to the term "follower." A follower who is self-led is one who brings great capacity to exercise initiative, creativity, and discretion over his or her own work. We are turning the traditional definition of 'follower' upside down. Today's followers are really adept leaders of themselves… Employees cannot accomplish this task blindly, passively dependent on the close direction of traditional leaders… SuperLeaders can help others to build their own self-leadership. (118)

SuperLeadership is thus heralded as making possible new identity and a more democratic workforce through self-leadership. "In the 21st century the challenge of influence has indeed passed over a new threshold that views leadership in a whole new light" (39). "Self-fulfillment will replace corporate loyalty as a dominant value," the authors enthuse, and the "old model of the charismatic lone star will be gone" (20-1). To better understand the full implications of this new model for SuperLeadership, and to examine the less desirable elements of the outdated charismatic model that have purportedly been left behind, we now turn to the character themes orienting the distinctiveness of Manz & Sims' benevolent fantasy.

CHARACTER THEMES: THE SUPERLEADERSHIP OF EMPOWERED SUPERTEAMS

In what is now a familiar rhetorical convention of the managerial self-help genre, SuperLeadership is boldly distinguished from the antiquated leadership types of the past. Observing that "fundamentally leadership means influence—the influence of people," Manz & Sims criticize the conventional "leader-centric view of influence" that had been "adequate for hundreds of years" and "are still alive and well in many settings." Although each of these types "still has a place in the leader's repertoire," they admit that "all too often, poor choices are made

regarding which leadership types are used in specific situations and which are emphasized the most overall" (39). They suggest that some of the most remarkable leaders of all time, like Mahatma Gandhi, have led others without holding formal office because of their intuitive understanding of the different styles or types of leadership influence.

Manz & Sims identify four prominent types of leaders that bear striking similarities to the archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership from chapter three: the Strongman, the Transactor, the Visionary Hero, and the SuperLeader. When describing the Strongman, they note that "the rough-and-tough image of John Wayne comes to mind" since he "is not afraid to knock some heads to get followers to do what he wants them to do." The Strongman leader is "a figure larger than life, who leads by commanding others" and often acts as "the Boss" by using "the authority of his position to influence others, who mainly comply out of fear." Behaviors typical of the Strongman are "instruction, command, assigned goals, threat, intimidation, and reprimand" (40). Highly directive and intolerant of deviations from prescribed ways of doing things, Strongman micro-managers like Doug Ivester of Coca-Cola can be effective in the short-term but "longer-term effects can be quite devastating, especially when creativity is a necessary element of success" (41). The Strongman bears significant similarities to the charismatic counter-fantasy of the Messianic Prince, the Machiavellian ruler who manufactures consent as savior-king for a new social order.

In contrast with the command-control style of the Strongman, the Transactor forges relationships with subordinates based upon the exchange of rewards and punishment. "Transactor leadership is a classic, time-honored type of leadership found in the corporate world," they explain, but its "emphasis on positive reinforcement principles" can "trigger memories of pigeons pecking at levers in order to get food pellet rewards during experiments

that were part of the behavior modification movement in the 1960s and 1970s" (41). Behaviors associated with Transactors "are personal and material rewards that are given in return for effort, performance, and loyalty to the leader" (41). Manz & Sims find that "Transactor leadership is still widely practiced today and, combined with some Visionary Hero leadership and a bit of Strongman leadership, can still be effective wthin the short-term" (41). Lawrence Ellison of the number-two software maker Oracle Corporation is invoked to illustrate that "at certain times and places, Transactor leadership has its merits" (43).

The third leadership type identified by Manz & Sims is the Visionary Hero. "The most popular current view of leadership is the exciting and charismatic leader who inspires and motivates others" by creating an "absorbing vision of the future," they explain. The Visionary Hero is gifted with "the capacity to energize others to pursue the vision," and thereby becomes "almost larger than life and sometimes attains a mythic reputation" for "inspiring others to pursue a captivating cause" (43). But Manz & Sims insist that the leadership of the transformational or charismatic Visionary Hero "is mainly a top-down influence process" since this "leader's power is based on a capability to generate a commitment by the follower to the leader's vision and persona" (43). The case study of Richard Branson is used to illustrate the use of behaviors like formulating and communicating a vision, exhortation, inspiration and persuasion, and the tendency to challenge the status quo.

The fourth and final view of leadership is the SuperLeader of Manz & Sims, one who leads others to lead themselves. The SuperLeader "is also known as an *empowering* leader," they emphasize, since these leaders "become 'super'—possessing the strength and wisdom of many persons—by helping to unleash the abilities of the followers who surround them" (45). "The SuperLeadership perspective transcends heroic leadership," they insist, since a

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"SuperLeader encourages others to take responsibility rather than giving orders" and "assure that followers have needed information and knowledge to exercise their own self-leadership." "With SuperLeadership the spotlight is placed on the follower" who, "in turn, tend to experience exceptional commitment and ownership of their work" (45). Although they "recognize that the different types of leadership each have their own advantages," Manz & Sims clearly favor "the role of information to empower rather than control" as followers are encouraged to become the best self-leaders they can be. "With SuperLeadership, the important twist in the leadership process is that followers are now treated as—and become—leaders," although Manz & Sims confirm that the "apparent contradictions inherent in leading others to lead themselves require some mental adjustment" (46). "Follower self-leadership is the main target of the SuperLeader's attention and action," they note, since it "pushes responsibility down to the lowest levels" of an organization through "behavioral and cognitive strategies that each of us uses every day to influence our own behavior" (49). Thus, self-leadership must be "taught, encouraged and maintained by the SuperLeader" (59).

These character themes of SuperLeadership closely adhere to the charismatic fantasy script in portraying heroic leaders gifted with miraculous magic, supernatural powers or extraordinary abilities. Although Manz & Sims relentlessly celebrate self-leadership, this latent potential for SuperLeadership remains the province of an elite of the chosen few who are able to self-actualize such potential. "Note that we do not conclude that all leaders should completely relinquish influence over followers, nor do we presume that every human is endowed with a fully developed set of self-leadership skills," Manz & Sims cautiously qualify. "On the contrary, we generally believe that only a minority of individuals in our society has had the natural opportunity to fully develop their own self-leadership," they explain, since most social

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institutions teach individuals "to become accustomed to authority figures making decisions and influencing their behavior in even the smallest details" (60). SuperLeadership indeed "believes that people are spiritual beings with inherent, individual worth" (31). "SuperLeadership is not the province of a select few who were fortunate enough to be endowed with special skills," Manz & Sims staunchly protest. "Anyone can be a SuperLeader," they qualify, "to at least some degree" (70). Hence the need for benevolent SuperLeaders who are gifted at mentoring and developing the unenlightened by "creating an environment where people can use their gifts and skills productively to help meet a need in society" (33). SuperLeaders thus unleash the charisma of others. "But, to be realistic," they admit candidly, "not every employee comes with a fully developed repertoire of self-leadership skills" so, for many if not most subordinates, "the SuperLeader must provide orientation, guidance and direction" (59).

SuperLeadership also adheres to the second element of the charismatic fantasy script, converting enthusiastic disciples who are transformed and mobilized as devoted missionaries for their own self-leadership. "The primary function of the SuperLeader becomes one of encouraging, guiding, and rewarding an employee's self-leadership practices," they explain, "rather than *directly* providing instructions and rewards for performance." By rewarding followers when they are able to do what the SuperLeader wants them to do (that is, accepting responsibility and demonstrating initiative in task-oriented problem solving), these self-leaders are encouraged indirectly to engage in appropriate behaviors without direct supervision. "In turn, the leader will enjoy the benefits of SuperLeadership," the authors enthuse, "such as more time, more committed employees, an increase in innovative ideas from followers, and a newfound power for progress that flows from working with more fully developed self-leaders" (63). When these enthusiastically committed self-leaders are miraculously able to read the

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SuperLeader's mind and accurately satisfy unstated performance expectations, "it is particularly important that social rewards be given when employee self-leadership behavior does occur" (63). For Manz & Sims, however, good self-leadership is that which is profitably productive to the business organization. "A SuperLeader concentrates on developing the self-leadership of followers as a means of achieving overall organizational effectiveness," they proclaim, "and a total organizational culture of self-leadership" (69). As we shall see next in the conclusion, the overt benevolence of such stated goals and strategies for SuperLeadership is undermined within this fantasy by the discomforting parallels with brainwashing and mind control techniques that are commonly used in cults (Arnott, 2000). It is to these darker potentialities of manufacturing cultish consent that we now turn.

SUPERLEADERS MANUFACTURING SUPERHEROES OR SLAVES?

There seems to be an unacknowledged dark side of SuperLeadership in its tacit rationalization of what could easily be construed as cult-like brainwashing or mind-control for purposes of corporate propaganda. "The SuperLeader creates productive thought patterns by carefully expressing confidence in the follower's ability, which can act to extend her present level of competence," they believe. The SuperLeader as "a sensitive leader helps a follower to use productive patterns of thought" (158). Manz & Sims insist that "the best results derive from a total, integrated system that is deliberately intended to encourage, support, and reinforce self-leadership throughout the organization. Of course for the most part," they admit, "this issue falls within the responsibility of top management" (191). The self-leadership of SuperLeadership therefore remains largely the province of corporate Princes. This bias favoring the power-maintenance of corporate hierarchies is all but admitted by the authors when contrasting SuperLeadership with traditional views of leadership. "SuperLeadership is viewed as a powerful

opportunity for achieving high performance rather than as a threat to external control and authority," they confirm comfortingly for their readership of business executives, but enables managers to "implement new forms of 'team' organization" for "working *with* not *against* management" (25). A critical reader can hardly help conjuring images of a power-broker in the mold of svengalis like Rasputin, the master of a mob who shapes more productive patterns of thought as an Orwellian system for power-maintenance which encourages faith in the rulers' benevolence.

At points, it becomes difficult to distinguish the self-leadership of SuperLeadership from the compliant company "Yes-Man" who dutifully follows orders because he or she is a true believer and buys into the company gospel. In one of their more troubling observations, Manz & Sims note that "Self-leadership is the essence of effective followership" (48). The self-leader implies a happily compliant follower, but one who also shoulders the responsibility and accountability for accurately anticipating the unexpressed performance and behavioral expectations of the empowering SuperLeader. Indeed, the SuperLeader is both mentor and master of "cognitive approaches to self-leadership that include managing our own beliefs, imagined experiences, and self-talk" (108). Yet these sinister potentialities lurking within SuperLeadership are instead safely projected onto the transformational visionary as charismatic hero. As Manz & Sims are compelled to insistently reiterate:

> True SuperLeadership is *not* about attracting the admiration of others with great charisma and vision. That approach only increases the attention on the leader at the expense of all the others. Instead, the object is to develop so-called followers into dynamic self-leaders that are inspired by their own potential and effectiveness… Visionary, charismatic leaders who posses a broad view of the organization and its environment can be very important, especially in the short term during a crisis or major organizational change, and particularly in cases of disarray, where the organizational culture has lost its direction and sense of competence… But in the long run, overemphasizing visionary or charismatic leadership can foster a dependence that can actually

> weaken the system… [whereas] with SuperLeadership, the power and vision rest in the followers… SuperLeaders are not heroes, they are hero-makers. (230-1)

Although power and vision is insistently located within followers, such enlightened self-leadership occurs only after subordinates have been re-educated by a SuperLeader into more constructive habits of thinking and more productive patterns of behavior. Additionally, self-leaders are seemingly placed in the double-bind of being 'empowered' to read the minds of management and shoulder responsibility for negative outcomes. This "catch-22" amounts to plausible deniability for the executive management of a scandalized company like Enron, for example, should self-leaders implement questionable strategies for desired results.

The shift in SuperLeadership from heroic leadership to managerial hero-making, however, is a trend that extends such criticisms beyond SuperLeadership specifically to management theory more generally. In his book review for the *Academy of Management Executive*, Stephen Zaccaro finds that SuperLeadership "offers a management philosophy that is congruent with several current trends in American organizations" and "the authors serve as SuperLeaders to individuals interested in learning how to join these ranks" (109). Offering a critical note that may reflect larger problems within such management theories themselves, Zaccaro suggests that "Manz and Sims appear overly optimistic about employees' motivations to be self leaders" (109). Robert Marx, in his book review for the *Journal of Management*, agrees that future inquiries into this New SuperLeadership "could benefit from elaboration about the pitfalls of implementing this approach" by examining "the largely uncharted territory of applying SuperLeadership concepts to larger systems" (876).

As we have seen in this analysis, SuperLeadership overtly demonizes the despotic potential of the charismatic hero as a transformational visionary even as the alternate rhetorical vision offered closely adheres to the fantasy script of charismatic leadership. Exhibiting striking

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parallels to the theories of Stephen Covey and Jim Collins, Manz & Sims displace the more troubling notion of charismatic leadership with their more purely benevolent model of empowered SuperLeadership. But, as we have explored here in the conclusion, SuperLeadership is itself blinded by its own utopian intentions and egalitarian principles to the same sinister potentialities that it shares with the dark side of charismatic leadership. In their article "SuperLeadership: Beyond the Myth of Heroic Leadership," Manz & Sims (1991) inadvertently articulate the critique offered here in their examination of the shortcomings typical of the Visionary Hero archetype:

> The promise is that if organizations can just find those leaders that are able to capture what's important in the world and wrap it up into some kind of purposeful vision, then the rest of the workforce will have the clarifying beacon that will light the way to the promised land… Once again, the leader represents the source of wisdom and direction… The notion of the visionary hero seems to have received considerable attention lately, but the idea has not gone without criticism. Peter Druker, for example, believes that charisma becomes the undoing of leaders. He believes they become inflexible, convinced of their own infallibility, and slow to really change. (21-22)

The New SuperLeadership is not immune to these very same criticisms, since it is largely unacknowledged that the road to hell-on-earth is often paved with the best intentions of Principle-Centered Leadership, Level 5 Leadership, and SuperLeadership.

This fantasy-theme analysis of The New SuperLeadership seems to offer indication that heroic models of leadership are not only alive and well, but thriving within the self-help genre of business management. Yet the predictably recurring demonizations of charismatic leadership, despite offering strikingly close approximations of the charismatic fantasy script, also seems to indicate that the Myth of the Charismatic Superhero is undergoing significant changes. The emergent popular fantasies of Principle-Centered Leadership, Level 5 Leadership, and SuperLeadership are moving away from celebrating the transcendent charismatic hero and are instead beginning to more fully contemplate the latent charismatic potentials immanent within

memberships. This shift from charismatic leadership to empowered crypto-charismatic

memberships is one that will be more fully examined in the final chapter.

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CONCLUSION

FANTASY RHETORIC OF
CRYPTO-CHARISMATIC MEMBERSHIP:
MYTHIC FANTASY RELOADED

REVIEW OF STUDY

> [The] charismatic person is one blessed with grace given by the Gods—that's
> what 'charisma' originally meant...Charisma may fall on anyone, even on those in
> whom the ability to lead and to bear authority are woefully absent, thereby
> deceiving followers who cannot distinguish mastery from magic… Charismatic
> power lends splendor to the showman, at moments raising this status to the
> shaman. (Hillman, 1995: 172-3)

Despite oceans of ink spilt on the topic, leadership today is a lot like pornography: hard to

define, but we're certain that we know it when we see it. There are as many different definitions

and conceptions of leadership as there are people who have studied the art. Since this is true of

leadership generally, it should come as little surprise that this is also true of charismatic

leadership more specifically. This study has been a humbling attempt to survey the origins and

contemporary development of the evolving myth of charisma within our fantasies of leadership.

Charisma, the extraordinary "gift of grace or favor" that intimates the superhuman and divine,

remains a fascinating yet elusive ideal with powerful appeal to the mythic imagination of our

popular political unconscious. As the demands of cultural leadership and bureaucratic

management have evolved as times have changed, so too have our fantasies of charismatic

leadership. What has remained the same amidst such dizzying change, I suggest here, are the

centrally fundamental paradoxes conveyed within the cautionary Myth of Charisma.

Chapter one identified the mythic return of charisma within our contemporary discourses

of leadership and the central problematic posed by this most recent rise to prominence:

definitional and methodological bias causing persistent failures to acknowledge 'charismatic

management' as a deeply troubling and paradoxical concept. Critics have complained that

contemporary managerial models often result in autocratic, coercive behaviors for top-down control dressed in the robes of pseudocharismatic leadership. Because of our anxieties and profound ambivalence, charisma thus returns in covert and encrypted forms so that we do not have to confront its contradictions and limits. In our eternal quest to discover and articulate more benevolent forms of leadership, complicated by a persistent indistinction between volitional leadership and the imposed headship of bureaucratic rulers, the specter of charismatic leadership continues to excite our conceptual fantasies but haunt our cultural nightmares. The solution proposed by this study was to examine our notions of charismatic leadership as a mythic rhetoric that influences and articulates contemporary leadership fantasies.

Chapter two surveyed the gargantuan history and evolutionary development of the Myth of Charisma. Beginning in the ancient world and ending in modern times, this chapter identified a recurring and fundamental mythic tension in the divinely-charged conceptualizations of the "gift of grace or favor" charisma. On the one hand, charisma has long been the exclusive domain of some transcendent social elite, most often god-like heroes, divinely-sanctioned rulers, and the spiritually-inspired seers who transform society because they wield magical superpowers far beyond those of lesser mortals. On the other hand, however, the God-given charismatic gifts which St. Paul posits as having been distributed uniquely amongst a community of believers hints at another more subversive view akin to Buddhist mysticism, which finds the power of charisma to be an immanent spiritual potential latent within every human being and manifest as varying personal gifts or miraculous abilities. The result is a paradox: charisma is a rhetoric invoked by both rulers and revolutionaries. Max Weber would delineate the modern secular routinizations for this transformational magic of charisma as belonging to either the exemplary prophet, whose virtuous action and heroic deeds make them worthy of emulation, or the emissary

prophet, whose righteous mission and sacred doctrine become holy law for a community of believers. For Weber, despite almost infinite variance in how cultures may subjectively conceive of charismatic gifts, there is a universal process of rationalizing and institutionalizing charismatic gifts and heroes into enduring social structures, which nonetheless always ends in the "iron cage" of cold instrumental reason and dehumanizing impersonal bureaucracy.

Post-Weberian theorizing, it was then demonstrated, still wrestles with these paradoxical contradictions and secular consequences for bureaucratic routinization even as Weber became a victim of his own theory. Whereas Weber posited charisma as the revolutionary force in history and creative genesis for radical social change, subsequent scholarship became more interested in bureaucratic applications and socio-historical models of routinized charisma. Amidst sweeping technological changes in society and political upheaval, a contentious divide emerged between those seeking to extend Weber's theories and those who declared Weberian charisma irrelevant in a secular world. Along the way, the radical and revolutionary character of charisma would be diminished and the pseudocharismatic manufacture of mass-mediated consent would gain prominence. As leadership scholars bickered over methodological and definitional distinctions between leaders and managers and the relative merit of charisma as a concept, new theories offering more benevolent forms of bureaucratic leadership emerged as egalitarian replacements for the chaotically unstable and dangerous permutations of charismatic leadership. Yet, oddly enough, most of these "visionary" or "transformational" models brushed up against the same characteristic themes and concerns of charismatic leadership theory.

Chapter three next explored mythology as a fruitful method for understanding shifting notions of charisma within our socio-cultural crisis of leadership. By attending to the evolutionary tensions within charismatic leadership, mythological perspectives reveal charisma

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as a rhetorical phenomenon expressing cultural anxieties regarding authority and power, leadership and membership, transcendence and immanence. The Janus face of myth provides powerful explanatory appeal for understanding charisma as the paradoxical quest rhetoric of charismatic heroes and kings, as yesterday's hero struggles against becoming tomorrow's tyrant. Now understood as mythic rhetorical discourse, "textual charisma" as a constitutive rhetoric for transforming social identities is then posited to be more productively explored using Fantasy Theme Analysis. After surveying the literature to identify characteristic elements of the ubermensch fantasy script of charisma, popular self-help management texts were selected to examine the evolutionary fantasy of the Charismatic Superhero within American popular culture.

Analysis chapters then examined three successful self-help management models for their fantasies of empowered memberships, weighing the findings of these chapters against the zeitgeist of the Charismatic Superhero. Chapter 4 examined the Principle-Centered Leadership of Stephen Covey. Chapter 5 then provided an analysis of Level 5 Leadership as championed by Jim Collins. Finally, chapter 6 surveyed the post-heroic SuperLeadership of Manz & Sims as the third self-help management model.

My own conclusion after these rhetorical analyses is that new vintages of leadership continue to be poured into the mythic rhetorical form of charisma. Whether invoked positively or negatively a concept, charisma is a mythic form that continues to be rhetorically deployed in crisis discourses re-imagining new romantic ideals for more benevolent and egalitarian models of leadership. The management gurus surveyed for this study showed striking fidelity to the fantasy script of the Charismatic Superhero even as they demonized it overtly. By evangelizing the equally ambiguous notion of "empowerment," however, these gurus are merely shifting the focus from manufacturing charismatic leadership to engineering the enthusiastic devotion of

charismatic *membership*, leaving the core fantasy of the Charismatic Superhero virtually intact. Although Principle-Centered Leadership favors the moral virtue of a *Visionary Prophet*, and Level 5 Leadership encourages the team-building skills of a *Messianic Prince*, while SuperLeadership craves a hero-making *Technocratic Superteam*, all of these models idealistically posit a utopian *Ubermensch* despite slight variation in the traits being romanticized. As these examinations subtly suggests of the *Servant Superhero*, we collectively yearn for a charismatic Superman who will not turn into a tyrannical Overlord in time but, as the myth warns us within both comic books and history, there is never any such guarantee. If the prior rhetorical analyses are any indication, these guru models for empowerment also share a deeply troubling tendency to project "bad" leadership outside itself and thus risk becoming self-righteously deluded into the belief that their purely benevolent models are uncorrupted by a "dark side" of their own. The Myth of Charisma tacitly intimates its own sinister potential for blind faith and unreflective devotion to a gifted Master who can potentially lead us into the hero-worshiping tyranny of a benevolent dictatorship. These borderline self-delusional fantasies of managerial empowerment, however, unreflexively project such sinister potential outward onto something or someone 'Other' than its own tacit acceptance of fantasy premises. Because any fantasy of leadership is the mythic handmaiden of an ideology of power, many if not most models for manufacturing benevolent managerial leadership are thus little more than dangerously unreflexive Superhero fantasies for grown-ups.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Even so, there are some interesting fantasy twists in this Neo-Superhero who facilitates the relational interdependence of empowered Crypto-Charismatic Superteams. In place of the romanticized Charismatic Superhero who acts as the messianic redeemer of Jewett & Lawrence's

"American Monomyth," the fantasy for empowered Superteams of fallible yet heroic humanity is sometimes displacing the lone transcendent savior with a rhetoric of mythic transcendence (Rushing,1985). Through their interdependent collaboration and relational cooperation, these Superteams draw upon their collective wisdom and unique individual gifts by combining each member's extraordinary abilities for a relational *telos* of shared purpose (Frentz, 1985). Although this fantasy is not new or unfamiliar to the American popular mythology, this fantasy is quickly gaining cultural currency by positing the special gifts and extraordinary abilities of charisma as an *immanent rather than transcendent* spiritual potential. "Spiritual remediation comes through properly understanding the true, unified nature of the cosmos, achieved through spiritual, mental, and physical discipline," Engnell (1995) explains; "Thus, salvation comes not from outside the cosmos but from within the individual devotee" (249). Rather than the monomythic hero questing for messianic redemption through violently self-righteous social crusades against some 'Other' evil enemy, the charismatic Neo-Superhero is a mythic symbol inviting our self-enlightenment to the Buddha within all citizens of the cosmos. Psychologist Ludwig Janus offers an analysis of *The Matrix* films that articulates the parabolic lesson of another Neo-Superhero reloaded as postmodern messiah:

> "The fascinating, powerful potential of human identity and individuation is no longer projected into the religious sphere and the Chosen One is no longer sought in heavenly realms, but is instead the individual him- or herself *in the charisma of his or her own primary potential*." (159-160, emphasis mine)

Charisma is thus re-imagined as a latent spiritual potential, an immanent Crypto-Charisma that is 'encrypted' as the unique individual gifts and abilities of every individual, rather than the transcendent traits of a rare heroic personality. As a 'representative citizen' of this postmodern spiritual mythos, the crypto-charismatic Neo-Superhero "disrupts images of traditional political power, depicting a chaotic, inclusive, and communal presidentiality dominated by a collectivity

of appealing heroes" (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 2002; p. 210). That is, the transcendent

charismatic leader-hero is being re-imagined within a cultural fantasy of humanity's immanent

spiritual potential and latent inner charisma, expressing an emergent hope for relationally

interdependent Superteams which are comprised of spiritually self-actualized and self-

actualizing *Crypto-Charismatic Memberships*.

These Superteams of Crypto-Charismatic Memberships are amply evident within the

preceding analysis chapters. Although each of the texts closely adhered to the dramatistic

structure of the charismatic fantasy script, the specific fantasy themes within their rhetorical

visions posited alternate archetypal counter-fantasies as co-constitutive of their respective

models. That is, the Ubermensch Prophet, the Messianic Prince, the Servant Superhero, and

Empowered Superteams were all represented in some fashion within each of the

"Empowerment" Leadership models. These models shared a concern for unlocking the

immanent gift and abilities dormant within those who are 'hailed' to subject themselves to the

particular leadership fantasy. Variation was evident in terms of the archetype privileged as

"meta-leader" of other subservient counter-fantasies: the "PCL" *Prophet*, the "L5L" *Prince*, the

"SuperLeader" of *Superteams*, or the "Smallville" *Neo-Superhero*. More interesting for fantasy-

theme analysis, however, is that the rhetorical visions within each of these texts were constitutive

of alternate counter-fantasies, which were co-opted as deferential crypto-charismatic

memberships by the overarching meta-leadership fantasy. Ironically, with the exception of the

mythically-charged "Smallville," each of the managerial 'empowerment' fantasies projected the

'dark side' of charisma onto other counter-fantasies while ignoring those same sinister

proclivities within their own benevolent variation of the charismatic fantasy script.

In the sections that follow, I will first offer a brief overview of a model for the fantasies of crupto-charismatic citizenship, and I will then conclude by considering possible directions for future research into fantasy theme analysis "reloaded" by mythic criticism of unconscious Phantasies within the cultural imaginary.

THE FANTASY RHETORIC OF CRYPTO-CHARISMATIC MEMBERSHIP

Will Wright's classic examination of the evolving American Western, *Sixguns and Society* (1975), found adherence to a professional creed and desire for profit rather than preservation of society was increasingly determining the actions of the collective hero. Wright's structuralist economic model of narrative transformation exposed the rise of a managerial elite, an expert Superteam of mercenary cowboys from *The Magnificent Seven* onward, which reflected the 60s and 70s changes of an increasingly white-collar corporate America. The mythic mutations of the Western were further charted by Rushing's (1983) examination of the emergent "urban cowboy" of popular culture, which was also being re-imagined in more feminized variations as the star-trekking space cowboy of an alien frontier (1991). Rushing (1985) posits that this scenic move into outer space to face an alien Other also makes possible the emergence of a "Rhetoric of Mythic Transcendence," as futuristic mythic imaginings make possible cosmological contemplation of the spiritual potentials for humanity across mythic time and space. But as has been suggested throughout this project, the emergence of the American Superhero as a colorfully-clad and super-powerful urban cowboy has already evoked these same religiously-charged themes. The 1938 debut of Superman introduced a secular American messiah into our popular consciousness, whose dual-identity wrestled with the contradictions and paradoxes of god-like power and democratic values (Jewett & Lawrence, 2002). From the very

beginning, the American Superhero wrestled with the transcendence/immanence dialectic that Weber had identified as a central paradox to both religious and secular organization.

Often overlooked is the emergence of Superteams within two years of Superman's premiere, a recurring superhero sub-genre that appealed to the sensibilities of young and old alike during troubled times. Although pulp heroes like "The Shadow" and "Doc Savage" enjoyed an entourage of subordinates, the first team of super-powered equals was the Justice Society of America, founded in *All-Star Comics #3* during the pre-war year of 1940. "Beginning with America's involvement in World War II," notes Arnold Blumberg (1999) in his history of super-teams, "the super-team became an established mechanism for bringing multiple heroes together in one title to battle a common foe" (107). While initially exhibiting a socializing "clubhouse mentality" amenable the marketing of fan club participants, the successful blend of entertainment and patriotic propaganda survived through the 1950s Red Scare until the Marvel Age of 1961 revamped the formula. With the appearance of the Fantastic Four super-family, personal angst and interpersonal conflict now offered Superteams to readers as an in-fighting surrogate family. "They were people—extraordinary people certainly—but people nonetheless," notes Blumberg (1999) of the X-Men and Avengers who would follow into the 70s, "with personality conflicts and personal lives caught in a whirlwind of fame and responsibility" (110). This humanizing Marvel Age of comics, read alongside scholarly examinations of the anti-heroic mutations of the Cowboy Western Myth, helps chart the increasingly self-conflicted inner turmoil informing the mythic dialectic of transcendence and immanence within the Charismatic Superhero. As human fallibility and personal uncertainty entered the mythos, Superteams have become an important resource for relational support, collective wisdom, or checks and balances

upon the will to power of an individual. Blumberg celebrates the characteristic features of this

Superteam fantasy, which challenges the mythos of the lone savior as social redeemer:

> "One truth remains: as long as we strive to be better than we are—to overcome
> the obstacles and face the challenges that lie ahead—we must cooperate with one
> another, and we must reflect it in our entertainment as well. We will always need
> our heroes to join forces and valiantly strive against impossible odds. Super-
> teams are more than a narrative device; they are our inspiration, and they preserve
> the hope that no matter what awaits us in the years ahead, we will be able to face
> it… together." (112)

This sense of communalism clearly favors the merit and virtues of a unifying collective identity

over the crass heroic individualism of the American Monomyth. Countless scholars and many in

the American political laity often express similar sentiments, since this fantasy is one which

penetrates to the very core of our cherished virtues and ideals for democratic American

citizenship. Yet we shall soon see that this fantasy also flirts with affinities dangerously

sympathetic to the salvation quest of a totalitarian ideology.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The mythic dialectic of transcendence/immanence is fundamental to our virtuous notions of

citizenship, but Max Weber has pointed out that the irrational Protestant quest for salvation

inevitably leads to the 'iron cage' of instrumental bureaucratic rationality. "The pessimistic

paradox of Weberian history," observes Bryan Turner (1993), "is that all that is virtuous (reason,

imagination, moral altruism) results in a world that stands in opposition to human creativity,

because rationality lays the foundation of the iron cage" (134). Weber recognized that the

"radical Christian political theory which separated the believer from the earthly power of secular

rulers" was profoundly revolutionary because "the Christian notion of political membership lay,

not in a set of sacraments, but in the idea that the bond of political life lies in a common religious

faith rather than in blood, ethnicity or ritual practice" (143-44). The neo-Weberian Turner

pursues a development of this dual citizenship, and how the division of social membership

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between secular and mystical powers created the conflicting theories of descending and

ascending power. Although "the king typically claimed divine status or quasi-divine status" as

above and not directly responsible to the community, says Turner, "we should see this principle

of a divine hereditary right as a defensive theory against the growth of social contract ideas,

which asserted the rights of representation of citizens—or at least the wealthy—against the

king's absolute power" (146-7). The revolutionary struggles of the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries thus paved the way to more impersonal notions of power, representation, and finally

citizenship. "Rousseau clearly recognized that what had occurred was a transition from the

power of the body of the king to the power of the body of citizens," Turner says, "a transfer from

one body to the body of *nobody*" (149). Here, says Turner, "the problems of modern politics are

ushered in by the French revolution and the democratic revolution of American society, because

these two events gave rise to the foundations of mass society, ideology and modern forms of

tyranny" (150). Drawing upon de Tocqueville's dire observations on "the problems of

totalitarian public opinion in such mass democracies," since "democratic despotism is based

upon the fact that he public becomes an undifferentiated mass which can be led by an

authoritarian ruler," Turner then turns to Lefort's reflections on this birth of mass ideology:

> "Following Marx, Lefort argued that all social systems produce an image of their own social unity which functions to mask and disguise the essential and necessary divisions, conflicts and discontinuities within real societies; this is what he means by the imaginary (*l'imaginaire social*)... The maintenance of the unity (the People-as-One) necessarily requires the production of enemies, of fantastic adversaries, of evil outsiders... From the totalitarian need to exclude enemies, there arises the need for an Egocrat whose body will symbolize the virtues, the heroism, the internal unity of the body politic itself; hence the emergence of Stalin, Mao or Fidel... In many respects therefore, modern forms of totalitarianism have merely resurrected much of the old rhetoric of patriarchal authorities, of sacred bodies, and thus of charismatic leadership." (151-2).

As a recurring rhetorical symbol within the social imaginary, the Charismatic Superhero and

"the legacy of Christendom suggested a very different picture of citizenship in which the private

arena was eventually held to be morally superior to the public, because it was in the public arena that man is most likely to become corrupted" (157). The transcendent charismatic leader of a unified 'public' has thus remained at odds with the immanent charismatic hero of self-actualized 'private' individuals.

The fundamental paradox that Weber prophetically acknowledged recognizes that charismatic leadership, when rationally routinized into more enduring and stable forms of organization, led to a choice between devotion to the benevolent master or the totalitarian law of the mob. When carried to their final logic, however, both the Master and the Mob result in a bureaucratic "party" structure to dominate the chaotic free will of mankind with the benevolent order of an elite priesthood of *virtuosi* mediating the public and private realms. Turner (1992) acknowledges these Weberian paradoxes and tensions, positing "a typology of citizenship which includes the notion of revolutionary and radical citizenship as opposed to passive and submissive citizenship," and thus able to "pay more attention to the cultural dimension of citizenship" (156). Turner's model for citizenship is explicated as follows, well worth quoting at length:

> "These reflection on the development of modern political space and contemporary citizenship allow us to establish *two crucial dimensions* of citizenship as socio-political participation: whether citizenship is developed from above in terms of the state's distribution of rights and obligations to its subjects, or whether citizenship develops from below as a revolutionary struggle against regulation and exclusion from political spaces. The second dimension is a division between a private and public morality, in which a privatized morality leads to subjective individualism which is incompatible with a notion of the public arena as a place of ethical involvement. By combining these two dimensions we can produce four types of citizenship: *revolutionary citizenship* which attacks the private arena, while crating an active sense of political participation; *liberal citizenship*, which emphasizes private consciousness and free liberties as in the tradition of J.S. Mill; *plebiscitary democracy* which denies the citizen the right to public involvement by emphasizing the private and perceives citizenship as part of an obligation to the state; and finally there is a *passive democratic* form of citizenship which perceives the citizen merely as a subject." (157-8, emphasis mine)

The 'ideal type' citizenship model offered here provides the foundation for a model for the archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership explored in this project.

This tentative model for crypto-charismatic citizenship is attractive because it is congruent with several other academic attempts schematizing modern forms of charismatic leadership, and it also allows for the darker potentialities of both the demagogic totalitarianism of the mob and the democratic despotism of a master. The works of postmodern organizational theorist David Boje (1994, 1995, 2001) similarly identifies the dramaturgical "theatrics of leadership" as managerial narrative "voices" that oscillate between the Machiavellian Prince, the Nietzschean Ubermensch, the traditionalist Hero, and Bureaucratic organizations. Boje's narrative model is highly amenable to Turner's radical taxonomy of citizenships, as are other archetypal schemas of charismatic leadership (Streyer, 1998; Weierter, 2001). Following is a brief explication for a taxonomic synthesis suggested by these models and my own prior analysis, which suggests an analytic schema for the archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership and crypto-charismatic memberships.

The model suggested here (illustrated in Appendix B) posits archetypal fantasy rhetorics of membership or citizenship divided along four dimensions: the monological 'will to power' and the dialogical 'will to serve' on one axis, interacting with the transcendent 'transactional' (public) and immanent 'transformational' (private) on the other. Beginning with the revolutionary citizenship of the *Ubermensch Prophet*, which creates political participation by challenging the status quo and transforming the private identity of memberships. The "Principle-Centered Leadership" of Stephen Covey assumed a counter-hegemonic prophetic rhetoric to refashion the inner-charisma of subjects according to timeless transcendent principles, while admonishing would-be memberships to resist inner temptations and embrace self-willed

humanistic moral principles to become a prophet for American values in their own right. The

liberal citizenship of the *Servant Superhero* instead emphasizes private consciousness and free

liberties as the path to self-actualization, tempered by a will to serve others as an exemplary

model of spiritual enlightenment. Interestingly, this counter-fantasy was consistently located by

the self-help managerial models within lower- or middle-management as the ideal "company

man/woman" who mediates hierarchical estrangement for the 'empowering' meta-leaders,

although these middle-management SuperLeaders of relational social networks lead by their

virtuous if not saintly character and eschew any dint of positional power. The populist

plebiscitary citizenship of *Empowered Superteams*, in contrast, fosters a membership identity

that subjugates private needs to the public duties and obligations required for the greater good of

the organizational collective. Unsurprisingly, all the managerial self-help models in this study

advocate a work force laity of managerial subordinates who align themselves with organizational

needs and goals, but the "SuperLeader" paradigm for self-leadership elevates relational

interdependence as a mutually-affirming 'hero-making' that replaces the need for top-down

management hierarchies. Finally, the passive citizenship of the *Messianic Prince* posits self-

actualized memberships only as subjects who are negatively incorporated into a presidential

system as not-Other. This leader-centric presidentiality elevates organizational unity and

consensus as the foundation for an identity of social membership, privileging a law-abiding

community of the faithful on a missionary crusade to purify a corrupted collective. The "Level 5

Leadership" of Jim Collins most starkly illustrates this fantasy by insisting that only the "right"

people be selected and the "unfaithful" purged from the redemptive organization of Princely

CEO rulership. Covey's "Principle-Centered Leadership" and the "SuperLeadership" of Manz

and Sims are far more sutble in their rhetorical gymnastics for disguising the authoritarian power

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and positional authority wielded by their ideal organizational leader. Although the iron fist is indeed often disguised within a velvet glove, this archetypal counter-fantasy is attractive since it esteems conformity with an elite party or priesthood of "true believers" striving to impose their patriotic will to power to redeem a corrupted organizational status quo.

Two important implications for future study can be gleaned from this suggestive model. First, nothing inherently precludes any of these counter-fantasies from potentially succumbing to the "dark side" of charismatic leadership within their benevolent "empowerment" models, regardless of whether redemptive salvation through crypto-charismatic membership is achieved by Prophetic purpose, Princely power, Superheroic action, or Superteam processes. The rhetorical agencies invoked as textual charisma within these counter-fantasies indeed nicely coincide with Kenneth Burke's Pentadic ratios. The mysticism of the *Ubermensch Prophet* indicates an Agent-Purpose ratio, since the charismatic agent inspires transformation through a shared substance or immanent purpose. The materialism of the *Messianic Prince* indicates an Agent-Scene ratio, whereby the charismatic agent is one who can transform the material conditions of a public scene. The realism of the *Servant Superhero* indicates an Agent-Act ratio, since this charismatic agent seeks transformation of reality through virtuous example. The pragmatism of *Empowered Superteams* suggests an Agent-Agency ratio, whereby the charismatic agent transforms how specific problems and conflicts get resolved.   As we know from Burke, as well as Weber, any successful identification will seek perfection until it either dissolves into failure or triumphs as hierarchical psychosis. "Dramatism," Burke somberly notes, "is always on the edge of this vexing problem, that comes to a culmination in the song of the scapegoat" (1970, 54). Whether one follows the transformational path of either salvational scapegoating or redemptive self-mortification, both roads lead to Weber's bureaucratic iron cage

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and Burke's victimizing iron law of history. As this model of Crypto-Charismatic Memberships suggestively hints, <u>any</u> of these counter-fantasies for Crypto-Charismatic Membership can potentially result in democratic despotism or demagogic totalitarianism if the tensions and tendencies between these conflicting citizenships is not precariously honored and maintained. The myth of the Charismatic Superhero illustrates these paradoxical potentials nicely since, if the revaluating *Ubermensch* were to ascend to power as the Princely ruler of mankind, his would be a benevolent dictatorship but a dictatorship nonetheless.

A second implication is found within the rhetorical maneuvers employed to delay or deny this tragically inevitable rage for bureaucratic order in the "iron cage." By thinking of these counter-fantasies as counter-mythic culturetypes or even counterhegemonic "ante-narratives" (Boje, 1993; 1995), the potentialities for shifting emphases and cultural self-renewal seem almost limitless so long as the tensions between these fantasies are acknowledged and self-reflexively preserved. Transactional transcendence and transformational immanence is a mythic dialectic that has long proved fruitful as symbolic inducements for perpetual re-identification, a push-and-pull between the competing values of ideological myths and spiritual myths (Frentz & Rushing, 1978; 1995). Yet this hope also belies a reciprocal danger. Exploring these inherent dangers will now take us into the phantastic realm of fantasy theme analysis.

FANTASY RELOADED

The popular fantasies of self-help management gurus surveyed in this study, it has been suggested, offer up a perplexing paradox for empowerment. Even as they overtly demonize the sinister potentials of charismatic leadership, these gurus offer seemingly more benevolent and egalitarian models for bureaucratic management that oddly peddle the charismatic fantasy script for 'empowering' memberships devoted to some culturetypal variation of a charismatic leader.

This concluding section will consider directions for future study by pondering explanations for why these gurus seem to be unconsciously perpetuating the very fantasy conditions they rail against with such conviction. The potential answer offered here suggests that future studies need to seriously re-examine the unconscious desires and ideological drives that Bormann's method of Fantasy Theme Analysis has for too long stubbornly denied. What is needed, I suggest, is a richer understanding of rhetorical fantasies by "reloading" fantasy theme analysis with a greater critical sensitivity to the unconscious dynamics of both myth and ideology.

As chapter 3 has already suggested, Ernest Bormann's rhetorical methodology of fantasy-theme analysis has been both prolific and useful in exploring how groups come to acquire a shared consciousness or reality. The idea that group collectivities create a consensus in worldview through sharing dramatic interpretations and narrative explanations is not a new idea, but fantasy theme analysis provided many an elegant simplicity capable of yielding rich textual analyses. But because FTA is a method that attends to the overt dramatizations that groups offer themselves to articulate a coherent group identity, some critics correctly worry that the method is prone to descriptively reproducing a group's self-aggrandizing and potentially delusional self-rationalizations as THE monological "reality" while dangerous repressions and unreflexive groupthink go unexamined (Nimmo & Combs, 1980; Mormann, 1982; Gunn, 2003). As chapter 3 has already suggested, critics such as Mormann (1982) and Gunn (2003) are justifiably wary that the "rational" bias of FTA too eagerly jettisons the Freudian unconscious so central to Bales' foundational works. By overlooking the subconscious drives and self-deluding desires that fuel the rhetorical act and social activity of fantasizing, FTA risks mistaking self-delusional group neurosis and over-conforming groupthink for healthy consensus building.

A potential remedy for this methodological blindness is one that has been advanced by rhetorical critics sympathetic to psychoanalysis, scholars such as Rushing & Frentz (1995) and more recently by Gunn (2002). The Jungian approach of Rushing & Frentz emphasizes mythic contradiction and paradox as fundamental for understanding the payoff and price of any archetypal symbolization, while Gunn deploys a Lacanian matrix for exploring the Althusserian interpolations of (mis)recognized subjects and (mis)reprented ideological fantasies. Both, however, share the conviction that neither mythic archetype nor ideological fantasy can be taken at face value for fear of being seduced by necessary fictions and dysfunctionally comforting self-delusions. As the works of Slavoj Zizek begin to garner the attention of American scholarship, rhetorical critics may come to the disquieting conclusion that we are no longer fetishizing commodities or money, but actually fantasy itself. As Zizek (1997) teases readers:

> [F]antasy is on the side of reality… it sustains the subject's 'sense of reality': when the phantasmic frame disintegrates, the subject undergoes a 'loss of reality' and starts to perceive reality as an 'irreal' nightmarish universe… [T]his nightmarish universe is not 'pure fantasy' but, on the contrary, *that which remains of reality after reality is deprived of its support in fantasy*. (p. 66)

For Zizek, the imaginary wholeness offered within fantasy always functions to mask the traumatic kernel of the 'Real' while the ideological distortion of 'reality' is written into its very essence. In "the Sublime Object of Ideology" (1989), Zizek conceives of the subject as an "answer of the Real" yet, because the signified can never find a signifier that would fully represent it, the void we call a "subject" is created (174-75). "The Sublime," says Zizek, is "the paradox of an object which, in the very field of representation, provides a view, in a negative way, of the dimension of what is unrepresentable" (202). Or, to offer an attempt at translation more directly relevant to the current project here, managerial fantasies desire devoted subordinates enthusiastically mobilized for some common purpose and shared identity which in turn, quite paradoxically, worships a 'Lack' constitutive of ideologies amenable to charismatic

leadership. In short, the fantasy of "empowered" memberships rhetorically interpolates charisma-prone subjects, and all the sinister potentialities that entails. The ideological consequence is that corporations have begun to resemble cults or totalitarian regimes susceptible to the hero-worship of a charismatic leader (Adorno, 1978; Arnott, 2000).

The necessity for scrutinizing the unconscious desires of ideologically-charged fantasies is perhaps more eloquently illustrated by an evocative book by history professor James Hoopes. In his book, *False Prophets: The Gurus Who Created Modern Management and Why Their Ideas are Bad for Business* (2003), Hoopes' thesis is that the management philosophies of luminaries such as Frederick W. Taylor, W. Edwards Deming and Peter Druker may promise emancipated employees and egalitarian empowerment but commodify modern workers with variations of exploitative plantation master/slave relations. "By pretending corporate power doesn't operate from a 'top-down' model, management theory fails to address the moral questions that come with authority," *Publishers Weekly* synopsizes, and "it's that blind spot, he claims, that leads to the self-deception and self-righteousness that fuel corporate scandals" (from *amazon.com*). The fundamental conflict within American society, Hoopes points out, is that business and capitalism is anti-democratic. Instead of the freedom and bottom-up management being touted in popular models and academic literature, American business managers should look for management models that recognize the inherently anti-democratic conditions necessary for a successful corporation. Management gurus and those who subscribe to them, he criticizes, are unwilling to accept that corporate power is "morally illegitimate, but useful" because American workers "live in two realms… Democracy keeps us politically free and top-down management makes us rich" (*Washington Post*, 7/27/03). Hoopes is insistent, however, that readers do not mistake his disquieting thesis as an endorsement of authoritarianism in the workplace. To the contrary:

Some managers—not the really good ones, but some—slip into a kind of arrogance, a feeling that they must be special, even superior, by virtue of their positions. That's one of the temptations of undemocratic power. Those who manage most successfully temper their power with a healthy dose of common sense and with personal competence; they have enough humility to realize that their power and their competence, not their charisma, are the main reasons people follow them… If you start by trying to be the inspirational leader, its easy to lose sight of competence and then you're headed for real trouble… The characters I wrote about in the book, most of them anyway, made important contributions to our understanding of how businesses work. At the same time, there is the danger that if the emperor is paying the guru, the guru may not mention that the emperor is not wearing any clothes… I do believe its possible that some corporations have something that fits the original anthropological sense of the word culture. But I also think that its easy to use the word culture to cover up the fact that people are doing what you want because you are the boss. ("Meet the Masterminds: James Hoopes Takes on the False Prophets of Management," interview posted at *managementconsultingnews.com*, 10/3/03)

Hoopes is equally suspicious of the reciprocal temptation to consider democratic citizens as customers or consumers. "What happens when we've stopped being a community and started being a marketplace? Most of us, when we ask ourselves that question, don't want to live in that kind of country," Hoopes tells the *Concord Monitor*; "That seems to me to be an awfully narrow way to conceive of our role as citizens" ("Opinion," 3/27/03). Becaue few seem willing to admit that corporate capitalism and democratic citizenship make for dangerous bedfellows, however, the myth of charismatic leadership has much to teach us still.

We can conclude this study of charismatic leadership by recalling the potential for rhetorical applications of the model offered in this chapter. By understanding the archetypal counter-fantasies of charismatic leadership as expressing contradictions and paradoxes inherent within the ancient Myth of Charisma, this study has suggested that textual charisma is a constitutive rhetoric of crypto-charismatic memberships. The archetypal fantasies of the Ubermensch Prophet, the Messianic Prince, the Servant Superhero, and Empowered Superteams each articulate and invoke specific discourses of citizenship that compete within the cultural imaginary as a 'representative character' for organizational membership. The return of

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charismatic leadership in the guise of "empowered" memberships suggests that charisma is every

bit as influential today as it has ever been, albeit more favorable to fantasies of the immanent

crypto-charismatic memberships rather than the more autocratic fantasies of transcendent

charismatic leadership. Yet if this study is to be taken as any indication, the concept of charisma

remains a centrally important rhetorical construct for understanding how our fantasies of both

leadership and membership continue to evolve. Thus, as Hurst (1995) has so eloquently noted:

> Charismatic leadership is a controversial phenomenon toward which we should always feel ambivalent. Paradoxical by its very nature, it has been associated with both the most inspiring and the most terrible episodes in human history. There are examples of charismatic leaders who are egotistical, elitist, exploitative, and destructive. There are also examples of those who are humble, egalitarian, fascilitative, and creative. For charismatic people exemplify, to an extreme degree, our human potential for the creation of both good and evil. As such, we need this paradoxical, contradictory concept to capture something of our paradoxical, contradictory nature: the phenomenon is all too real. (112)

I must wholeheartedly agree that the archetypal appeal of charisma is best understood as a myth

reminding us to question not only ourselves, but also the ideological work in empowerment

fantasies of crypto-charismatic memberships which are being constituted, invoked, and

rhetorically deployed. We would do well to recall and contemplate the ancient injunction: Kill

the Buddha if you meet him on the road. The same holds true, I believe, for any management

guru or charismatic leader we might stumble upon.

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APPENDIX A

FANTASY-THEME ANALYSIS CONCEPTS

The following section provides a set of definitions for emergent concepts utilized in Fantasy-Theme Analysis. Since Bormann's 1972 introduction of Fantasy-Theme Analysis, a gradual refinement of terminology has evolved in response to both criticisms and the emergence of his broader Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT). SCT rests upon two major assumptions: (1) communication creates reality because humans use symbols to introduce form and meaning into disordered sensory experiences, and (2) individual meanings for symbols can rhetorically converge to create a social reality of shared meanings. "Symbolic Convergence Theory is a general communication theory that explains how people collectively build a common symbolic consciousness that provides meaning, emotion, and motive for action," a rhetorical process whereby "humans come to share a common symbolic reality" (Cragan & Shields, 1995: 59, 29).

Thirteen technical terms have been gleaned and outlined by Cragan & Shields (1992, 1995), divided into three fundamental categories: basic concepts, structural concepts, and concepts for critical analysis. Unless otherwise noted, the following definitions are paraphrased from these works.

BASIC CONCEPTS

According to Bormann (1985), a *fantasy* is "the creative and imaginative shared interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need" (130). Although such fantasizing often seems overtly wistful because it is fancifully removed from the here-and-now pragmatic concerns of an individual or a group, Bormann finds "the basic dynamic of the theory is the sharing of group fantasies, which brings about a convergence of appropriate feelings among participants" (130). As a narrative 'chain reaction' of shared fantasies amongst

individuals establishes both appropriate feelings and an interpretive consistency, the symbolic

foundations of a collaborative group identity are formed. "Through symbolic convergence,"

Griffith (1991) explains, "individuals build a sense of community or group consciousness" as a

co-constitutive group identity in which participants "assume a joint venture" (34). Thus, a

fantasy is both means and ends within the dynamic of identity-building.

A *fantasy theme* is the narrative representation of characters, events and actions that

dramatizes shared experiences and social phenomena which individuals come to interpret

similarly. Fantasy themes are the dramatic units of analysis as witnessed through the discovery

of recurring *symbolic cues*, which "may be a code word, phrase or slogan… or even a nonverbal

sign or gesture" (200). Foss, Foss & Trapp (1991) further specify that "Fantasy Themes of

setting tell where the action is seen as taking place in the rhetorical world; *character* themes

name and identify the characteristics and motives of heroes, villains and supporting players; and

action themes, which also might be called plot lines, tell what is being done in the rhetorical

world or drama" (328). It is these themes of setting, characters and action that may be tacitly

"cued" within the discursive choices of individuals, narratively interpolating (and ideologically

interpolated *by*) the dramatic understandings of a shared group identity or membership. The

shared fantasy themes of memberships, Bormann (1993) insists, will cultivate "a sense of

community, to impel them strongly to action" by providing "a social reality filled with heroes,

villains, emotions and attitudes" (212-13).

A *fantasy type* is a "stock scenario repeated again and again by the same or similar

characters" (Bormann, 1985, p. 7), or "a recurring script in the culture of a group" which is

"essentially the same narrative frame but with different characters and slightly different

incidents" (Bormann, 1993, pp. 102-6). Bormann, Cragan & Shields (1994) differentiate fantasy

themes as "the content of a dramatizing message that sparks the fantasy chain," whereas a fantasy type is a "general scenario that covers several of the more concrete fantasy themes" (281). Fantasy types are thus evident in more than one rhetorical vision and found across various organizational *sagas*, the historical dramatization of past origins which institutionalizes a "detailed narrative of the achievement and events in the life of a person, a group, or a community" (Bormann, 1993, p.115). Hart (1990) offers a helpful clarification important to this study when he observes that fantasy themes are in fact "mythic shorthand," since "if myths are the prized tales of humankind in general, fantasy themes are the local variations wrought on these themes" (251). Similar fantasy archetypes, therefore, may function mythically as the romantic hero of one saga and the questing villain in other "mirror-image fantasies" (Bormann, 1982a), or perhaps the utopian vision for one rhetorical community (i.e. "Operation Iraqi Freedom") might be portrayed instead as an apocalyptic saga within a competing rhetorical culture (i.e. American Imperialism). As conceived in this study, divergent fantasy types of crypto-charismatic membership are emergent variations upon ancient mythic archetypes of charismatic leadership: the Messianic Prince, the Visionary Prophet, the Servant Superhero and Technocratic Superteams.

STRUCTURAL CONCEPTS

A *rhetorical vision* is the total synthesis of the above concepts, an interpretative totality of characters, settings and events which come to be similarly understood by a significant number of people as expressing their collective social reality. "As people seek to make sense of the environment and the events around them, these fantasy themes swirl together to provide a credible interpretation of reality," Foss, Foss & Trapp (1991) explain; "The total dramatistic explanation of reality is called a rhetorical vision," the "symbolic drama that contains fantasy

themes dealing with scenes, characters and actions" (328-9). A rhetorical vision thus articulates

and unifies "the composite dramas which catch up large groups of people in a symbolic reality"

(Bormann, 1972, p. 398). Cragan & Shields (1998) find rhetorical visions akin to a "viewpoint,

ideology or worldview" (100-101).

A rhetorical vision will therefore articulate or tacitly allude to four narrative units of

analysis, or fantasy-themes. The *dramatis personae* are the heroes, villains, helpers, or other

supporting characters portrayed within a rhetorical vision. A *scene* places them in a location or

contextual circumstances, a *plotline* presents these characters in action or related behavioral

sequences over time, and some *sanctioning agent* legitimizes the ends and means of actions

taken. Taken as a whole, a rhetorical vision often reflects one of three *master analogues*:

righteous, pragmatic or social (Cragan & Shields, 1995). A righteous analogue stresses actions

based upon transcendent moral principles or "the right way of doing things," a pragmatic

analogue stresses effective actions based upon "expediency, efficiency, utility, practicality, cost

effectiveness, and whatever it takes to get the job done," while a social analogue negotiates

collectively beneficial action based upon interdependent "social relationships" (42).

CRITICAL EVALUATION CONCEPTS

First and foremost, the critic attempts to understand the meanings and emotions inherent

in the predominant dramatistic interpretations of a group as the shared group consciousness of a

rhetorical community, which "also might be thought of as shared meaning, consensus or general

agreement on subjective meanings" through which "individuals have interpreted some aspect of

their experiences in the same way" (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1991, p. 328). When a critic explores

the nature of meanings and emotions that are evoked by stories circulated within a group,

examining how recurring dramatic characterizations figure into the history and anxieties

embedded in the culture of a group, then the descriptive power of fantasy-theme analysis can indicate how those themes and visions work together to attract the unconverted while also generating a sense of cohesion and idealized identity for group memberships.

This shared group consciousness is indicative of a perceived *reality link* connecting individual fantasy themes to a group's rhetorical vision of a shared symbolic reality. Studies by Cragan & Shields (1990) have determined that rhetorical visions can span a continuum somewhere between *pure and mixed*, which implies that individuals can also span a similar continuum regarding their adherence to the conflicting rhetorical visions of competing rhetorical communities (this may explain why some people can be converted to a new vision while others are either ambivalent or continue subscribing to elements of an old vision in decline). "In truth," Jackson (1999) admits, "we would probably see a full spectrum of commitment ranging from cynical disgust through to casual interest to manic devotion" (364). Stone (2002) also points to studies suggesting that rhetorical visions may offer "a blend" of master analogues via the "archetypal deep structures" which they invoke (230). Due to Fundamental Attribution Error, the "tendency to assign more noble motives" to one's own behavior, Stone reports that adherents of a rhetorical vision tend to "identify with fantasy types that are largely 'righteous' in nature" since such self-idealizing motivations are "easier to reconcile within themselves than more 'pragmatic' motives" of naked self-interest or utilitarian effectiveness which may also be motivational factors (238). Thus, critics should weigh Gunn's (2003) criticism that the fantasies of rhetorical visions may offer groups the payoff of comforting self-delusions or exaggerated self-aggrandizement while avoiding discomforting self-examination into other unconscious or ideologically-driven motivations. The primary concern of this study, therefore, is to attend to the

fantasy payoffs and mythic price for memberships within the rhetoric of crypto-charismatic empowerment.

Bormann, Cragan & Shields (1996) have also demonstrated the utility of several additional principles that are directly linked to the consciousness-creating, consciousness-raising, and consciousness-sustaining activities within all competing rhetorical visions (and 5 for decline or *terminus*: explanatory deficiency, exploding free speech, competing visions, and the principle of rapid implosion). The following explanations are paraphrased from this article.

Consciousness-Creating

In this first stage of a rhetorical vision, *the principal of novelty* is simply a new fantasy that is beginning to replace an outdated or deficient one. The new fantasy provides an explanatory power for characters or circumstances that the old one is lacking, yet also retains some elements of the old fantasy (under *the principle of imitation*).

Consciousness-Raising

As the 'chain reaction' of a new fantasy attracts a significant number of converts who actively mobilize into coordinated symbolic action or adopt new rhetorical behaviors, "critical mass" is achieved. At this stage, there is a high degree of involvement (*principle of dedication*) as converts seek to proselytize their vision to others through discourse, self-advertisement, or other forms of identity-making and recruitment.

Consciousness-Sustaining

The *principle of restoration* involves the rhetorical revitalization of weakening components of a vision that is losing its explanatory power. When changing elements of experienced reality become incongruent with an increasingly inadequate rhetorical vision, its adherents will act under the *principle of conservation* to salvage viable remnants of a vision and

continue on. The *principle of preservation* applies to elements of rhetorical visions that become rigid or inflexibly dogmatic in response to adversarial visions, while the *principle of shielding* protects adherents from potentially damaging outside influences or counter-fantasies. The *principles of rededication* and *reiteration* reflect a revivalist dramatization, a self-idealization that positively refits dominant fantasy themes or types to re-establish unity and commitment from devoted participants. Failure to succeed in such efforts results in the onset of *terminus* stages for a declining rhetorical vision.
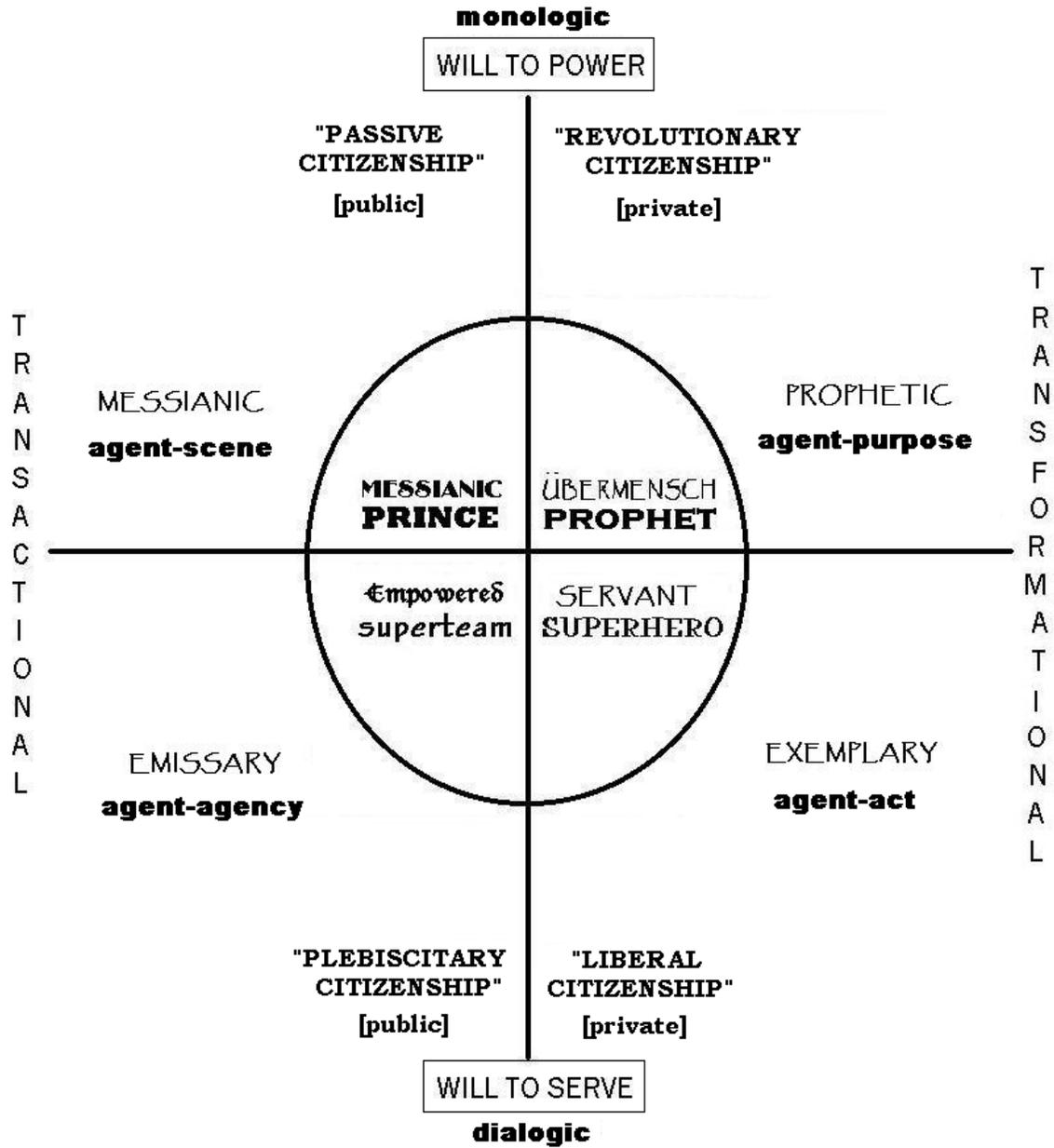
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS PROBES

Roderick Hart (1990) presents eight critical queries that probe the mythic presuppositions of fantasy-theme rhetoric. "These questions ask the critic to isolate the story lines most often used in a body of discourse and ask what lessons they teach: about people's capacities, about right and wrong, about human purpose." Yet the discerning critic, he says, "tracks them *across discourse situations*, since only then can genuine thematizing be established" (335-6).

1. Given the speaker's story lines, what are people like? Are they dependable? Fundamentally deceived? Are people essentially alone? Evil or duplicitous at root? Do they care for one another?
2. Given the speaker's story lines, what are the possibilities for group action? Is group effort morally superior to individual effort? Practically superior? Are groups doomed to disharmony? Does group action bring out the best in us, or the worst?
3. Given the speaker's story lines, upon what can people most depend? Their mental agility? Physical skills? Spiritual resources? Hard work? Other people? Nothing at all?
4. Given the speaker's story lines, what is humankind's fundamental purpose on the earth? To help others? To self-actualize? To change the world? To fulfill historical mandates? To right wrongs?
5. Given the speaker's story lines, what are the fundamental measures of right and wrong? Personal ethics? Some religious code? Social obligations and agreements? Political utility? Legal duty?
6. Given the speaker's story lines, how can success best be measured? By assessing quantitative gain? By enhancing self-knowledge? By fulfilling group destiny? By being faithful to certain abstract principles? By defeating an enemy?
7. Given the speaker's story lines, what sort of information is the most dependable? Book learning? Empirical observation? Personal experience? Folk wisdom? Secret revelation?
8. Given the speaker's story lines, why do things happen as they do? Because of some hidden design? Because of individual or group effort? Because of random chance? Because of some extrahuman force?

APPENDIX B

MODEL OF CRYPTO-CHARISMATIC CITIZENSHIP

monologic

WILL TO POWER

"PASSIVE
CITIZENSHIP"
[public]

"REVOLUTIONARY
CITIZENSHIP"
[private]

T
R
A
N
S
A
C
T
I
O
N
A
L

MESSIANIC
agent-scene

PROPHETIC
agent-purpose

**MESSIANIC
PRINCE**

ÜBERMENSCH
PROPHET

Empowered
superteam

SERVANT
SUPERHERO

T
R
A
N
S
F
O
R
M
A
T
I
O
N
A
L

EMISSARY
agent-agency

EXEMPLARY
agent-act

"PLEBISCITARY
CITIZENSHIP"
[public]

"LIBERAL
CITIZENSHIP"
[private]

WILL TO SERVE

dialogic

VITA

Shaun Treat was born to Bob and Donna Treat in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on November 25, 1968. Raised on a farm nestled by a stream in the lush rolling hills of the Ozarks, Shaun attended Farmington public schools and was one of only twelve in his graduating class of 74 who attended K-12 in the rural community. He was active as an officer and parliamentarian in Future Farmers of America, served as class vice-president, and was a member of the Alpha Beta and Golden Key honor societies. After surviving high school, Shaun attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville to major in communication and drinking beer. As a graduating senior in 1991, he had a paper accepted to the Arkansas Communication Association and decided to pursue his master's degree in communication and rhetorical studies. Upon receiving his master's from the University of Arkansas in 1994, Shaun briefly worked for the City of Fayetteville in the Mayor's office before accepting a position to supervise national accounts for J. B. Hunt Transport, one of the country's largest trucking firms. Disenchanted with corporate life, Shaun opted for poverty and a different form of indentured servitude when he moved his family to the Louisiana bayou in order to pursue his doctorate at LSU in Baton Rouge. Shaun has over thirteen convention papers, two publications, and a forthcoming book with Dr. Andrew King, *Power and Leadership: The Return of Charisma* (Praeger). Current research interests examine the role of superhero mythologies within American popular culture, the leadership models of Confucius and Lao tzu, and American political propaganda. Shaun has two children, Kaitlynn and Austin, who have continued to teach him the difference between education and enlightenment.