

Editorial Statement

Colloquy is a journal of the Department of Communication Studies, funded through Instructionally Related Activities at California State University, Los Angeles. *Colloquy* aims to represent the variety of scholarship conducted in the Department of Communication Studies as well as representing different types and levels of academic thought. Writing style varies with students' experience with writing as a scholarly enterprise.

The editorial board is comprised of students in the Department of Communication Studies and a supervising member of the Communication Studies faculty. Typically, the membership of the editorial board changes with each issue. The intention of the editors is to ensure that essays appearing in the journal are checked for consistency in style and general clarity in writing. Owing to the breadth of theoretical, methodological, and rhetorical approaches within the purview of communication studies, the editors subscribe to a general ethic is of inclusiveness, and they endeavor to treat all essays with this ethic in mind.

As representative of the scholarship in communication studies, a number of essays in *Colloquy* have been presented at national and regional conferences, including the National Communication Association convention and the Western States Communication Association conference. As such, *Colloquy* highlights the achievements of students in the Communication Studies department while providing a forum for scholarly discussion and innovation.

The Editorial Board wishes to thank all those who contributed to this volume, including the authors who submitted essays, the faculty members who solicited materials, and members of the production staff.

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Liangxiang: The Propagandistic Function of the “Frozen Pose” during the Cultural Revolution

Alice Fritz

Abstract

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Chairman Mao Zedong controlled every segment of the performing arts in order to cultivate a mass internalization of the Party's ideology. Any possible channel for the dissemination of propaganda was fully utilized to promote the CCP. The following paper uses fantasy theme analysis to examine how pro-Party messages were circulated via certain dance poses, and the resulting effect on audiences. The historical context is carefully considered as part of the analytical process. The author concludes that the rhetorical attempts were largely successful in China, where many, particularly the young, deeply internalized the perspectives of the ruling party.

During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government employed various media to foster positive attitudes towards the ruling political party, including such seemingly “innocuous” mediums as music and dance. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) comprehensive utilization of all available means of propaganda allowed them to influence the *Weltanschauung* of a nation of 800 million people. Jacques Ellul defined propaganda as “a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization” (61). Those who try to impress their political views onto the general public have frequently embedded their propagandistic messages in visual mediums.

Olson has noted that rhetoric can take any form of symbolic action, and does not necessarily have to be a verbal message (333–4). Visual rhetoric uses images and other visual signs and symbols to convey messages. Since 1970, rhetorical critics have recognized visual images as an important area of study; this importance is further highlighted in view of the opportunities images offer the political propagandist to advocate certain perspectives. Visual mediums may be particularly effective for the transmission of ideologies and other messages involving power, since they can potentially bypass the more critical cognitive

processes that audiences tend to reserve for more text-based artifacts. Ott and Dickinson have identified three principles that characterize visual rhetoric: 1) Visual rhetoric is a meaningful set of visible signs and therefore a mode of communication; 2) it is fundamentally an optical process, although that process is registered viscerally by the body as well as symbolically by the mind; and 3) while the forms of visual rhetoric vary widely, from paintings and photographs to sculptures and buildings to films and television, they are human constructions and indulgences (392).

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (approximately 1966–1976) in China, the Chinese Communist Party under Chairman Mao Zedong relied heavily on propaganda to instill the desired attitudes and beliefs in the masses. To promote pro-Party sentiment, the Maoist government circulated Mao's Little Red Book and used political posters (*Dazibao*, "big-character poster"), but besides such written texts, pro-Party messages were embedded in other mediums as well. The transmission of propagandistic messages from a multitude of channels may have helped to instill a notion in the people's minds of an omniscient, Foucauldian center of authority that is present in all aspects of people's daily lives; even an evening spent at the theatre watching Beijing opera would be spent under the watchful eye and enlightened guidance of Chairman Mao. Given the then fervent distrust of intellectual activity of any kind, it is not surprising that the Chinese government would turn to mediums that did not demand much or even any reading on the part of the audience, such as music (Beijing opera, revolutionary songs, etc.), comic books, paintings, ceramic figurines, and dance. Songwriters did not hold back in their encomiastic praise of Mao, and the messages conveyed by the figurines from that period were not very subtle either. One common theme depicted by these figurines would show a bespectacled (eyeglasses being the trademark of the intellectual) man about to be executed by two Red Guards grinning happily as they tower above his kneeling form. Such unconcealed glorification of the bloodshed and violence that accompanied the revolution may fan the already warm pro-Party fervor of some audiences, but for others, propaganda of this kind may only serve to invite oppositional readings. Perhaps taking this into account, the Maoist government supplemented the more overt propaganda with less "obvious" mediums as well, such as the performing arts, to transmit their propagandist messages.

All artistic production during the time of the Cultural Revolution was subject to government scrutiny, and was required to incorporate pro-Party messages. For example, the revolutionary songs often took their lyrics directly from Mao's Little Red Book. The distinguishing feature of dance performances from the

same period was that they would invariably incorporate, into every choreography, frozen poses (*liangxiang*) or gestures that the audiences for those dance performances would immediately recognize as narratives alluding to Mao's leadership. Those dances were, in essence, epideictic rhetorical texts, to use Aristotle's classification, in that they persuaded their audiences to feel a certain way about their present situation. Specifically, the messages found within those dances attempted to stimulate feelings of admiration for Mao, satisfaction with the status quo, and optimism towards the future. Since the significant movements/poses all served to remind the audience of Mao's wise leadership and helped build up his status as a hero, fantasy theme analysis would be an appropriate methodology for studying the rhetorical effects of the frozen poses.

Inspired by the work of Robert Bales in small group behavior, Ernest Bormann developed fantasy theme analysis in 1972 as an analytical tool for exploring "how dramatizing communication creates social reality for groups of people" (396). Fantasy theme analysis is a methodology that looks at the stories that are popular among and frequently recounted by a group of people in order to gain insight into "the group's culture, motivation, emotional style, and cohesion" (396). A simple dance pose would immediately bring to the minds of the audience members, all of whom have heard the same stories told over and over again, some one or another of Mao's heroic feats or attributes. Fantasy themes, according to Bormann, are dramatized stories about people, whether real or fictitious, which are narrated and repeated by different people. These oft-repeated stories revolving around one particular heroic central persona (in this case, Mao) are circulated so frequently within that society that they mature into a fantasy type, which in turn influence the worldview of the people in that society. The "cult of Mao" was built upon the vigorous propagandistic efforts of the CCP to chain-out particular narratives among the Chinese people.

The word "propaganda" may immediately call to mind for many the posters and films produced and circulated by the Allied and Axis governments during WWII; a connection is not often made, however, between the concept of propaganda and the infinitude of commercials, billboards, political campaign ads, even magazine or newspaper editorials, with which we are constantly besieged. "Because it surrounds us, propaganda goes undetected, especially when we imagine that we (need not) control it. In the 'free world,' political, economic and commercial propaganda are relatively unrestricted. This makes them infinitely more sinister than their gauche counterparts in Cuba, China or the USSR" (Rohatyn 80). The fact that propaganda is still very much a part of the

everyday lives of every individual points to the need for more thoughtful examination of this category of rhetoric. Insights gained from the close examination of propaganda campaigns could help us better understand the persuasive processes at work. The present paper aims at a better understanding of how propaganda is produced and disseminated by looking at how pro-Party messages were disseminated via the frozen poses in China in the Cultural Revolution era. Using fantasy theme analysis, the present essay will show how the various narratives conveyed through the familiar dance poses were calculated to increase group cohesion among the audience members, to promote homogeneity among the people, and silence voices of dissent. After all, when one expresses an opinion dissimilar to that upheld by everyone around him or her, the individual is immediately singled out as an outsider based on that difference of opinion. In a collectivist culture such as that of the Chinese, this would doubtless be perceived as an unenviable position to be in. The constant reminders, not just through dances but from a multitude of sources, of the many inspirational sayings and accomplishments of Chairman Mao, served to keep his admirable qualities always foremost in the minds of the populace.

Context and Framework of Analysis

While In his landmark 1972 essay, Bormann described the process by which a fantasy theme is “caught up” by an audience, and then “chained out” through its members. These shared narratives serve to “sustain the members’ sense of community, to impel them strongly to action (which raises the question of motivation), and to provide them with a social reality filled with heroes, villains, emotions, and attitudes” (398). A dramatization that falls flat upon its initial iteration will not chain out through the rest of the audience. On the other hand, one that does will create a sense of community among group members, as they will become so familiar with the story that even superficial allusions to it will produce recognition and a sense of community akin to that shared between participants who are “in on” an inside joke. The CCP under Mao was certainly successful in creating dramatizations that referenced both Communist ideals and the persona of Mao himself that were chained out among the people and ultimately developed into the rhetorical vision of the time. Bormann defines rhetorical vision as “the composite dramas which catch up large groups of people in a symbolic reality” (398). It is the result of a successful persuasive campaign.

A fantasy theme analysis would prove a useful framework for the rhetorical scholar investigating how rhetorical vision operated during the Cultural

Revolution to influence public opinion and generate support for their political leader. Williams identifies a list of questions a scholar embarking on such an investigation using fantasy theme analysis may seek to address: "The dramatis personae, motives, attitudes, values, settings, behavior, emotions, etc. that are contained in the fantasy theme(s) in question" (15). Seeking, Williams asserts, to fill in gaps generated by what the author refers to as vagueness on Bormann's part, Williams mapped out a more concrete set of instructions on how to use fantasy theme analysis as an analytical tool. According to Williams, one should start by identifying the dramatizations and by reconstructing the resultant rhetorical vision. Then, the audience should be identified. A discussion of audience reaction is also appropriate. Evidence should then be presented that the fantasy theme has indeed been caught up and chained out. Finally, the critic gets to the ultimate goal of fantasy theme analysis: to assess the motivating effect of the rhetorical vision. "By discussing the ways in which participation in the dramas serves to create for the participants a social reality, the critic may be able to explain certain behaviors and possibly predict others" (19).

Similarly, Foss has explicated the procedure involved in using fantasy theme analysis as an analytical tool. Foss identified the two major assumptions of symbolic convergence theory (the theory accompanying the fantasy theme method of rhetorical criticism): communication creates reality, and the realities created by individuals using symbols/language can converge to form a *shared* reality for all members of the group (122). In their fantasy theme analysis of the 2004 mockumentary *A Day Without a Mexican*, Marambio and Tew similarly stress the focus on how audiences respond to the communicator's message. The communicator's goal, according to Marambio and Tew, is to use fantasy themes to "unify audiences around the political, economic, and social issues of concern to the targeted audiences" (479).

In building up his cult of personality, Mao Zedong was essentially engaged in an extended political campaign; although he was not running in an election against an opponent, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party under him had to constantly remind the masses of why he was their ideal leader, so that the notion of searching for an alternative to Mao would not even enter their minds. Clark has observed that the Cultural Revolution "saw a nation of 800 million people apparently respond to the whims of one man" (1). This was the result of ceaseless efforts on the part of the CCP to promote the cult of Mao. Hence, all the propagandistic activities during the Cultural Revolution could be compared to those conducted during a campaign. Employing fantasy theme analysis to examine the 1972 U.S. presidential campaign, Bormann observed that a

compelling drama, one that had a better chance of being chained out through the public, must possess “plausibility, action, suspense, and sympathetic characters” (152). A fantasy theme usually stresses one or two of those elements. In his analysis of that campaign, Bormann discovered that the fantasy themes the McGovern campaign emphasized “tended to be character sketches which stressed the moral superiority of the heroes and the evil nature of the villains” (145); on the other hand, the Nixon campaign tried to downplay his persona from their rhetoric. Like McGovern’s campaign, the fantasy themes that were chained out among the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution stressed the sagacity and heroic qualities of Mao and the other heroes of the revolution, while denouncing the enemies of Communist values. As previous scholarship has not turned its attention towards a critical analysis of the “cult of Mao” using a fantasy theme analysis approach, the present paper will seek to address this gap.

The analysis of the visual rhetoric within Chinese dance poses in the pages that follow will look at five frozen poses as the fantasy themes, the basic units that combine to comprise a broader myth, the rhetorical vision. There were other fantasy themes that were circulated (chained out) during the Cultural Revolution; however, the present essay will focus upon the fantasy themes conveyed through the frozen poses. All the circulated narratives shared certain similar elements, including an emphasis on character. The rhetorical vision that resulted from the combined repetition of all those fantasy themes informed the way the Chinese people of that era interpreted their reality. Data on the Chinese dances was collected through an interview with a professional dancer who performed in China during the Revolution years, and for several years afterwards. The five particular poses were chosen for analysis based upon the frequency with which they appeared in dance performances as reported by the interview subject. These poses were then coded to determine the dominant themes that emerged; whether the emphasis was on setting, characters, or actions.

Dance in Cultural Revolution-era China

The goal of entertainment in China during the years of the Cultural Revolution was not so much to entertain as it was to *educate*. The Chinese Communist Party saw mediums of popular culture such as the opera and other performances as opportunities to spread pro-Party messages to the “broad masses.” They oversaw the production of all artistic performances. Though the CCP focused their propagandistic efforts on the Chinese opera, dance was

another medium that was a target of close governmental scrutiny and control. In fact, of the eight “model performances” (*yangbanxi*), two were ballets. Ballet was an import from China’s neighbor and political mentor, the Soviet Union, and the fact that the Chinese government made attempts to popularize this art form “indicated the modernizing and internationalizing ambitions of cultural practice in the Cultural Revolution”(Clark 158). The inclusion of *The White-Haired Girl* (*Baimaonu*) and *The Red Detachment of Women* into the Communist canon of “model works” “ranked dance as close to equal with the relatively ancient performing art of Chinese opera” (Clark 158).

To gain a deeper insight into the cultural life of the Chinese people during the Cultural Revolution, the author conducted an interview with one who had experienced that era in Chinese history firsthand. Mia Z., who had been a professional dancer in China during the years of the Cultural Revolution and for several years afterwards, recalls the cultural production and consumption during that period in Chinese history. Chinese opera, she recalls, was the most popular form of entertainment among the people. Despite the limited choices, audiences still enjoyed going to those shows. The audience for dance performances was considerably less, and some of the smaller dance troupes struggled to sell tickets. This was never a concern, however, for Mia’s own dance company: She belonged to a company that performed exclusively for the armed forces. Mia estimates that her company would be on the road six months out of the year to travel to different army or naval bases and perform for large audiences comprised of soldiers, for whom attendance at those performances was mandatory.

Mia explains that there really is not a dance form that is truly indigenous to China. Due to its geographical proximity and political ties to China, the Soviet Union influenced several areas of Chinese life, including the performing arts. In addition to the Soviet import of ballet, which was being incorporated into Chinese cultural life, a new form of dance was being developed in China in the years leading up to and during the Cultural Revolution. In the development of this new dance form, certain elements of Russian dance were incorporated, as well as some elements of Chinese folk dances, and even martial arts. The folk dances have their origins in the celebratory rituals of peasant farmers during times of harvest, and they may just as well have been called *traditional* Chinese dances, if not for the Cultural Revolution-era abhorrence of the word “traditional.” Hence, they were referred to as “folk dances (*minzu wu*).” The hybridity that resulted from merging Russian dance styles and Chinese folk

dances was a modern dance-like art form that began to be taught in dance departments in Chinese Universities.

Mia herself first began to receive formal instruction in dance at Heilongjiang University, where she studied for six years before transferring to Harbin Normal University, where she continued her dance education for another two years. Prior to her formal dance education at those two universities, Mia recalls participating in informal dancing in the streets of her hometown during the pro-Party parades that were regularly held. Attendance at those parades was not an optional matter. Mia was a young child at the time, but she can still recall men and women sporting the red armbands attached to their sleeves (the emblem of the CCP) visiting each house in the neighborhood as they performed the watchdog duty of ensuring that no one stayed indoors during a parade. While they were in your homes, these party watchdogs would also take the opportunity to inspect your house for signs of recalcitrant tendencies. The obligatory portrait of Mao hung at a negligent angle, for instance, would be grounds for a charge of treasonous intent. Leese provided several accounts of persons receiving severe punishment for absurdly trivial transgressions that were interpreted as counterrevolutionary behaviors, including a peasant who was executed in 1970 “for having claimed not to have had space in his small hut to put up a Mao poster” (174). In addition, “everyone who, intentionally or not, failed to partake in the cult rituals, misspelled Mao quotations, or vilified cult symbols faced being sentenced as an ‘active counterrevolutionary’ by the PLA [People’s Liberation Army] military control commissions that had come to assume legal power in most parts of China by 1968” (207).

This kind of “penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power” (Foucault 198) instilled the appropriate amount of fear and uncertainty into the hearts of the people, and ensured that even when Party watchdogs were *not* watching, the “docile bodies” the populace had become were still behaving and thinking in a Party-approved manner. While the younger generation was exceptionally susceptible to the Party-generated fantasy themes and willingly embraced the cult of Mao, fear was the CCP’s weapon of choice when it came to controlling the older members of the population.

Coming to age in and then attending dance school under such a politically oppressive environment, Mia reveals that it was not until she came to the United States that she realized, for the first time in her life, that art can be imaginative and free. Creative freedom was something performers and

choreographers did not even dare aspire to in Communist-ruled China—it was simply taken for granted that any artistic effort had to follow Party guidelines and its content had to be Party approved. Mia recalls the tedious process of trying to put on a dance performance during those years: The choreographer would first describe his or her vision for the show to the appropriate cultural committee. Once the committee was satisfied that the proposed dance seemed to feature the proper pro-Party messages and no insurrectionary sentiments, the choreographer was given the go-ahead to start rehearsals for the project. Before the show could be presented, however, official cultural monitors had to preview the show; additional modifications may be prescribed at this stage. Only when the cultural committees were completely satisfied that a given show espoused the proper pro-Party spirit and affirmed the proper values and heroic figures would the show be allowed to be performed for the general public, for whom it would purportedly have an uplifting, edifying effect. Mia, however, has a different take on the real goal behind all those Party-approved artistic performances: “The goal was to spread the Party’s agenda through art.”

Foss has advised the critic employing the analytical tool of fantasy themes to look for evidence early on in the research process that a series of fantasy themes has indeed been shared and symbolic convergence has occurred (127). There is no question that by the 1960s, the fantasy themes that built up Mao (and a few other war heroes) as an exemplar of right-thinking, self-sacrificing hero of the masses had already been widely “chained out,” though this was not always enacted voluntarily by the participants. The CCP had been engaged in a massive public relations campaign since 1943 to boost “the image of Mao Zedong as supreme party leader and eminent Marxist-Leninist theoretician” (Leese 11); the goal was to make him into a compelling symbol that the party could rally around and attract followers away from the representative of the opposing Guomindang Party, Chiang Kai-shek. Mao’s popularity among the peasants gave him an advantage, and the CCP emphasized his identification with the peasant class into which Mao himself was born.

The media campaign to solidify Mao’s Messianic image was redoubled in 1966 upon his return to politics following a four-year forced hiatus necessitated by the failure of his Great Leap Forward (1958–60). The CCP targeted its propagandistic efforts at the younger generation, and quickly won their wildly enthusiastic support. “Mao exploited the passion of the young people,” recalls Mia. “It was madness. Do you know how big Tiananmen Square is? Standing in the middle of it, you cannot even see the edge. As big as it was, when Mao gave a speech there, the young people who came to hear him filled the entire square

to capacity.” His youthful supporters became Mao’s Red Guards, and they supported his goal of purging the country of such “undesirables” as the urban intelligentsia who had previously criticized him. Many of those intellectuals were persecuted and sentenced; others were sent to the countryside to be “re-educated” through hard manual labor and by learning to live as the peasants do. Schools were closed and traditional, “bourgeois” values were vehemently denounced; in some instances, elderly citizens were harassed simply because of their ties to the past. In place of the rejected values, Mao’s government promoted the values of dedication to political work, military training, and good work ethic. The military, agricultural, and industrial spheres were privileged above others.

Foss defines *character themes* as a fantasy theme type that describes “the agents or actors in the drama, ascribes qualities to them, assigns motives to them, and portrays them as having certain characteristics” (123). The fantasy themes that were circulated in Cultural Revolution-era China were stories that emphasized the characters. Some were portrayed as heroes and given prominence, while the villains were portrayed as either dim-witted stooges or simply bland and uninteresting. Given the aforementioned privileging by the CCP of the military, farming, and industries (steel, oil, etc.), it is not surprising that the “young soldier/farmer/industrial worker who sacrifices himself for the good of China” featured so prominently in most of those fantasies.

One of the most iconic heroic figures was that of Yang Zirong, who became “one of the most widely recognized and enduring heroes in modern Chinese drama” (Clark 27). A member of the Red Army brigade during the Chinese civil war in the late 1940s, Yang Zirong disguised himself as a bandit in order to infiltrate a bandit gang that was associated with the Guomindang Army. After gaining their trust, Yang Zirong led his comrades in a victorious ambush upon the pro-Guomindang bandits. His story, that of a brave and resourceful fighter for the Communist cause who outwits the capitalistic enemies with his ingenuity, is typical of many of the fantasy themes of the Cultural Revolution.

Not that the heroes of those fantasies were always male; Chinese women experienced a raise in societal status due to the egalitarian beliefs encouraged by Mao. In contrast to the hyper-feminine female characters in traditional Chinese opera, the female characters featured in the model operas and other fantasies during the Cultural Revolution were just as strong and resourceful as their male counterparts. Instead of flirting demurely with the male protagonist, the female lead of a model opera could be seen performing physical labor in red, gender-neutral Communist Party attire or outwitting enemies of the revolution.

Whether male or female, the protagonists of those fantasies were invariably young, brave, clever, politically right-thinking heroes and heroines who were never shown to have either families (in terms of blood relatives) or love interests—the implication being that their family was the collective family of the Chinese populace, and their love was solely reserved for the Chinese Communist Party. Clark summarized the basic mythology that formed the basis of the model operas, ballets, films, etc.: “God-like main heroes came down to often remote earthly situations, showed the way forward for other heroes, and sometimes died in the process” (54). Portrayals of these fantasies in opera, films, dance, and other mediums endeavored to establish and/or strengthen the bonds between audience members as they were presented with a perspective they were invited to share.

Model operas afforded actors numerous opportunities throughout the show for sweeping gestures and striking a pose. These poses were often the same ones used in dance performances as well. There were a number of frozen poses that choreographers were expected to incorporate into their dances and that dancers like Mia were expected to assume at strategic points during any given show. Five of those frozen poses are discussed here. As we will see, these poses all suggest strength, power, youthful energy, leadership, and joy. They are synecdoches that are associated with an entire story or series of stories for their audiences.

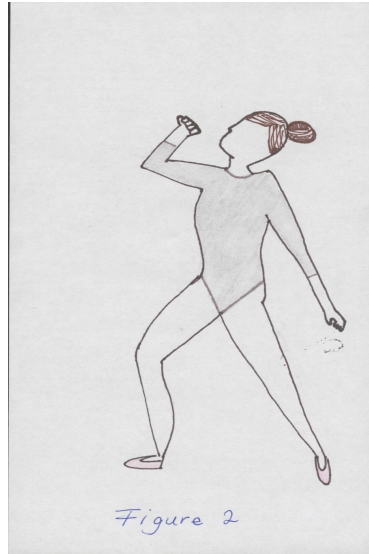
In one of those frozen poses, (see Figure 1) the performer assumes a powerful forward lunge position. The back is straight, the head is held high, and one bended arm is held before the dancer’s chest. The positioning of the bended arm reflects the influence of Russian folk dance. The presence of the Russian influence as evidenced by the positioning of the arm held in front may hint at internationalism and may be a reminder of the Soviet-inspired policies of the CCP. The positioning of the legs may reflect a martial arts influence. In publicity stills for the model performances from that period, one can often see this particular pose assumed by the characters playing the soldiers. For audiences familiar with these publicity stills, the pose will further carry the connotation of being “ready for battle;” a readiness to defend one’s country, to fight whatever enemies may threaten one’s homeland. To convince people they must be in a constant state of alertness and readiness for battle, you must instill in them the belief that there is a perpetual threat. One common element of the fantasy themes during that time was that the bourgeoisie was ready to seize any opportunity to once again hold dominion over the proletariat. Hence, the model

Chinese citizen was one who was constantly on the lookout for counter-revolutionaries and special agents working to dismantle the Communist Party.

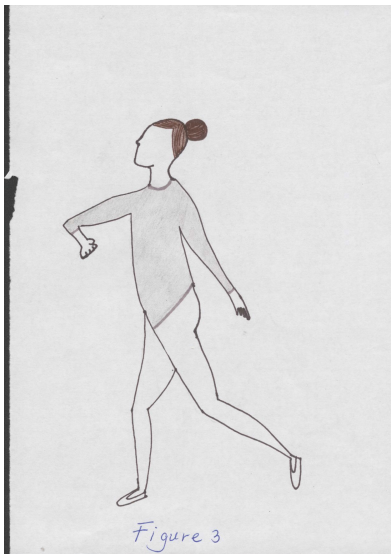


The major themes that can be detected in this pose are that of character and action. The affirmation of the stock character of the fearless soldier fighting to defend the proletariat against those who would threaten the egalitarian society of the New China is suggested by this powerful pose. Action is the second prominent theme that could be derived from this pose, namely the act of fighting as a member of the People's Liberation Army, or as a member of the other paramilitary units that supported the CCP.

A variation of this pose is shown in Figure 2. The figure is still in a slight lunge, but now the arm held in front seems to be clutching a bugle, and the performer seems not so much about to break into a run as s/he is preparing to sound the clarion call announcing the arrival of an important VIP, or signaling the dawn of a new age. The dominant code that emerges from this pose is that of action. The figure seems to be announcing the dawn of a new age (a New China); the message here is one of "out with the old, in with the new," or "let's rejoice for a new world order is finally here."

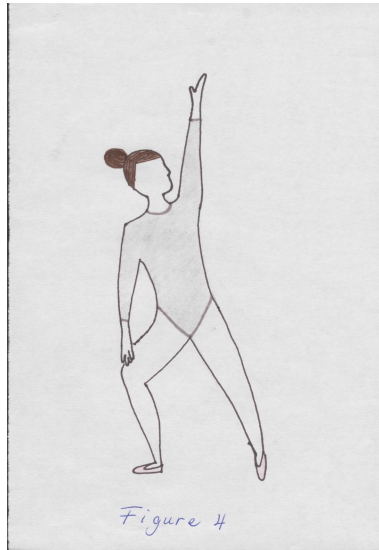


The energy in Figure 3 hearkens back to the intensity in the stance shown in Figure 1. Here, one arm is still held defiantly in front, but the figure is no longer in a lunge; instead, the back leg is raised. The elevated leg and the arm held behind is reminiscent of an arabesque, showing the influence of ballet on these



frozen poses. The hand held in front is in roughly the same position as that shown in Figure 1. It is a gesture suggestive of readiness and purpose; a viewer senses the kinetic energy that is building up and expects the performer to spring into action at any moment. The dominant theme that emerges from this pose is that of action. The pose suggests a readiness to spring into immediate action in response to the Party's call. The government's stress on the proper attitude towards work and physical labor (i.e., alacrity and enthusiasm) is alluded to through this pose.

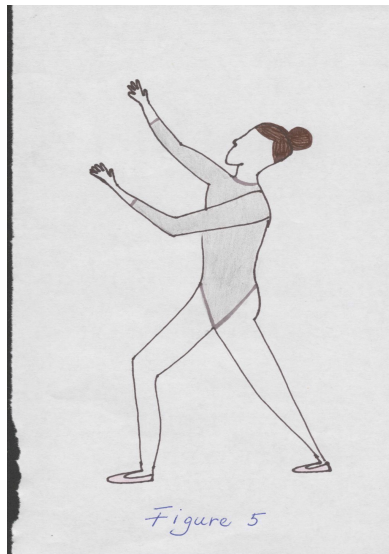
A publicity still for the model opera *Shajiabang* (1971) shows the hero, army general and political instructor Guo Jianguang, prominently featured center-stage and striking the same pose as that shown in Figure 4: one hand rests on either the waist or thigh (in the publicity still Guo Jianguang's hand is clutching a pistol), and the other arm is raised above the head, as if the actor were about to



make some momentous announcement. The raised hand could also be seen as drawing the viewer's attention to what lies in the immediate environment or just slightly ahead, as if to say, "Look, we have arrived!" Another connotative implication suggested by this pose is that the person is a fearless and decisive leader, one whom others can rely on to lead them in the right direction, and that the person is about to march purposefully into a bright future. This connotation also carries with it the associated ideas of progress and modernity.

Two themes emerge from this pose. The most prominent emphasis is given to that of character. This pose can arguably be seen as shorthand for any number of hero narratives with which audiences would have been very familiar, including, of course, the fantasy theme surrounding the persona of Mao Zedong himself. The mere sight of this allusive pose would have conjured in the minds of audiences many different fantasy themes that feature the same archetypal hero, someone who fought hard and overcame enormous obstacles and dangers to lead his people to a promised land of equality for all. A secondary theme that emerges from this pose is that of setting. The placement of the arm suggests that the person is presenting the immediate environment to an audience. The implication is that the participants in this fantasy theme have arrived at a new land of equality, a new world order in which the bourgeoisie are no longer in charge and where the proletariat has triumphed.

The last pose, shown in Figure 5, is the most blatantly adulatory. Both arms are raised in a presentational (or panegyric) manner towards some invisible (or sometimes, not so invisible) object of worship. The climax of a dance show, according to Mia, would sometimes involve one dancer going onstage carrying a portrait of Mao Zedong. The other dancers would gradually gather around the one carrying the picture. As the music reached a dramatic crescendo, all the other dancers would suddenly freeze into some variation of this reverent pose,



facing the portrait. This outright display of Mao worship is not so surprising given that the CCP's propagandizing emphasized the persona of their chairman. The dominant theme that emerges from this pose could be either action (praising Mao) or character; however, it is the argument of the present analysis that the emphasis is actually placed on character, i.e., the almost saint-like portrayal of Mao.

The frozen poses achieved their suasive effect in several ways. One can argue that the main goal of the ruling party at the time was to create a profound sense of community and communal identity in the people. Not everyone agreed with the tenets and actions of the Communist Party under Mao, and some people were still reeling from the horrors of harassment and persecution at the hands of the Red Guards. Many people lost or were separated from family members who were labeled as belonging to the "Five Black Categories" (property owners, wealthy farmers, counter-revolutionaries, "bad elements," and political Conservatives). A primary goal for the Maoist government, then, was to instill a sense of unity in the citizens, to make them feel deeply connected to their comrades so that they would begin to think of themselves as an extended family, with the same goals and the same enemies. That these dances were a public cultural event was itself a suasive tactic: the people who gathered on any given occasion to watch one of these dance performances were immediately identified as a group that shared something in common—that of spectators to a show. This sense of community was further enhanced when, throughout the performance, they could detect, and make sense of, the various meaningful gestures/poses incorporated into the choreography. These meaningful poses featured in dance performances correspond to what Roland Barthes designated as condensed codes, and they are semiotic movements that are intelligible only to their intended audience (the Chinese population at the time). That is, a visiting American watching these dance performances may have been witnessing the same chain of signs, but would probably not have been able to decipher them in the way the Chinese would. This shared familiarity with the messages conveyed by the frozen poses in the program generated a sense of community and kinship.

Proletarian themes were affirmed in every Party-approved performance and other cultural products. As Deputy Director of the Cultural Revolution Group, Mao's wife Jiang Qing was in charge of the arts and "oversaw the total suppression of a wide variety of traditional cultural activities during the decade of the revolution" (Jiang Qing). Instead, Jiang enforced uniformity in the artistic production of the time both in terms of content and theme. Expounding on the

ideological goals of paintings, Jiang insisted that “They must serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers. The workers, peasants, and soldiers should occupy that battle front. The central ideological theme of what is painted must be quite clear, the composition must be quite simple, and the central theme must be pronounced” (qtd. in Schoenhals 198). The same motto guided production of all other artistic expression as well. The dance performances all tended to tell the same story revolving around the same heroes and affirming the same ideologically “correct” themes. The frozen poses assumed at strategic points within those performances served a synecdochic function: The sight of a familiar pose would immediately remind audiences of entire stories (fantasy themes).

The audience’s familiarity with these poses and the meanings and stories associated with them contributed to a sense of shared knowledge, which in turn led to a strengthened bond between members. The protagonists of those legends were often based upon actual martyrs from the wars the Chinese had been fighting in the years leading up to the Cultural Revolution (e.g., Yang Zirong, etc.). The “Us versus Them” mentality that such narratives created also contributed to enhanced group cohesion among the Chinese people. Other stories featured heroes from the world of agriculture, such as Chen Yonggui, who turned the Shanxi village of Dazhai from a community of barren farmlands into one that yielded decent amounts of grain, fruits, and nuts (it was common for a choreographed piece to be given a title that had the phrase “Learn from Dazhai” somehow incorporated into it. For example, Mia remembers her first major performance as a dancer in a frenetically-paced piece entitled “You Chase I Run Let’s Learn from Dazhai”—the resulting title did not necessarily have to make a lot of sense; the important thing was to remind audiences of Dazhai’s successful example of what can be accomplished when hard-working farmers labored tirelessly for the good of Party and country). Exactly which individual hero was featured was beside the point; the protagonist of those performances was an amalgamation of the ideals upheld by the Party. Whether male or female, the protagonist was invariably a young person who had no interest in either romantic or familial relationships; rather, it was someone who dedicated him- or herself to advancing the goals of the New China, often by sacrificing his or her own life in pursuit of the collective good.

Finally, and most importantly, the protagonist had to exhibit complete compliance with Mao Zedong Thought; his or her words, actions, and behavior needed to reflect this conformity to the “correct” ideology and perhaps show the appropriate degree of reverence for Mao Zedong himself as well. S/he worked with his or her hands or otherwise performed hard physical labor,

whether in an agricultural, industrial, or military capacity. The audience was invited to identify themselves with this hero of the Cultural Revolution, sometimes quite explicitly. One publicity poster for the model opera *The Red Lantern* (*Hongdeng ji*) shows the heroine in Party uniform, reverently clutching the Little Red Book in one hand, and a rifle in the other. The subject has a determined expression upon her face, and her upward gaze falls upon the image of another woman raising high a red lantern. The caption accompanying this image reads: "Be this kind of person—carry out the revolution to the end."

The powerful, defiant frozen poses are a synecdochic symbol for the hero who bravely fights the bourgeoisie, for the benefit of all Chinese workers. The objective of the Cultural Revolution, as stated in the *Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*, is to "Contest and crush the capitalist-roaders in power, criticizing and repudiating the reactionary bourgeois academic 'authorities' as well as the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes." This battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is reflected in the dominant fantasy themes told through the dances and the frozen poses. The poses are strong and energetic; even the female dancers display the same level of strength and intensity as their male counterparts. There is no hint of softness or sensuality in these poses. The protagonist of these fantasy themes are never shown as having either a family (blood relations) or love interests.

An important binary that underpinned Maoist philosophy was that of private interests vs. public good. The absence of romantic elements within these fantasy themes demonstrates a rejection of desire and self-interest while privileging dedication to furthering communal interests, such as increasing agricultural and industrial production, and protecting the country and Party from counter-revolutionary traitors. Wang Min'an has suggested that the real target of the Cultural Revolution was in fact *personal desire*. "The reason capitalism is what it is, or, the capitalist roaders are who they are, is all because they are fully possessed by private desires. Personal desires are the seeds of evils of capitalism, including private ownership, lust for profits, excessive indulgence in pleasure and comfort, pursuit for sensual pleasure, sundry techniques of oppression and containment, and social inequality and injustice" (1). The frozen poses strip the dancers of sexual differentiation; the characters are no longer "men" and "women" with personal desires. They are all warriors and heroes whose only passion is for the collective well-being.

The protagonist's lack of parents or other blood relatives suggests s/he embraces his or her community as an extended family. In addition, Mao Zedong

is seen as a parental figure replacing one's biological father. The absence of family ties in these stories connects as well to another binary within Maoist ideology, that of tradition/past vs. modern. The "four olds" that the Cultural Revolution targeted were the old ideas, old cultures, old customs, and old habits. The past and everything related to it is suspect, including the Confucian ideals of filial piety. Filial duty is no longer owed one's parents; instead, devotion is to be re-directed toward the communal "father" embodied by Chairman Mao. The energetic dances and powerful poses suggest the youthfulness of the dancers; this again was an affirmation of the young/new over the old/past. Mao's laudation of the young proved a shrewd political strategy, as many of the young people, galvanized by his rhetoric, became the paramilitary units known as Mao's Red Guards and helped Mao regain his position as leader of the CCP following the failure of the Great Leap Forward.

Rhetorical Vision of the Chinese Cultural Revolution

After coding the fantasy theme types that emerge from the five frozen poses, a heavy emphasis on the theme of character can be observed. This is congruent with the philosophy that guided the presentation of protagonists of the model performances, explicitly designated as the principle of the "three prominences" (*san tuchu*). Protagonists were to be featured in exceptionally prominent and flattering ways. Specifically, the principle stated, "Among all the characters, give prominence to the positive characters; among the positive characters, give prominence to the main heroic characters; and among the heroes give prominence to the central character" (Clark 46).

The individual fantasy themes that were chained out during the Cultural Revolution resulted in a rhetorical vision that was shared by many in China during that period. It was a highly melodramatic myth of the existence of an intrepid, self-sacrificing leader that the people could place their trust in, someone who constituted the only safeguard against the resurgence of the exploiting classes to oppress the simple, hard-working proletariat. The enemy of the people was identified as members of the bourgeoisie, or anyone who desired to restore political power to the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the persona of Mao was emphasized as an infallibly wise leader. In the sycophantic rhetoric of Lin Biao (Mao's right-hand-man), we see how the CCP attempted to promote the persona of Mao: "We should do as Chairman Mao does. In both theory and practice, and both in Marxist theory as well as in his personal talents, Chairman Mao is not only superior to us in all respects, but he is also the world's greatest contemporary Marxist-Leninist. We must use Chairman Mao's example

as our measuring stick and attempt to catch up with, emulate, and learn from him" (qtd. in Schoenhals 20).

The resultant shared reality from the ubiquitous repetition of fantasy themes that emphasized Mao's persona in turn became the social glue that united Mao's followers together so strongly. People were so determined to stay on the "Us" side of an "Us/Them" dichotomy created by the Party's polarizing rhetoric that they would often go to great lengths to demonstrate their right to be included within the privileged "Us" group. Many volunteered to spy on neighbors, friends, and even family to uncover revisionist or counter-revolutionary tendencies. It was not unheard of at that time for someone to report his or her own relative to authorities for suspected disloyalty toward the Party. Such actions could be justified because the shared reality of the people was one in which love for family members was subordinate to devotion to the Party and Mao's political vision. The vision evoked strong emotions in participants, exciting a passionate determination to protect and defend the established government against those portrayed as dangerous villains.

As successful as the CCP's propaganda campaign was, propaganda is not mass hypnosis, and though a large majority of the Chinese people fell under the spell of "Mao Zedong Thought," there were inevitably some who did not embrace it wholeheartedly, or at all. "The notion of convergence emphasizes the audience as a critical element in the rhetorical process" (Foss 123). Although there were those who remained unmoved (and kept their oppositional opinions a secret) by the propagandistic rhetoric with which they were constantly bombarded, the rhetors who produced the persuasive texts during the Cultural Revolution were largely successful in achieving their goals, as much of the public responded to the texts in the way the producers intended.

Conclusion

An analysis of the visual persuasion used by the Chinese Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution yielded some interesting findings on how entire narratives and ideologies could be conveyed using the synecdochic symbol of the frozen pose. As many in China at the time were successfully persuaded by the government's zealous propaganda campaign, the evidence suggests that the fantasy themes circulated in China at the time (through a multitude of channels, of which dance is but one) were effective at creating a collective reality for the Chinese people. People's familiarity with those stories was a commonality between them, which served as a form of social cohesion.

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao claimed that “In this movement, Chairman Mao’s thoughts have been extensively propagated and popularized. They have become deeply engraved in the minds of people and have exerted a tremendous didactic impact upon the young and upon society in general” (qtd. in Schoenhals 10–11). The ten years following Biao’s proclamation proved how right he was. That Mao’s government was able to kindle such a fierce loyalty in the people demonstrates the ingenuity of the CCP in making theirs a *cultural* revolution: their propagandistic messages were so compelling because they permeated people’s cultural lives, and the fantasy themes were so potent because they were spread via the performing arts and other popular cultural products.

Looking back upon this notorious period in their history, many Chinese still shudder at the extremes to which people at the time, most notably Mao’s Red Guards, resorted in their eager determination to achieve Party objectives. Their sometimes shocking behavior, including the harassment, humiliation, or even beating or killing of anyone classified as a member of the Five Black Categories, can be explained only by taking into account the prevailing dramas that shaped the reality of those people. In one of the most impressive displays of the power of propaganda the world had ever seen, the CCP’s effective propagandistic efforts resulted in a rhetorical vision that convinced the people that any act of aggression executed in the name of the Party, however atrocious, was justified.

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Using Humor to Make Dominant Ideologies Explicit: A Rhetorical Analysis and Cultural Critique of Two Characters on *Arrested Development*

Andrea Smith

Abstract

This paper takes an in-depth look at two characters on the TV show Arrested Development in order to understand what makes the Arrested Development audience identify and root for two characters, George Bluth, Sr. and Lucille Bluth. Incorporating a variety of cultural, rhetorical, and media psychology methods of analysis, this paper contends that dominant ideologies are on display as a source of laughter and entertainment rather than hidden or embedded into the show itself, as previous television studies research has argued. The analysis demonstrates the mirroring relationship between television and American culture, and how television shows like Arrested Development help us to cope by laughing at the pitfalls of our political system.

Introduction

In a 2013 survey from The Bureau of Labor Statistics, it was reported that Americans spend an average of 2.8 hours per day watching television, which means that we will have spent nine years of our entire lives watching TV. There are an infinite number of television shows that will pass through our lives, and an infinite number of television characters who will come and go in our lives. In order to understand the ritual of why we invite television characters into our home each week, we must first understand why we, the audience, identify with certain characters. I often hear people saying, "that's my favorite character, you have to watch the show." Also, why are we persuaded into "rooting" for certain characters to succeed? Since Americans are spending more time in front of a television, it is important to understand why the audience identifies with these characters, and how the audience is persuaded into liking or rooting for these characters to succeed.

This paper will take an in-depth look at two characters on the TV show *Arrested Development* in order to understand what makes the *Arrested Development* audience identify with these two characters. Moreover, for this paper I will define rooting interest as characters we have empathy for, characters we admire, and characters with humanistic traits. If we combine these three characteristics, there is ample opportunity to illustrate why the audience is persuaded into rooting for a particular character.

There has been a plethora of research done in television studies when it comes to character identification. In addition, a review of literature revealed that there is not one strict method for analyzing identification with media characters; each theorist views character identification differently, which shows a lack of consensus among television studies theorists to answer the “why” question: why does the audience root for certain characters? In addition, there is a lack of research done on the show *Arrested Development* from a rhetorical perspective. Therefore, this paper will attempt to fill in that gap in media studies. The research questions for this analysis are:

- R1: Why is the audience persuaded into rooting for George Bluth, Sr. and Lucille Bluth to succeed?
- R2: What traits and/or characteristics do these two characters embody?
- R3: What dominant ideologies does *Arrested Development* display as a source of humor?

Review of Literature

The review of literature focuses on two areas of scholarship: first, audience identification with media characters, and second, the influence of television on American culture. To begin, we should first look at why the audience identifies with particular characters. In so doing, it is necessary to look at the literature already in place and its strengths and weaknesses. In 2008, Gardner and Knowles conducted a study to show the association between love and perceptions of realness. The authors rooted their study in the parasocial relationship with television characters. The authors were interested in finding whether or not the participants liked or disliked the TV character depending on the level of perceived “realness” portrayed by that character. Gardner and Knowles measured human characters against cartoon characters to study “realness.”

The important contribution of their study was that the more a character is liked or loved by the audience member, the more real they appeared to the audience regardless whether they were human characters or cartoons. Lastly, their discussion argued, “the fact that two individuals can view an image of the same fictional agent and only one individual—the one viewing [their] favorite character—engages in a social way with the target further affirms the importance of understanding individual cognition and construal in predicting social behavior” (Gardner and Knowles 166). This could also pose another argument as to why *Arrested Development* has nine main characters on the show, thus giving the opportunity that there could be a character for anyone to “like” or identify with.

In 2006, Mittell argued for the narrative complexity of numerous shows dating from the 1990s to 2006. Mittell also illustrated that shows like *Arrested Development* have become an experience in intellectual exercise (33). The audience watches the show not only “to get swept away in the realistic narrative world but also to watch the gears at work...[essentially, how will the producers do it?]” (Mittell 35). The primary weakness of the author’s argument was his claim that the audience identifies with the complexity of the episode itself rather than specific characters within the narrative.

In 2001, Cohen argued that we should look at the function of identification, because through its function we live vicariously through the experiences of media characters (246). Cohen illustrated that we can “try on alternative identities, or otherwise adopt the goals, feelings, or thoughts imagined to be those of the target of our identification” (Cohen 249). In other words, our role as an audience member shifts (while watching the show) and we replace our personal identity with the identity of the character we are watching. One can also claim that identification with media characters helps us to move from the position of spectator to “being inside” the text and interacting with the character, as if it was a real scenario unfolding.

In addition to audience identification, it is important to explore the influence of television on American culture. If we look at this phenomenon through the lens of the social construction of reality, we can see that “televized representations of social realities reflect ideological bents in their portrayal of human nature, social relations, and the norms and structure of society” (Bandura 2001, Adoni & Mane 1984; Gerbner, 1972).

As Lembo states, “dominant ideologies are the most fundamental of symbolic structures [in television] because they represent most directly the interests and world view of elites” (Lembo, 20). In addition, Adorno argues that

television is multi-layered; we can see this in *Arrested Development* when there are six or more plot lines going on at the same time with elements tied to American popular culture during each show. Therefore, he argues, “when we speak of the multilayered structure of television shows, we are thinking of various superimposed layers of different degrees of manifestness or hiddenness that are utilized by mass culture as a technological means of “handling the audience” (Lembo, 480). At one time we believed television was there to “string us along” into accepting dominant ideologies without our being aware of it. However, *Arrested Development* takes a unique stance by putting dominant ideologies on display to be laughed at. Lastly, as previously studied, the role of television can be used as a means to escape from our everyday lives, to be entertained away from our troubles (Lembo, 483). However, once again in *Arrested Development’s* case, the show places the troubles of American politics on display to be laughed at.

As the review of scholarship reveals, this study holds a unique position within the existing literature for a few reasons. First, it draws upon a variety of cultural, rhetorical, and media psychology methods by which to analyze the characters on *Arrested Development*, rather than strictly pulling from media psychology methods to analyze characters (Cohen, 259, Gardner & Knowles 166). Secondly, this paper looks at two characters from the same TV show rather than comparing characters from multiple TV shows and different time periods (Mittell, 33). Lastly, this paper contends that dominant ideologies are on display as a source of laughter rather than hidden or embedded into the show itself, as previous TV studies research has argued.

Methodology

As previously mentioned, this paper will incorporate a variety of rhetorical and cultural theories, concepts and sources. These concepts will provide a better understanding of how the elements of emotional appeal, logical appeal, persuasion, identification, use of words, and entertainment all work together to influence the audience into rooting for a particular character and laughing at dominant ideologies on display.

A rhetorical analysis will also help us to see the available means of persuasion when analyzing characters, and why we identify with them. In addition, Burke’s concept of identification will help us to recognize the shared characteristics, and view the terministic screens as part of American politics and culture in which these characters use the power of language to create a relationship with the audience and dominant ideology. In addition, the paper

will incorporate Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory to explain why characters "model" particular "positive stereotype behaviors" to enhance the persuasiveness and motivation of rooting for certain characters (1986, 2001b.). Lastly, by incorporating cultural studies frameworks from Adorno, Gerbner, and Hall this analysis will provide a unique contribution to the television studies field.

Analysis of *Arrested Development*

To begin a discussion of the site for this rhetorical analysis, we will look at two characters, George Bluth, Sr. and Lucille Bluth. The justification for only using two characters on *Arrested Development* is two-fold. First, the other characters' actions on the show are dictated by the actions of their father (George) or their mother (Lucille). Second, George and Lucille represent the "higher powers" or authority over the entire family; thus, an analysis of the two strongest characters of the show will provide an ample opportunity to study the representation of dominant ideologies, persuasive character rooting interest, and audience identification. In addition, through the dysfunction of the family the husband and wife characters embody everyday human relations and social cohesion that keeps the family together and the audience coming back each week to watch the newest episode. I will be using seasons one through four (2006-2013) of the show for this analysis.

Let's begin by looking at the father figure, George Bluth, Sr. He can be seen as the unlawful patriarch on the show. He can be seen as the "rule maker", entrepreneur, capitalist, and authority over his family. The show revolves around the rest of the characters trying to do something for him or cleaning up his mistakes. The motivation for why the other characters behave or act in certain ways is because of George's situation. George Bluth, Sr. has been in jail in one way or another for the entire duration of the show. *Arrested Development's* theme for George Bluth, Sr. involves his avoiding jail, going to jail, escaping jail, being under house arrest, and going back to jail. He is in jail for stealing exorbitant amounts of money and illegally building model homes in Iraq for Saddam Hussein. The show ironically highlights his easy and enjoyable stay in an Orange County prison in which his fellow prison inmates treat him with respect and hold him in high regard as an authority figure.

In order to understand why George Bluth, Sr. represents an authority figure both as a father and as a prisoner, it is important to look at the power dynamics his character embodies. Foucault explains how "power operates as a creative force—one that facilitates, produces, and increases qualities and conditions...in prison, for example, power generally produces individuals subjected to habits,

rules, order and authority; delinquency; [and] a high rate of recidivism” (Foss, Foss, & Trapp 354). If we look at the theme of power as outlined by Foucault and explicated by Foss, Foss and Trapp, we can see that George operates as the force that keeps the family together. During each family member’s visit with him in prison, George offers advice about where to find money hidden in his Bluth Company. He facilitates the operations and productions of his company from prison by giving his son, Michael Bluth, advice. Furthermore, his time in prison has helped him create habits, rules, and order in his life, so rather than George’s mind and body being the site for punishment for his crimes, his soul becomes the focus of reform.

Because George’s Orange County prison experience is a pleasant one, it allows him to find himself through a religious awakening. George turns to Judaism to help him cope with his time in prison. He considers himself “self-taught in Judaism” and tries to convert others in prison to follow his ways. However, being the true entrepreneur and capitalist that he is, he decides to use his learned “Caged Wisdom” in prison to make money by selling inspirational religious DVDs called “Caged Wisdom.” The DVDs are about his experiences converting to Judaism from a prison cage.

George eventually moves from prison to house arrest. While on house arrest and living in the attic, George turns to Christianity after reading a pamphlet he found in the trash. George uses Christianity as a means of living in peace in the attic. During his time in “lam” or (living in an attic), George makes yet another video. However, this video happens to feature old party decorations (stored inside the attic) that coincidentally make it look like he was filming the video in the Iraqi desert. Since he went to prison for illegally building model homes in Iraq for Saddam Hussein, the video makes it seem like George escaped house arrest and went to Iraq to hide. Therefore, the video (which went viral on the Internet) gives clearance to the CIA to invade Iraq to bring George Bluth, Sr. back to the U.S to face his punishment. Ironically, FOX News gets wind of the investigation and reports on the connection and evidence linking the Bluth Company as the Middle East developer for Saddam Hussein’s housing project. However, the CIA later finds out that George Bluth, Sr. actually did not flee to Iraq, but was living in the attic the entire time. The CIA made a mistake by invading Iraq to try to find George Bluth, Sr. If we go back and look at the historical context of the time, we remember being “on the hunt” for Saddam Hussein just a few years prior. In addition, we remember how FOX News and other networks reported day-in and day-out on the manhunt, while linking any evidence or connections to anyone who possibly knew Saddam Hussein.

Furthermore, drawing upon Burke's concept of terministic screens, we can see "that observations about 'reality' may be the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms" (Burke 4). *Arrested Development* uses the same choice of terminology as major media outlets like FOX News did when they reported on the manhunt for Saddam Hussein. *Arrested Development* uses terms like "hiding in the spider hole" when describing George living in the attic, and the other characters mention the phrases "we got him" and "he's captured" as joking statements when referring to their father's whereabouts in the house. The show also uses George's appearance as a means of poking fun at how the media portrayed Saddam Hussein. George grows his beard out while on house arrest and begins dressing in light linen because the attic does not have air conditioning. Consequently George resembles Saddam Hussein's "on the run" appearance more and more.

By using the terms, "we got him" and "he's captured," we can see how the government first used these particular choice terms when discussing the capturing of Saddam Hussein and announcing it to the media. In addition, the media also helped in framing or using ideographs (McGee) to socialize Americans into the dominant ideology that the "United States has freed Iraq" and "gave them democracy" (Fox News). We can see how *Arrested Development* uses the same terministic screens, or ideographs, from a comedic standpoint to show how the tragedy of a situation can be turned into a comedic situation depending on how the same terms are framed within the situation.

As McGee argues, "the ideology [or framing of a situation] can serve as a product of persuasion" (McGee 4). We can also look through Burke's comedic lens at the government hunting someone down, and invading a country in search of weapons of mass destruction because *Arrested Development* has helped reshape our attitude toward previous government affairs by making jokes about it. The comedic framing within *Arrested Development*, and in particular George's character, can help the audience internalize the idea that television can help transform once threatening situations (for the United States Government) into nonthreatening ones by persuading the audience to frame the emotional experience in a different way (Bandura 137). In other words, the act of George impersonating Saddam Hussein makes the idea of a person like Saddam Hussein a funny and enjoyable memory of the past rather than once a threat to our national security. By openly displaying dominant ideologies that include the invasion of another country as something "the United States succeed in," we can continue to justify the government's actions for spreading "democracy" years later with a laugh or two.

Now that we understand how George's character is used to represent dominant ideologies of the American Government, it is critical to look at why the audience would root for George to succeed. George allows us to try on different identities. Burke "defined identification as consubstantiality, a sharing of substance...identification can be used purposely by others as a means of social influence" (Cohen 259). George's character not only represents the "father figure role" that many audience members can identify with, he also represents male authority, privilege, and the superiority of capitalism. His time in prison is a time of privilege for him. The prison sentence allows him time to become a better person through self-reflection and new ways to organize the company. He also uses the time in prison to be a provider for his family by telling his son where the money is hidden. He can be an admired character for a variety of reasons; he is witty, funny, successful, wealthy, powerful, and, despite his dysfunctional relationships with his family members, he cares for them. He owns his own company, which brings in the money for the family, but he manipulates the family members into doing things that are in his best interest.

The audience identifies with and roots for George because he is clearly *not* a perfect dad or husband, but rather, someone who makes mistakes and has many flaws. George's character has a sense of humor that often turns bad situations into even worse ones. The audience identifies with George because he reminds us of how life can always be worse, so we should not dwell on what could happen but rather laugh about what is happening, whether it's good or bad. We root for George because he has been through so many hardships, yet he always has something to joke or smile about. George is the type of person you want as a friend, because when your day isn't going so well, he would be the first to remind you how bad it could really be. Moreover, he encourages us to laugh at capitalism, individualism, and circumventing the government to make money. The audience empathizes with George because of his concerns over his family and providing for them. Lastly, George Bluth, Sr. is seen as the operation behind the family. Without him, the family could not be dysfunctional, and thus could not survive without him because they need his humor to make light of any situation.

Now that we understand how the unlawful patriarch operates within the show, it is time to see how the matriarch operates. The last character we will discuss is the mother, Lucille Bluth. Lucille is the successful, proud alcoholic, racist, matriarch, and right-hand woman with George's operations. She is often blamed for the family's problems; nevertheless, she fakes having empathy for anyone in her family very well. Lucille often makes racist jokes to her

housecleaners. While speaking with her Latina housekeeper, Lucille tells her to “be careful with that fur coat, it costs more than your house...I’m kidding, you probably don’t even own a house.” Her children are often embarrassed by their mother’s failure to be politically correct despite living in Southern California. She can be heard belittling nonwhite waiters, and even her own adopted Asian son. The tension between her children and her racism is the source of laughter for the audience. We laugh at her lack of political correctness because she does not discriminate against one person or type of person. She consistently discriminates against her own family for being “gay” or “fat” or not being “man enough,” among other references. In other words, through her discrimination against everyone she actually discriminates against no one specific group.

Furthermore, Lucille represents what it means to be a capitalist and to want control of everything. During the fourth season, it is her idea to make money by helping the United States build a wall between “us” and the Mexican border. The reason for investing in the border wall is because the Bluth company owns part of the land rights on the border between the United States and Mexico; therefore, by allowing the United States to build on their part of the land, they can make money from the government.

However, the Bluth family comes to realize that the land they own is actually *in* Mexico and does not bring them money from building a wall that could “keep immigrants out.” Therefore, they believe the land and the wall is useless because there is no financial gain to be made for the Bluth Company. The joke within the “border investment” wall is the fact they are trying to keep Mexican citizens out of their own country (Mexico). The wall does not serve a purpose to keep anyone out. Since the wall is not very tall or wide, it is easy for anyone to simply climb or walk around it. In *Arrested Development*, the wall represents an inconvenience rather than a border to keep people out. We can see that when the audience decodes the messages about the United States and Mexican “border wall,” the audience takes a negotiated position. In the negotiated position, “the decoding with the negotiated version contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements, it acknowledges the legitimacy of hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations...it operates with exceptions to the rule” (Hall 511). *Arrested Development* serves to help the audience take a negotiated position by showing that while Lucille represents the capitalist viewpoint of immigration and the differences between “us” and “them,” the physical site of the wall represents an obstacle in people’s way rather than a means of keeping people out.

Now that we understand the dominant ideology behind *Arrested Development* and Lucille's character, it is time to look at why the audience would identify with her character in the first place. If we look at Lucille's character through Burke's lens of dramatic analyses, it is revealed that we, the audience, are persuaded into rooting for Lucille because she plays the victim role. Viewed from the perspective of victimhood, we can see that Lucille blames the world for her problems and everyone else around her because that is what her family has turned her into. Her family blames her for all of their problems, which in turn causes her to blame the world for the bad cards she has been dealt. Lucille cannot handle her family blaming her for everything that is wrong with them, so she drinks, behaves poorly toward other people, and blames other people for her misfortunes. She uses the universal victimhood role as a means to justify her behavior and gets away with it. The audience identifies with Lucille because she hasn't had an easy life, and all the misfortune throughout the course of the show cannot be all her fault. Although she isn't perfect in any sense of the word, she speaks her mind and doesn't apologize for who she is. Lastly, the audience roots for Lucille because she is a successful woman despite her flaws. She keeps her family together despite her husband being in and out of jail, while also maintaining material wealth and financial power.

Conclusion

This analysis showed the connection between television and American culture, and how television shows like *Arrested Development* help us to cope by laughing at the pitfalls of our political system. The surprise within the analysis was that the show makes it seem like even the writers and producers do not really understand American politics. The failure to remember details, use of the narrator of the show (Ron Howard) to generalize the United States' invasion of Iraq, and the erection of a wall between "us" and Mexico contributes to a comedic, less-than-threatening attitude regarding American politics.

In addition, *Arrested Development* is unique in the sense that it places power, capitalism, discrimination, and a class-based society on display as a commodity to be enjoyed and laughed at rather than hidden in the plot. The argument advanced in this paper that audience members negotiate dominant ideologies in media texts contradicts the notion, apparent in much of television studies scholarship, that dominant ideology is something hidden within the characters or storyline (Adorno 478).

As the analysis has demonstrated, *Arrested Development* provides a rich site to examine character identification in terms of why audiences are persuaded

into “liking” or “rooting” for particular characters to succeed. We identify with characters so we can “form our *selves* through various properties or substances, which include such things as...friends, activities, beliefs, and values” (Foss, Foss, & Trapp 191). Through a rhetorical and cultural critique, we are better able to understand audiences’ motivation, identification, and traits embodied by characters that to help persuade audiences to root for them. As a result, we enhance our understanding of the ritual of television, dominant ideologies on display, and why we invite television characters into our home each week to build an on-screen relationship with them.

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From Charioteer Myth to Shoulder Angel: A Rhetorical Look at Our Divided Soul

Robert E. G. Black

Abstract

This paper connects the charioteer myth from Plato's Phaedrus to the modern trope of the shoulder angel and shoulder devil. By first exploring the meaning behind Plato's rhetorical use of the divided soul, and then comparing that to other uses—using the Katha Upanishad, the Bhagavad Gita, the Book of Ezekiel, Cherokee legend, Tarot cards, Freudian psychology, and modern sitcoms—this paper answers the question: Why do we keep reinventing the chariot? That is to say, why do we keep finding new rhetorical ways to represent the struggle within ourselves? We keep coming back to Plato without realizing that we are still trying to represent the same decision-making process that Plato outlined more than two millennia ago. This paper argues ultimately that the recurrence of the divided soul in our rhetoric may just be a way of policing our moral choices, subjecting ourselves to Foucauldian binary branding and our own personal panopticon.

In the *Simpsons* episode "The Frying Game" (Swartzwelder & Polcino, 2002), Homer accidentally kills the endangered screamapillar living in his backyard, and out of thin air pops a small devil on one shoulder, a small angel on the other. They try to influence his choice, for bad (to hide the body) and for good (not), respectively. In the episode "We're on the Road to D'ohwhere" (Curran & Kruse, 2006), Homer instead has "Strict Homer" who looks like a futuristic police officer, and "Fun Homer," who looks more like a clown. Still, these are smaller versions of Homer, not just abstract representations of angels and devils and police officers and clowns. Each one, rather, is a miniature simulacrum of the character in question, aspects of self that serve to direct our actions within moralistic bounds.

The shoulder angel and shoulder devil are not exclusive visuals to *The Simpsons*. In the Looney Toons short, "Daffy Duck Hunt" (Selzer & McKimson, 1949), for example, Barnyard Dawg must weigh whether or not to free Daffy

Duck from his master's freezer, and his shoulder devil and shoulder angel come into play. In "Scaredy Cat" (Selzer & Jones, 1948), Sylvester the cat has only an angel version of himself show up, reminding him of how Porky Pig feeds him and mice are smaller than he is so he should go save his master from the murderous mice. Nor is this an exclusive visual to animation; live action television shows have used the shoulder angel and shoulder devil for a quick laugh as well. For example, *Married with Children* gave Kelly Bundy's boyfriend Vinnie his own version of this modern Freudian trio in the episode "Oldies But Young 'Uns" (Leavitt et al, 1991). However, both his angel and his devil tell him to go for it. The sitcom *Herman's Head* (Babcock et al, 1991-1994) complicated this further, giving the protagonist Herman Brooks not simply an angel and a devil but four separate aspects of his psyche that viewers got to see compete for control over Herman's actions. In the opening sequence, they introduce themselves:

Genius: I'm Herman's intellect. Without me, he couldn't hold his job, pay his rent or ties his shoes.

Angel: I'm Herman's sensitivity. Without me, he wouldn't feel tenderness, honesty or love—the good things in life.

Wimp: I'm Herman's anxiety and I keep him out of trouble. And, believe me, there's trouble everywhere.

Animal: I'm Herman's lust. Without me, he'd miss out on all the good stuff—you know, fun, food, babes.

Narrator: Sometimes they agree. Usually they don't. But this struggle is going on inside all of us. (Guerdat et al, 1991)

The Simpsons, Looney Toons, Married with Children, Herman's Head—these shows and others offer us a modern incarnation of the same dispute within the human soul that we see in the charioteer myth from Plato's *Phaedrus*. This "psychological theater" involves "ideas and affects acting out a drama of universal significance in the mind" (Milowicki & Wilson, 1995, p. 225).

We can relate to Plato's metaphor because we experience every day the struggle it depicts (though perhaps not on such a divine or literal level). The idea of the divided soul, however, is not unique to Plato; while the description in *Phaedrus* may be an exquisite bit of imagery, it is not original, nor has it remained exclusively with Plato. It is important that we continue to study Plato's use of the divided soul and also to explore the divided soul as rhetorical symbol outside of Plato because a) we keep coming back to it in one form or another, and b) it *does* represent a process universal to us all. Reeve (1988) calls Plato's

divided soul a “theory of the psyche” that is “among the greatest philosophies of mind, and one from which we can still learn” (quoted in Miller, 2005, p. 169). The following essay will first explore Plato’s rhetorical use of the divided soul, then provide examples of other rhetorical approaches to the same before finally answering the question: Why do we keep reinventing the chariot? That is to say, why do we keep finding new rhetorical ways to represent the struggle within ourselves?

Plato’s Charioteer

Let us take a look at Plato’s charioteer myth from *Phaedrus*, so it can serve as a baseline by which to measure other rhetorical representations of the divided soul. We cannot simply approach Plato directly, so let us also look at what scholars have said about Plato’s charioteer myth. In *Phaedrus*, Plato presents the soul as a concrete, understandable metaphor. He presents a composite figure, “a pair of winged horses and a charioteer” (Plato, 2009, p. 202). Frede (1978) suggests that Plato “treats the soul as substance” (p. 33). That is, for Plato the soul is necessarily understood as a real, substantial thing, even if we may want to understand this composite figure as a hypothetical construct. Plato’s concern in *Phaedrus* is to explain a philosophical Truth, with a capital T, about the human soul. It does not matter how literally we understand the charioteer myth (or any of the other rhetorical uses of the divided soul explored below) because the implications end up the same; this psychic division reveals a process common to us all.

Plato describes the chariot and its horses in detail:

Of the nature of the soul, though her true form be ever a theme of large and more than mortal discourse, let me speak briefly, and in a figure. And let the figure be composite—a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the winged horses and the charioteers of the gods are all of them noble and of noble descent, but those of other races are mixed; the human charioteer drives his in a pair; and one of them is noble and of noble breed, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble breed; and the driving of them of necessity gives a great deal of trouble to him. (Plato, 2009, p. 202)

The journey of a god’s soul is smooth, pulled by two horses of “noble descent,” but for man, his soul chariot is pulled by a black horse “of ignoble breed” and a white horse “of noble breed.” This provides a clear and simple metaphor. Man’s *soul* is divided; he struggles every day with his decisions. The black horse represents our baser appetites. As Endres (2012) tells us, “The black horse

represents *epithumia*, which includes selfishness and sexual gratification” (p. 154). The black horse pulls naturally toward the material world below. The white horse represents our noble urges, our “good conduct” (Endres, 2012, p. 154). The white horse pulls naturally upward toward the divine. Plato returns to his description of the horses with more detail:

The right-hand horse is upright and cleanly made; he has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose; his colour is white, and his eyes dark; he is a lover of honour and modesty and temperance, and the follower of true glory; he needs no touch of the whip, but is guided by word and admonition only. The other is a crooked lumbering animal, put together anyhow; he has a short thick neck; he is flat-faced and of a dark colour, with grey eyes and blood-red complexion; the mate of insolence and pride, shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur. (Plato, 2009, p. 206)

Buccioni (2002) tells us that the white horse is “never headstrong. It neither craves power nor victory, but follows obediently. It is a stable force by its very nature” (p. 343). In presenting this stable and cooperative horse, needing “no touch of the whip,” Plato is suggesting that our souls are naturally inclined toward the Good. Schiltz (2006) agrees, suggesting that the chariot’s wings indicate a “unity toward a common, ‘natural’ goal” for the entire trio, “as the natural function of a wing” is to fly (p. 456).

Still, the charioteer must rein in both horses, “produc[ing] in the soul an equilibrium between the opposing tendencies of restraint, represented by the white horse, and bold movement, represented by the black horse” (Belfiore, 2006, p. 187). However, Restraint and boldness are not necessarily *good* and *bad* traits, respectively. Both are useful, which Uebersax (2007) tells us is key to understanding how Plato’s triumvirate does not correlate properly to the Freudian trio of *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. Uebersax (2007) does say, “Plato’s model naturally invites [the] comparison” to Freud, however. The black horse and Freud’s *id* are “the most closely corresponding parts” according to Uebersax, “correspond[ing] to appetites, concupiscence, and bodily desires and lusts. In Platonic psychology, this part of the soul is called the *epithumetikon*.”

The question arises: is the charioteer a separate construct within the soul, or our consciousness weighing a binary division of good and bad? Endres (2012) tells us that “the charioteer embodies reason and the love of wisdom” (p. 154). This embodiment implies a third part of the soul, not the decision maker but another piece of the tripartite soul. However, Endres continues: “The black and white horses are waging a continual war.” This would imply that the charioteer

is a separate entity, controlling as he may the two horses. Uebersax (2007) tells us that the charioteer is *logistikon*, “associated with Reason and the reasoning element of the mind,” and he “corresponds to the Freudian *ego* [though] Plato’s charioteer has a more definite goal and destiny: to direct the chariot to the heights of heaven and beyond, there to behold ‘divine sights.’” Uebersax (2007) makes a distinction between the charioteer and Freud’s *ego*, then, in that the *ego* exists “specifically to broker disputes between the *id* and *superego*,” there is no notion of an external goal in Freud’s model. Additionally, Plato never suggests that one would be better off without the black horse. While there is a clear goal and the charioteer is in charge, “he would be powerless without the strength of [both] desires/horses” (Schiltz, 2006, p. 457). The white horse only “roughly corresponds to the Freudian *super-ego*” (Uebersax, 2007, emphasis in original). This horse represents *thumos*, and Uebersax says, “Modern man has no concept of *thumos*.” He cites lines from Hamlet to demonstrate *thumos*:

Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them.

“That second option,” Uebersax says, “opposing the sea of troubles to end them, the heroic response—that’s *thumos*.” Miller (2005) suggests the white horse represents *aspiration*. This is certainly a far less negative meaning than Belfiore’s (2006) *restraint*.

Plato’s rhetorical notion of the tripartite soul “has had a long after-life” (Miller, 2005, p. 1). Nonetheless, the study keeps returning to Plato instead of moving forward (or backward), as if Plato created the concept rather than just described it. Miller (2005), citing *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, published in 1905, and *The Ego and the Id*, published in 1923, explains further: While Aristotle quarreled with the precise notion of “parts,” he nonetheless developed a psychological theory according to which the soul had three. Augustine adopted Plato’s soul for the most part, adapting it to Pauline Christianity, and thus substituting one part for another: Will (*voluntas*) for Aspiration (τὸ θυμοειδές). Aquinas later assumed Augustine’s scheme, but returned psychology to the Aristotelian idiom. In the modern period, the tripartite soul seemed for a long time to disappear; that is, until Freud, who referred to “the Divine Plato,” revived it in his so-called structural theory. Although psychoanalysts have since qualified this structural theory in many ways, most of them accept its tripartite cast all the same. There is therefore an

embattled but nonetheless vigorous tradition of tripartite psychology—practical as well as theoretical—whose distant ancestor is Plato’s *Republic*. (p. 1)

The Charioteer Around the World

This notion of the divided soul did not originate with Plato. Wilhelm (1982) tells us that “the image of the chariot and its mastery by the charioteer had long been used for describing the qualities and skills associated with a leader” and “the inability to control the chariot had long been a metaphor for the lack of rational control over the emotions” (p. 217). Uebersax (2007) tells us that “the myth... was ancient even for [Plato], perhaps coming from Egypt or Mesopotamia.” Slaveva-Griffin (2003) compares Plato’s charioteer to that in Parmenides’ *Proem*, which uses the charioteer’s journey as that of a “young philosopher beyond sense-perceptible reality to the realm of eternal existence” (p. 227). Slaveva-Griffin (2003) also references

the chariot-rides of gods and men in the *Iliad*, the personal quest of Telemachus searching for his long-missing father and for social approval to restore the wealth of Odysseus’ household, the aggressive impetus of passionate love depicted in Sappho’s image of golden Aphrodite ruling the hearts of mortals while flying on winged chariots across the heavens, [and] Pindar’s chariot of the Muses celebrating Epharistos’ Olympic victory. (p. 231).

Schiltz (2006) makes extensive comparison between Plato’s chariot myth and that in the Hindu *Katha Upanishad*, as does Uebersax (2007). In the *Katha Upanishad*, we are told, “Know the Self to be the master of the chariot, and the body to be the chariot. Know the intellect to be the charioteer, and the mind to be the reins” (quoted in Uebersax, 2007). Additionally, Uebersax makes comparison to Prince Arjuna’s chariot ride in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the vision of God in the Book of *Ezekiel* (which Uebersax specifically notes as being written “roughly 200 years before Plato’s *Phaedrus*”). In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna is joined in his chariot by Krishna. As Bowen (2012) describes it,

This is where many believe the allegory and metaphor of the *Bhagavad Gita* come into play. Lord Krishna presents himself as a non-combatant. Although he is on Arjuna’s side (and has not yet revealed himself as God), he cannot fight on Arjuna’s behalf. Arjuna, like all of us, must face this life and its challenges on our [sic] own... That isn’t to say that the divine is not with us. Lord Krishna shows us here that God is always there to support and guide us even through the most perilous episodes of our lives, but we cannot expect

him to do for us what we ourselves are meant for. Arjuna, then, represents all of us as we struggle with who we are, what we are meant for—our purpose. Lord Krishna represents the voice of insight, inspiration, divine guidance, our highest self or conscience.

Arjuna, upon discovering the identity of his companion, falls to Krishna's feet on the battlefield to beg for guidance. Bowen (2012) tells us, "no matter what is happening around you, it is never folly to bring yourself to supplication and prayer/meditation/contemplation." This is much like the charioteer, who might attain "any vision of truth in company with a god" (Plato, 2009, p. 203); the mortal is ever seeking the divine, seeking the Good. What matters most is that this seeking is conscious as much as unconscious.

In Tarot cards, "The Chariot represents conquest, victory and overcoming opposition through your confidence and control," and the charioteer here "holds no reins... He controls through strength of will" (Esselmont, 2003). Waite (1911), who helped design one of the most common versions of this card, tells us that The Chariot is "conquest on all planes—in the mind, in science, in progress, in certain trials of initiation... He is above all things triumph in the mind." The card can also mean you need to "come to terms with your own aggressive impulses" (Esselmont, 2013).

These are the same impulses represented by Plato's two horses. The vehicle in *Ezekiel*, like the Thoth Tarot's version of the Chariot, is pulled by "four living creatures." As the Tarot card of The Chariot often depicts a chariot pulled by two horses or sphinxes, the Thoth version of the Tarot has four creatures, representing the four elements. Uebersax (2007) describes the four creatures of *Ezekiel*, "each with four faces: human, lion, bull, and eagle. Each figure was also associated with wings, as well as 'wheels within wheels', conveying the idea of movement." He cites Saint Jerome's *Commentary on Ezekiel* in suggesting that

the human face corresponds to the Platonic *logistikon*, the soul's reasoning faculty (i.e., the *Phaedrus*' charioteer); the lion to Plato's *thumos* element (white horse); and the bull to concupiscence, *epithumia* (dark horse)... The eagle, however, has no obvious counterpart in Plato's psychology or chariot analogy. [Saint] Jerome, picking an eagle's keen vision as the defining attribute, saw it as representing a transcendent part of the psyche, something that hovers above the others, able to scrutinize and discern things. (Uebersax, 2007)

Saint Jerome links this "transcendent part" of the story to the guidance of Christ, or Krishna riding with Prince Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is worth

noting that the creatures in *Ezekiel* and on the Thoth Tarot's version of The Chariot nearly correspond to *Herman's Head's* chorus—the reasoning human to Genius, the concupiscent bull to Animal, and the transcendent eagle to Angel; the heroic lion, though, does *not* correspond to Herman's Wimp aspect.

Stepping away from chariots, this binary of influences can be seen in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil versus the Tree of life in the Biblical Garden of Eden, or the presence of a personal guardian angel in popular Christianity or the similar qareen in Islam. However, the same division exists outside Western cultures. For example, Dorian (2009) makes the link between Plato's chariot myth and a Native American myth:

One evening, an elderly Cherokee brave told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "my son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one that you feed." (Tale of Two Wolves, 2011).

The first wolf is ignoble, like the black horse, the second good like the white horse. This much is obvious. The ideas are similar even though they come from separate cultural traditions. The key distinction comes in the end. While feeding the wolf is figurative, it is notable that the *Phaedrus* charioteer, while "putting up his horses at the stall, gives them [both] ambrosia to eat and nectar to drink" (Plato, 2009, p. 203). Plato's charioteer feeds both of his horses. He does not favor one over the other. To lift up the "heavy burden" of the chariot, "both [sets of] wings must have the same force" (Endres, 2012, p. 157). Both of the horses are useful because it takes both horses to power the charioteer's journey.

The Binary Division of Good and Evil

But why are there two? On the one hand, Foucault might suggest that this is just binary branding, but such branding involves authority "exercising individual control" (Foucault, 1979, p. 199). Foucault is talking about standards put upon us by outside forces, primarily. However, I argue, the same binary division can exist *within* us, put upon ourselves to make sense of the world. The kinds of rules that come from Foucault's "discursive formation" determine what we say and what we do. Foucault (1979) describes "a double mode; that of binary

division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized show a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way" (p. 199). Imagine now that we might coerce ourselves into believing that the things we do are normal or abnormal, dangerous or harmless, good or bad. The question then becomes, why would we use a binary division to weigh our actions and survey ourselves?

As described above, the divided soul *can* be depicted in many ways, and not always in pairs. Much like the vehicle in *Ezekiel* or the Thoth Tarot or *Herman's Head*, this internal battle can involve more than just a duo or trio of players. Milowicki and Wilson (1995) suggest Prudentius' *Psychomachia* as a template for this "allegorical vision of struggle within the human soul" (p. 225). In *Psychomachia*, the struggle is "between such virtues as Faith, Patience, and Good Works and such vices as Pride, Deceit, and Heresy" (Milowicki & Wilson, 1995, p. 225). Much like *Herman's Head* (1991-1994), we get more than just good and bad influence. For Herman, his influences are his lusts personified in the overweight Animal; his sensitivities by Angel, the only female; his anxieties by nerdy Wimp; and his intellect by prim and proper Genius. Arguably, Herman's chorus is closer to Plato's triumvirate than Prudentius' collection. Genius often plays the part of the mediator between the other three, like the charioteer driving his horses.

So, why is the binary pairing of good and bad the more common rhetorical representation of our inner struggle? I offer that it could be our internalization of outside control. If we are told by our myths that choosing the good leads to reward and choosing the bad leads to punishment, then we will operate as if these ideas are Truth. And, there are two options because that is a reasonable demarcation, easily understood, easily believed and easily taught to others. Foucault (1979) tells us,

It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished—and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives. This is the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is

born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. (p. 29)

Foucault is in the process of exploring punishment as he writes this, but the idea that the soul—especially, Plato’s tripartite version of it—is created in our homes and in our schools as we are taught right from wrong is compelling. We can then understand the soul as a construct, and we take part in its construction just as the authorities around us do. If we combine Foucault’s take on the soul with Plato’s version in *Phaedrus*, we can come to an interesting understanding of why we may believe in a simplistic binary of good and bad rather than a more nuanced spectrum of possibilities. For Foucault (1979), the soul inhabits each of us and “brings [us] into existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body” (p. 30). That is to say, if we *do* operate as if our soul is a division between the good influence and the bad influence pulling us toward the heavens or toward the ground, then we accept *forward*. Taken literally, Plato’s charioteer drives forward; sure, there is up or down, but there is no right or left, there is no turning backward. There is but one choice: white or black, good or bad. The charioteer may feed both of his horses, but ultimately, if he wants to reach the Beauty and Truth he has glimpsed in the heavens, he must choose the white horse just as the Cherokee grandson must feed the good wolf, just as Herman Brooks must choose Angel over Animal, just as Homer Simpson must choose his shoulder angel over his shoulder devil.

On a rhetorical level, we must keep coming back to this representation because it is the easiest way for us to reify our sense of the world. The good/bad binary, however it is represented, delineates our actions into categories of what is acceptable or unacceptable, and this positions us within or without the society around us. McGee (1980) writes, “Human beings are ‘conditioned,’ not directly to belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief” (p. 6). In the construction of our soul, then, we are limited by the terms we are given; the binary division provides simple, memorable terms. Dorian (2009) calls this is “a fair assessment of human nature.” He writes, “Humanity, it seems, has a ‘good side’ and a ‘bad side.’ And it is up to our own rationality to keep them both (namely the bad side/dark horse) in check.” Plato, writing *Gorgias*, might agree, as he argues that “in fact there’s nothing worse than doing wrong” (Plato, 2008, 469b). Whether we agree with Plato or not, we choose to do right. Or, so we want to assume; we prefer the idea that we

choose what we do, and invariably we choose what is *good*, for *us* if not for the world.

It is possible that all of this—the charioteer, the shoulder angel, the two wolves—is just our own internal panopticon keeping us in line because we want to believe there will be some measure put to our choices in the future. Foucault (1979) suggests that we—he refers to “the inmate” but the effect is the same—“must never know whether [we are] being looked at at any moment; but [we] must be sure that [we] may always be so” (p. 201). The only reason to ever choose between the good horse and the bad horse, the good wolf and the bad wolf, the shoulder angel and the shoulder devil is that we believe in the existence of moral rightness. This belief presumes that our actions will be weighed by, if not a God or gods, then by the society around us. The good/bad binary keeps us in line because we believe one option is the correct one. Foucault’s (1979) “guarantee of order” comes from the “invisibility” inherent in narrowing down the panoply of real choices we have to an obvious, and omnipresent, two.

On a personal level, we need our choices to be good or bad, because then anything that isn’t strictly *bad* must be good, and anything that someone else might do that we don’t consider strictly *good* must be bad. This provides us the agency—or at least the illusion of it—to decide who is good and who is bad. Recall the quotation from the *Katha Upanishad* above: “Know the Self to be the master of the chariot, and the body to be the chariot. Know the intellect to be the charioteer, and the mind to be the reins.” As long as we can believe that we are the masters of our own chariots and that we have the intellect to choose between the good and the bad options, we will feel a sense of control over our lives and not that we are simply responding to the possibility that we are being watched. And, as long as we can keep representing this binary in our stories, we can assume the idea to be universal and timeless and, thus, correct.

In conclusion, the shoulder angel and shoulder devil, like the ones we see in *The Simpsons*, are an even clearer take on the divided soul. This version of the divided soul is simplistic, and deliberately so; it is specifically aimed at an audience that includes children. Gerbner et al (1986) argue that “Television cultivates from infancy the very predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other ‘primary’ sources” (p. 18). Television—cartoons especially—provide us with the same moral lessons, presented as entertainment, that old mythologies once did. Gerbner et al continue: “The illumination of the invisible relationship of life and society has always been the principal function of story telling. Television today serves that function” (p. 18).

Television reinforces the binary division of good and evil. But, not every moral decision we make can be boiled down to the good option or the bad option. Reality has far more nuance than we find in cartoons. Williams (2009) tells us that “the true nature of the soul is beyond ‘mortal discourse,’ and he is reduced to relying on a poetic allegory” (p. 192). This allegory puts into simple terms a complicated idea. One of the virtues of Plato’s version is that it is simple to understand but still “gives us a tangible framework for considering a complex idea and to reflect on it” (Uebersax, 2007).

Ultimately, it does not matter how literally we take the details of the chariot myth, whichever version. Plato did not even use it consistently; his *Phaedo* “assumes that the soul is simple, or non-composite” (Miller, 2005, p. 3). Figuratively, the vision of the soul chariot, the wolves battling within us, the “chorus” of *Herman’s Head*, as well as the shoulder angel and shoulder devil of Homer Simpson et al, each represent a way to measure the conflict we face when making moral and ethical decisions. These myths show us “direction towards *greater immediacy of experience*, inner and outer; greater clarity of mind; greater connection to reality; the ‘pure experience’ of the here and now” (Uebersax, 2007, emphasis in original). In other words, each of these myths can simply be taken as representing a psychological process universal to us all. And, we make them our own. As Mary Renault’s protagonist realizes upon reading *Phaedrus* in her novel, *The Charioteer*:

In his imagination the pages were printed not with their own paragraphs only, but with all that he himself had brought to them: it seemed as though he must be identified and revealed in them, beyond all pretense of detachment, as if they were a diary to which he had committed every secret of his heart. (quoted in Endres, 2012, p. 154)

Ultimately, we all have some knowledge of what is good and what is bad. Regardless of how that knowledge has been constructed within us, we must weigh all of our options before deciding how to act. We must decide which horse to urge on, which wolf to feed, whether we listen to the angel on one shoulder or the devil on the other. In the end, these binaries don’t matter, though; what matters is the decision that we make.

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An Ode to Objects: Using Kenneth Burke's Identification Theory and Pentad to Heal from Loss

Rachel Blumenberg

Abstract

In this qualitative study, Kenneth Burke's dramatisic pentad, identification theory, and guilt-redemption cycle were used to analyze a loss situation, specifically the loss of objects from theft. The study discusses the relationship between objects and identity, and highlights the intricacies of collecting in regards to categories of collecting, the identity of the collector, and how identity is affected by the loss of a collection.

Objet... Anything which is the cause or subject of a passion. Figuratively, and most typically: the loved object.

—Jean Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting"

Objects have always been a huge part of my life. As a child, I was surrounded by the African, Pre-Colombian, Native American, and WWI and WWII artifacts that my father collected (and continues to collect). My mother, a collector of objects as well, taught me that just because something is utilitarian does not mean it shouldn't be beautiful. Everything in my mother's home was judged based on that philosophy. Over the years I became a collector of various objects of my own liking, and the inheritor of things from aunts, uncles, and grandparents...the having of objects has always been a part of my life's narrative. So, two years ago, when my dad became ill with cancer, and subsequently needed an unrelated heart valve replacement, leading to my moving back home to help take care of him, I had to figure out what I was going to do with all of my things .

I got rid of as much as I could by having several yard sales, and giving certain items away as donations and to friends. What I was left with were the items that were most valuable and meaningful to me, and to my family history. I put

that stuff in storage. Therein lies the incident that is of analytical interest to me. Specifically, it concerns the assertion by Kenneth Burke that we identify ourselves through physical, mental, and emotional relationships. These relationships that identify us are with people, places, ideologies, values, and even objects of which we share common “substance” (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 192).

A year later, when my dad recovered from surgery and was doing a bit better, I was able to move out and get an apartment. I pulled some things out of storage in order to set up my new home, although a large majority still remained. Nearly a year into living in my “new” apartment, I went to my storage facility to put a few things away. I tried to open my unit, but was frustrated that my key wasn’t working. I tried and tried, but was not able to unlock my unit. I realized that the lock on my unit was not the lock I had put on originally. I went to the main office of the facility and had management cut the lock off. My storage unit had been totally ransacked. I could tell that many of the boxes that had been there had been stolen, and the remaining boxes had been opened up and gone through. My things were strewn everywhere, and I felt totally violated. The items that had identified me were gone or in shambles.

Since this incident I have been posing to myself, and others through conversations about the incident, several questions: Why would someone do something like this to another person? Why did someone steal MY things? What is my part in this; what do I have to learn? How can I continue to identify myself in the same way now that many of the items that I used to create my identity are gone? I have decided to use this research opportunity as a tool to help me attempt to answer some of these questions for myself, and potentially, for other people struggling with the same loss of identity.

The purpose of my paper is to answer the question: how is the process by which we become identified with or attached to material objects a rhetorical process? In this paper, I will argue that rhetorical analysis can help in coming to terms with loss, and can bring a sense of understanding and closure to a loss situation. This research is important to me because I have been struggling for months to come to terms with this loss, and all that it has cost me mentally, emotionally, socially, and financially.

In order to work toward answering these questions, I will focus my theoretical framework on Kenneth Burke’s dramatisic pentad and theory of identification. For Burke, identification is the fundamental way that human beings use particular language, or “terministic screens,” to create connections with others, either in relationship to what we have in common or what we do

not have in common (Quigley). As I discussed earlier, identification plays a large role due to the importance of objects in shaping my identity. Dealing with the loss of the objects, the stuff, is in many ways dealing with the loss of a part of my identity. Within the context of identification, I will discuss the types of items that were stolen, and why those items were so significant. I will also investigate the theory of identification from a hierarchical perspective, as well as through an investigation of the negative. Burke asserts that we don't only identify ourselves based on what we are connected to, but also what we separate ourselves from (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 192). Burke's conceptualization of the guilt-redemption cycle will serve as a final analytical tool.

In using Burke's pentad, I hope to gain some insight into the various aspects of the incident and how those aspects are related to one another. In beginning this project, I anticipated that pentadic analysis would be very challenging on many levels, but in reality it was much more difficult than I had expected. I had not anticipated the level of understanding of my own emotional response, and the intricacies of the event in relation to how the various aspects of the pentad came together to form ratios.

In regard to people identifying themselves in relationship to material objects and the relationships to those objects, there is much literature to pull from, both within the communication studies field, and around it. Because the topic of this rhetorical analysis is theft, I was interested to gain some insight into rhetorical perspectives on that particular subject. First, I began with an investigation into the topic of theft in classical texts.

David Whitehead's article *Theft in Greek Oratory* gives an in depth explanation of Anaximenes' ideas of theft, or "klope," what constitutes theft, and how thieves were to have been dealt with in ancient Greek society. Whitehead also discusses instances of the verb "kleptein," which according to the author is representative of deception in ancient Greek texts. He highlights the handbook *Techne Rhetorike*, in which Anaximenes writes, "for just as the lawyer punished thieves with the severest penalties, so deceivers, too must be penalized severely; for these men are stealing our understanding" (70).

As discussed earlier, objects have always been for me a way of identifying myself, as well as an entry point to the creation and maintenance of a relationship with my father. In thinking about how the objects stolen were mostly part of collections I had amassed over time, I was interested in seeking out voices that discussed the topic of collecting and its significance. Walter Benjamin's lovely essay *Unpacking my Library* does just that. Written after a messy divorce, and subsequent relocation, Benjamin's essay highlights the

power of collecting, and how the process of unpacking a collection can be both empowering and hectic (Lewandowski). Benjamin writes, “This or any other procedure is merely a dam against the springtide of memories which surges toward any collector as he contemplates his possessions. Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector’s passion borders on the chaos of memories” (60). Within the context of this project, I connected with the idea of “the chaos of memories,” especially in thinking about Burke’s theory of Identification, because of the inescapably strong associations that both Benjamin and I shared with our respective collections.

In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke asserts that the pentad is a “universal heuristic” or a strategy for intuitive judgment that allows us to understand the “rhetoric of human motives” (Rountree). Rountree further explains that when we can analyze an action using the pentad, we are more able to engage in “viewing, talking about, and treating others as humans engaged in an action rather than as bodies in mere motion” (1). Using the pentad connects us to the intention of an action, a tool germane to my study in that it allows me to uncover thoughts and feelings about the incident that I wasn’t initially able to uncover.

Burke’s theory of identification and pentad will serve as the main rhetorical framework and analytical device, respectively, for this project. The main works by Burke that I investigated were *Permanence and Change*, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, and *A Grammar of Motives*. In these major works, Burke lays out the fundamentals of his identification theory, and concepts that are of specific interest to me, his ideas of consubstantiality and identification and property. In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke discusses consubstantiality as a shared existence with another, but he goes further by saying that in order to be consubstantial with one, we must be divided from another (22). In connection with consubstantiality, Burke refers to the “onus of ownership” (23) in that, in owning something, just as all other consubstantial relationships, there is a give and take of substance. Burke also discusses how one’s identification by material property can lead to “turmoil and discord” (25) because of the very nature of material possessions. Having one thing, being consubstantial with it, by definition means that you don’t have something else (25). Benjamin might say, and I would agree, that this Burkean concept is the source from where the true chaos of collecting stems.

Rountree’s article “Coming to Terms with Kenneth Burke’s Pentad” gave me more of an understanding of how to utilize the pentad as a strong analytical device. Rountree broke down the respective parts of the pentad—act, agent,

scene, agency, and purpose—and how they work together, as well as pointing out that the pentad is originally an Aristotelian construct. The article clarifies that, at its core, the pentad is a “terministic screen” by which we all interpret reality. In describing the analytical value of the pentad, Foss, Foss, and Trapp, write that “Motives and language are so closely associated that an analysis of a rhetorical artifact can point out a rhetor’s underlying motives” (200). Those motives are fundamentally why I am interested in using the pentad as a rhetorical tool of analysis.

Pentadic Analysis

In considering my usage of the pentad as an analytical tool, it quickly became clear to me that I would not be able to stick to a normative format when associating my site with the various aspects of it. To clarify, there is certain information associated with the pentad that I simply don’t have. I do not know who the agent is, for example, in that I don’t know who the thief was. The agency is a mystery as well; I only have an assumption of how the act was carried out. The interesting thing about the pentad as an analytical device is that it can be manipulated in many ways in order to come to varying analytical conclusions.

Act (*what happened*)- Instead of focusing on the act as the theft itself, I chose to focus on the act as my response to the theft. Unfortunately, I have had things stolen before. As a child. My father’s house was broken into on several occasions, and I can remember him being devastated by the robberies. During my first out-of-country excursion to Israel, at the age of 17, I had my money and passport stolen from a beach in Eilat, an ocean town on the Jordanian border. That theft left me more frustrated and annoyed than anything else, first at my own stupidity for walking away from my backpack, and second, that I had to spend the last three days of my trip at the U.S. Embassy getting a new passport so I could go home.

How I reacted to this theft, on the other hand, was somewhat out of character. First, I spent several days ignoring that it had happened at all, refusing to talk about it. I shut down, and for close to a month, slid into what I can only explain as a depression. I did not want to, refused to, deal with the situation. This inability and unwillingness to communicate to anyone about the intense feelings of loss and devastation are what I referred to as out of character. For me, this total shutdown is the act.

Scene (*where it happened*)- The scene of the action is significant on two specific levels; first, in terms of the facility, and second, the scene of the unit

itself. As I indicated earlier, the circumstances that lead to me making the decision to place my stuff in storage were rather difficult. When I sought out a facility in which to store my things, I was looking for specific criteria. The facility had to be close to where I was to be living (with my parents), it had to be secure, and it had to be clean. Upon finding a location that met the first criteria, I went into the main office of the facility, and the first thing I saw were two enormous flat screen televisions that were streaming video of all manner of security camera angles. Looking outside of the office, I noticed the key-pad guarded metal gate that separated the office of the facility from the units themselves. The management representative and I discussed the security of the facility, that a security code was mandatory for entrance and exit of the facility. At the end of the conversation with the management representative, I had secured the unit that I would be renting, purchased a package of two locks, and left the facility with an expectation that my stuff would be safe and secure, and it was for over a year.

That sense of security in relationship to my stuff being at the storage facility became part and parcel of the way I identified myself. My terministic screen was that of having provided security and sanctuary for my items. That is, until the day I realized that the break-in happened. That leads me to the second part of the significance of the scene, seeing my items after the break-in.

Agent (who did it)- In this pentadic analysis, I am the agent because I am the one performing the act.

Agency (how it was done)- Burke asserts that in thinking about the agency, I should ask myself, how did I deal with and come to terms with the theft? As much as I hate to admit it, and as much as it sounds like an overreaction looking at it in hindsight, I spent the first several weeks dealing with the theft by drinking many a glass of wine. At least temporarily, alcohol allowed me to remain in my self-imposed mode of ignorance. It kept me able to avoid this new loss of identity. There came a point, just outside of a month since the theft had taken place, that I began to come to terms with my new identity. After much urging from my father, I began to think about what I was going to do with my remaining stuff. He offered a spot in his back yard where, if I chose to pull my stuff out of storage and buy a storage shed, I could have a place to locate it. There was a therapeutic quality in the action of going to Home Depot and purchasing the storage shed. There was also a great therapeutic quality in going to the storage facility and giving my thirty-day notice to vacate. Those two things were paramount in creating the agency for me to feel more in control of my situation. Another thing that created the agency for coming to terms with

the theft were the many phone calls and trips to the police station I made to get a police officer to come and take a statement about the theft. Being persistent to that end, and finally having an officer come to the facility, take photographs of the scene, and speak to management (even though there was nothing that could really be done) was highly empowering, and allowed me to take the final step in coming to terms with the theft.

In order to prepare a final report for the police and to vacate the storage, I had to clean everything up, figure out what had been taken, and move it all out. This process was perhaps the most painful in regards to coming to terms with the theft. As I discussed earlier, the chaotic nature of how the thieves had left my treasured possessions, and knowing that someone had been in and amongst my belongings without my permission, was almost unbearable. I stood at the open door of the storage unit and took stock of what I saw. Boxes overturned and piled on top of one another, a box of paintings and other artwork was at the top of the pile, seemingly thrown from one side of the unit to the other. There was no clear path into which or out of which to maneuver, so it appeared that the thieves would have had to climb over the top of the pile or somehow work their way out of the unit as if they were mopping a floor and did not want to get trapped in the corner while it dried. An entire wall of blue plastic bins that I had purchased in order to make sure nothing was broken by being kept in cardboard, was just gone. In its place were, I suppose, the remnants of the items they had not wanted to take. I will discuss more about this in the act/scene section below.

Purpose (*why it happened*)- In analyzing the purpose of my response, or as Burke would suggest, the “private intention in performing the act” (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 201), the only thing that is clear to me is that my reaction was a defense mechanism in order to not feel the devastation of the theft. It was somehow easier, and more doable on an emotional and psychological level to shut down as an immediate response, than to work through the pain by dealing with what needed to be dealt with (see my discussion of agency).

Attitude (*motivation*)- According to Foss, Foss, and Trapp, *attitude* is the motivation behind the means of an act, so “To build something with a hammer would involve an instrument, or ‘agency’; to build with diligence would involve an ‘attitude,’ a ‘how’” (202). In thinking about the attitude with which I completed all the tasks necessary to make up the agency, what comes to mind is slowly. As I have discussed in depth, I was unwilling and unable to deal with the situation immediately, and therefore it took an extended period of time within which I was able to do what needed to be done.

Ratios- *The pentadic ratios refer to the consubstantial relationships between the elements of the Pentad (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 200).*

Act/Scene- As I mentioned in the introduction, the thieves did not only break in, but they replaced the lock I had purchased at the facility with their own. This fact meant to me that the thieves could have had multiple opportunities to enter my storage. In addition to the idea that they could have come and gone multiple times between the two last times I had visited the unit, I also had to deal with the idea that they took time to go through boxes and take some things, but not others.

This relationship between the way I reacted and the way the scene was left is one of the main ratios I have found within my analysis. Part of the reason I shut down and was unable to deal with going through the objects for such a long period of time after the theft was because I had such a hard time with the idea of another person having their hands on my stuff. Burke might say that such a violent reaction might mean that my terministic screen was that of violation, or even rape.

I will discuss more in-depth later about the relationship between a collector and his or her objects. But in order to clarify, I think it would be significant to say that collectors (yes, I am speaking for collectors in general) view their objects as not just things, but little (or sometimes big) dynamic creatures that have pasts, presents, and will one day, hopefully, have futures as well. To the true collector, their objects are extensions of themselves, and therefore an integral part of their identities. In that way, to say I felt violated or raped as a result of the reality of having my objects violated, does not seem like an exaggeration.

Pollution-Purification-Redemption

One of the first thoughts that ran through my head as I was standing at the freshly cut lock and open door of my pillaged storage unit was, I am now a victim. That word, "victim," was up until that point one that I had never used to describe myself in that way. In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke asserts, "even if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function as a deflection of reality" (45). A bit of witty word-play, I agree, but I also agree with James A. Herrick when he explains this passage as meaning that the terms we subscribe to "an object, event, or person simultaneously directs attention *toward* some factors and *away* from others" (227). In viewing myself in that moment through the terministic screen of "victim," I was simultaneously pulling

away from the screens I had always used to describe myself previously, namely strong, responsible, and most importantly, collector.

The substance of the screens strong, responsible, and collector identified me, as do all terministic screens. They gave me access to many people at the top levels of the hierarchical structure of which I had always been a part. My father was the one most important. As I discussed earlier, he has always been the top of the hierarchy in terms of collecting, and my connection with objects. As a child, he saw my ability to discern various African tribal masks by sight as a sign of strength and intellect. And as it went through my life, when I took an interest in what he collected, or when we went to flea markets together either buying or selling, and I was able to negotiate a fairer price for some object I wanted to buy or sell, that was a point of connection for us, and I came to believe that my strength as a daughter, and an intellectual was always connected to things. That being said, my "guilt" was not so much "guilt" in the going-to-church-to-repent type guilt, but more a sense of shame and embarrassment that I had allowed such a thing to happen to my objects.

Burke is paraphrased by Foss, Foss, and Trapp as saying that guilt must be purged, and that the two main ways this process takes place is through *victimage* and *mortification*. Simply, *victimage* can be seen as finding a scapegoat, or some entity to blame for any perceived wrong, and *mortification* can be seen as "self-inflicted punishment" (210-211).

I would argue that, in my case, mortification was the means used to help purge me of guilt. Withdrawing, drinking more than I should have, blaming myself for the theft incident, and finally making the decision to take necessary action on my own terms, were all acts of mortification that ultimately lead to the "rebirth" or "redemption" (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 211).

Foss, Foss, and Trapp define redemption as "a change of identity, a new perspective, or a feeling 'of moving forward, towards a goal' or a better life in general" (211, emphasis in original). I can definitely see myself in this idea of redemption. Through the mental, emotional, physical, financial, and intellectual work (up to and including the completion of this analysis), I indeed have a feeling more toward well-being and certainly a new perspective. I am not one hundred percent in a redemptive frame of mind, and I do still mourn the loss of my objects (I will go more into that in the next section), but I am no longer self-flagellating (figuratively speaking) through withdrawal and copious amounts of wine. Progress is something to strive for.

What I Lost (The Identity of Objects): Antique/Vintage/Retro

The passion for an object leads to it being construed as God's special handiwork: the collector of porcelain eggs will imagine that God never made a more beautiful nor rarer form, and that He created it purely for the delight of porcelain egg collectors.

—Jean Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting"

With the advent of *Antiques Roadshow*, being a collector has taken on new meaning. Anyone with a dead Aunt Edna has probably inherited some piece of "tchotchke schlock" (as my father called it when I was a child) that he or she has tried to sell on eBay, most likely to no avail. But, if I have learned anything, it is that collecting is not that simple. Baudrillard asserts that objects become "pieces," and "pieces" become collections when the collector ceases focus on the utility of the object, and only emphasizes the subjective passion of the object (8). It is a complicated relationship, what Walter Benjamin calls "a very mysterious relationship to ownership" (60), which the collector has with her objects because they carry such profound meaning and significance. They have pasts, they tell stories, and to the collector they truly become a living thing that if broken, lost, or damaged can cause tremendous heartache. Thus is the present situation for me.

Collectors collect in categories. Usually, the objects that people collect can be placed into one of three categories: antique, vintage, or retro. All collectors agree that the categories are hierarchical, and therefore bring with them a certain status depending on what a person collects. Much of this reality is attributed to the relative cost of items in the various categories. Antique objects, for example a furniture item, painting, or a piece of precious jewelry that is more than 100 years old would most likely be a very expensive item (depending on the condition, which also plays a role in relative cost), and would most likely be obtained at an auction, as opposed to a second hand shop or "antique store." So, a collector of such items would need to have the capitol with which to purchase such an item, and the connections to know when and where a particular item would be bought or sold.

According to a collecting blog, *The Quill*, the categorical breakdown is as follows: typically, an object that is called "antique" must be 100 years old or older, a vintage object is one produced from the 1930s to the 1980s, and retro items (the lowest in the hierarchy) are ones that have been produced in the last 20-25 years.

To contextualize this in a Burkean way, even though these categories are hierarchical, not all collectors of retro objects, such as Beanie Babies, wish to move higher up the hierarchy and begin collecting vintage objects. That said, any Beanie Baby collector will tell you that they are striving to find that perfect specimen to add to their collection. Conversely, some collectors of antiques occasionally enjoy a bright piece of retro kitsch, or a beautifully designed and functional vintage object as well. So, what do I collect, and more importantly, what did I lose?

I like to call myself a “professional appreciator.” I find happiness, enjoyment, and inspiration from objects in all three categories of collecting. For me, certain things are appealing due to their aesthetics of form, color, or shape. I have a collection of various objects such as ash trays that are in the shape of human hands, and I also collect turtles. Certain things are socially significant. I have a collection of vintage pin-up art from the 1930s to the 1950s that was inspired by old modeling photographs of my grandmother in the 1940s, and that play a significant role in my sense of female empowerment. In the socially significant category, I also collect prison art, which are objects such as picture frames or jewelry boxes that are made by people in prison using folded cigarette cartons or other plasticized paper. Certain things are functional, such as shoes and handbags (both very typical for women to collect). And finally, certain things I collect for no particular reason, other than I see it and I have to have it. I tend to collect artwork (paintings, photographs, and collages) in this category.

The hierarchical structure of antique, vintage and retro is how I will explain what was stolen, and how each item affected me. True to my self-subscribed identity of “professional appreciator,” I had collected, inherited, and now lost objects from all three categories.

Antique: One of the most devastating losses of all was a particular antique doll that had been passed down through three generations of women in my family. She was a lovely fabric faced doll with blond hair, a white sundress with a blue undershirt, and a delicate weaved straw hat with tiny silk flowers around the brim. Prior to all of my things being put into storage, she held a place of prominence in my living room, and I labored over whether or not to put her in storage. I packed her snugly in a box with other vintage dolls that I had collected or inherited, and as I went about categorizing what had been taken, realized that the whole box was gone.

Perhaps her loss was so devastating due to the family significance that she held. Her existence identified me as a prominent enough member of my family

to be entrusted with her safekeeping. Her loss caused me a great deal of guilt in terms of not being able to hold up my end of the bargain, so to speak.

Vintage: Like most everyone, I suppose, I had crazy old aunts. Mine were Annette and Louise. Annette was my maternal grandfather's sister, and Louise was their first cousin. When Louise's father died in her early childhood she went to live with my grandfather and his siblings, so Louise became their sister. Annette and Louise lived together their whole lives, until Annette died in the late 1990s. Neither of them married or had children, and in the 1960s they bought a house in the Hollywood Hills together, which they lived in for fifty plus years. They were both collectors and lovers of vintage objects. As Hollywood cigarette girls in the 1950s and 60s, they collected anything that they could find that related to vintage Hollywood. Some of these objects included movie posters, and headshots of obscure Hollywood actors (many of whom I imagine were gentlemen that one or both of them had affairs with).

When Louise died in 2008, my mother and I were instructed to enter her house and search for any pertinent documents we could find, such as a driver's license, mortgage documents (their mortgage on the house was a whopping \$225.00 a month), insurance and medical records, family photos, etc. My mother's cousin Goldie, who was the executor of Louise's estate, also instructed us to take whatever we found that we were partial to. Aside from a couple of pieces of fabulous silver jewelry (that were also taken in the theft), I thought I wasn't going to find much else, until I went into Annette's old bedroom. There, I found a very dusty collection of fifteen or so vintage Murano glass ashtrays. Produced sometime in the 50s or 60s, Murano glass is known to collectors as being extremely "desirable." "Desirable" is collecting jargon for collectable. Murano glass is big and bulky, and very heavy. But the pieces were so beautifully curved, colorful, and dynamic that I decided I couldn't leave them to be pillaged, or, god forbid, thrown away. I had to liberate them from their dusty home.

That rather long story leads to the most devastating vintage loss that came out of the theft. I did not labor over whether or not to pack these pieces away and store them due to their size, and how cumbersome they were. So, when upon going through the objects after the theft, I realized they were gone; I was in shock and disbelief. Truly, I did not expect that the thieves would go to the trouble of taking them. That vintage loss was doubly devastating due to the fact of their family significance and to my connection with them on an aesthetic level.

Retro: The retro items that were stolen from storage were of varying type. Many items in this category had already been earmarked for sale at a garage sale or flea market. They were items such as clothing, shoes, kitchen utensils and other house wares. These items being taken had very little significance to me, which I am grateful for.

Discussion

For the last several pages, I have used Kenneth Burke's pentad, theory of identification, and guilt-redemption cycle as the main frameworks to answer the question: can rhetorical analysis help a person heal from loss? I have also brought in voices from other rhetorical theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, as well as voices on the power of collections such as Walter Benjamin to assist with answering that question.

In undertaking a Burkean analysis of this significant site—the experience of a loss of identity resulting from a loss of material possessions—I have learned certain things about rhetoric, life, emotions, collections, and various identities. What I have always connected to about Burke is the emphasis and importance he places on language. For Burke, language and reality are irrevocably connected, and the lenses through which we view, judge, and understand our lives, however stagnant or dynamic they may be, are wholly and only created through language. It can be argued that this ideology is especially relevant to a collector of objects in terms of how interconnected a collector and her objects are, and how she defined her identity so much through something that has no ability to communicate, no terministic screens of its own. The relationship between the collector and his collection is completely determined by the collector, either in spite of or in connection with how other people view her through their own lenses (obsessive, weird, strange, over the top).

About life and emotion, I have learned that what appears simple and straightforward can sometimes in reality be the most complicated. On some level, I'm sure, I knew that prior to this research, on an intellectual level. However, going so in-depth into one event, one day in my life, has opened my eyes to the intricacies of motivation and action.

I will end with one of my favorite stories of an object that was not stolen from my storage, but that is a testament to the power of objects in creating emotional connections. My parents went to Eastern Europe in 1970-1971 on a sabbatical trip. They spent six months (September through February) driving from country to country in a Volkswagen van. Along the way, they purchased many pieces of art and various trinkets and collectables. While in Europe, they

stopped at Picasso's Madoura Pottery Studio in Vallauris, France. There they bought a Picasso vase for the equivalent of \$150.00. It managed to get home unscathed. I am told it was one of the only items they carried in to the plane on the flight home.

In the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, the Picasso pot was demolished. The whole left side of the pot was broken into a thousand pieces. My father, of course, was devastated at the loss. He picked up what pieces he could, and put them in a box. Being a ceramics teacher and an artist, he knew he could try to fix the pot, but could not deal with the intense emotions of the potential that he couldn't, so there it sat. For six months. In the summer of 1994, he decided that he would attempt to complete the restoration on "The Picasso" as we called it in the family.

On Christmas day of that year he presented me with the completely restored vase. I told him I couldn't accept it; it meant too much to him. He insisted. I cried, and accepted it. He said simply, "I did it for you." It was not in storage, nor will it ever be. It is an object that remains a daily reminder for the power of connection and family.

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Understanding Social Media in Organizational Culture

Pooja Bhangay

Abstract

The central aim of this paper is to elucidate how the use of social media can impact an organization's culture. The paper comprises a literature review of concepts of culture, organizations, and socialization in the bracket of social media. I employ an interpretive approach in order to understand the connection between social media and organizational culture, and specifically, how organizational culture can be enhanced with the use of social media and the subjective experiences to which it may lead. In addition, I assume a neoclassical perspective in support of modern organizational theories to illustrate the subject matter. Research demonstrates that social media may help in enhancing organizational culture with potential benefit to employees through factors such as collaboration, cooperation, networking, and reduction of conflict.

Introduction

For the first time in my life I witnessed profound human cultural diversity as I walked into a very new and unique organization, California State University, Los Angeles. Coming from India, I consider myself blessed with a variety of experiences today and for the days to come. At CSULA, people from different cultural backgrounds come together for an academic pursuit. As I witnessed the diversity of my class, I was elated and concerned at the same time: elated at the prospect of being able to enrich my learning experience, and concerned about acceptance into the organizational culture.

On day one, like any new student, I was anxious about interacting with my peers. After a few interactions within the classroom, I thought of using social media, and Facebook in particular, to connect with them online. Our conversations helped us to know each other better and brought out a few surprising common interests. Through social media I was able to easily discuss questions and concerns that I would have hesitated to discuss in the class. Days passed, and I became more comfortable with the group. I was able to work on

my communication apprehension with the help of my interactions with peers online. Eventually, I came to see the classroom as a safe environment in which to express my thoughts, gaining better confidence to participate in class discussion. Also, through social media, I was able to spend much more time with the group than otherwise possible. Thus, I realized how social media played a vital role in enhancing my understanding of the organizational culture of CSULA.

Organizations have changed the way they do things today. Traditionally, there was the model of organization where employees worked from a particular time to a particular time in their offices to fulfill their “job requirement.” In the last decade, this paradigm has changed from a quantitative to a qualitative perspective, in which the quality of work done is appreciated and observed by the employer. Collaboration, cooperation and networking are a few factors that facilitate employees’ performance within their team in their organizations. With time and other technological advancements, humans have gotten closer to each other, and one such advancement is social media. Nielsen (2012) supports the view that communication on social media may make it easier for people from different cultural backgrounds to converse with each other, and it can be a good way to discover and learn more about other cultures.

Social media is transforming communication across cultures. Social media might actually push cultural boundaries away and bring people together who might otherwise be culturally distant from each other. Because it brings with it some kind of focus, social media actually allows people with very different cultural backgrounds to find a connection, and allows for conversations between people that would otherwise not have taken place at all. In sum, it can be said that communication on social media may make it easier for people from different cultural backgrounds to converse with each other, and it can be a good way to discover and learn more about other cultures, not just in bringing people together but also in the creation of new cultures. While cultures around the world value their individual traditions, beliefs, and norms that make them unique, social media links people around the world regardless of differences and geographical boundaries. According to Chen and Zhang (2010), “The compression of time and space, due to the convergence of new media and globalization, has shrunk the world into a much smaller interactive field.”

I intend to study the impact of the use of social media in enhancing organizational culture. I want to discuss the value of various channels of social media platforms as a means to foster an understanding of organizational culture and the integration process. In this light, I assess the role of collaboration in

social media and its impact in the understanding and acceptance of organizational culture.

Analytical Framework

In order to understand the impact of the use of social media in enhancing organizational culture, I undertake a review of scholarly literature surrounding the subject. The review begins with a discussion of culture, since in order to understand organizational culture one must first understand this concept. We then move to a discussion of organizational culture, after which the impact of social media is illustrated with the help of literature in books and various articles. I discuss the value of various channels of social media platforms as a means to foster an understanding of organizational culture and the integration process. Through this discussion I also study its impact on collaboration in light of its role in the understanding and acceptance of organizational culture. By way of the literature review, I take a neoclassical perspective in addition to modern organizational theory, focusing on Schein's (1985; 1994; 2003; 2006) theory of organizational culture, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, and Socio-technical Theory in particular, to support my research question.

Social Media and Organizational Culture

People use social media for many reasons. First, the need for connection and interaction with other people is evident. As supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, people desire to fulfill a sense of belonging through support from relationships with others. After obtaining physiological and safety needs, people strive to achieve Maslow's third need of belonging. Social media provide this opportunity where people can communicate with others and belong to different networks via virtual communities on the Internet. In relation to interacting with others online, people use social media to gain knowledge and learn about different opinions and perspectives regarding issues, topics, and events. Most importantly, social media is used for socializing; it is a form of media that allows people to participate in conversations and online dialogue without being face-to-face with others.

Despite this revolution in organizational communication, communication researchers have largely ignored the impact of social media on organizational culture and, instead, concentrated their scholarship on how social media is utilized in development (Barker & Ota, 2011; Baron & Segerstad, 2010; Koc, 2006), in what ways culture affects social media development and design (Campbell, 2007; DeGoede, Van Vianen, & Klehe, 2011), and how computer-

mediated communication (CMC) is influenced by culture (Chen, 2012; Gue'guen, 2008; Mollov & Schwartz, 2010). What is missing from communication journals—except for Shuter's (2011) guest-edited forum on intercultural social media research—are lines of research on how information and communications technologies (ICTs) affect intercultural communication between individuals and groups. Research on this topic challenges more than fifty years of intercultural communication knowledge and theory rooted in the twentieth-century paradigm of face-to-face interaction.

Culture

It is generally presumed that few organizations have a “strong” culture as they demonstrate a long-shared history of experiences and participation (of members) within themselves. As a result of having no common history or certain frequency of members, some organizations have no profound culture at all. The definition of organizational culture is quite problematic, as the concept of organization is itself uncertain, especially as a result of its indistinctness. In 1871, British social anthropologist E. B. Tylor provided one of the earliest and most influential definitions of culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (qtd. In Stocking, 1995, p. 332).

In order to understand the concept of “organizational culture,” we must first understand the notion of “culture.” In his book *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Schein (2006) stated that culture “as a concept has had a long and checkered history. It has been used by the layman as a word to indicate sophistication, as when we say that someone is very ‘cultured.’ It has been used by anthropologists to refer to the customs and rituals that societies develop over the course of their history” (p. 3). In Hofstede's words, culture is the “software of the mind” (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 1991).

Culture can be defined as a pattern of basic assumptions that is invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 2006). Such assumptions have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, are to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Once a group has learned to hold common assumptions, the resulting automatic patterns of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving provide meaning, stability, and comfort; the anxiety that results from the inability to understand or predict events happening around the group is reduced by the shared learning. The strength and tenacity of culture derive, in

part, from this anxiety-reduction function. (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1989; Menzies, 1960; Schein, 1985).

According to current understandings, culture is a group phenomenon comprising a combination of values, beliefs, and basic assumptions. We, as participants of certain cultures, become part of a culture through acculturation or enculturation, socialization, conditioning, and economic determinism. In other words, culture is what a group learns and maintains over a period of time, solving its problems of survival in an external environment and through internal integration. The learning here is a concomitantly cognitive, behavioral, intellectual, social, and emotional process.

Culture can be managed through hiring, socialization, training, and rewarding apt behavior. Viewed in this light, culture is a mechanism of control and power. It manages behavior and identities. Researchers have supported some of these views by reporting findings that cultural “strength” or certain kinds of cultures correlate with economic performance (Denison, 1990; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Sorensen, 2002). To support the statement further, consultants have touted “culture surveys” and have claimed that they can improve organizational performance by helping organizations create certain kinds of cultures. Schein (2006) further attempted to understand whether or not a culture is “good” or “bad,” “functionally effective” or not, emphasizing the fact that these factors “depend on not only culture but on the relationship of culture to the environment in which it exists” (p. 14).

However, few scholars believe that culture cannot be managed, as they believe culture is created in and influences interactions because values, norms, and assumptions are so deeply grounded in routines and actions. There is a conceptual problem, conversely, because systems contain subsystems, and organizations contain groups, subcultures, and units within them. As such, it is not clear over what range the tendency toward equilibrium will exist in any given complex total system. Schein’s experience with large organizations tells us that the size of the variations among the subcultures is substantial, suggesting that it might not be appropriate to talk of the culture of, say, IBM or General Motors or Shell. In the evolution of the Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) over its thirty-five-year history, one can see both a strong overall corporate culture and the growth of powerful subcultures that reflected the larger culture but also differed in important ways (Schein, 2003). In fact, the growing tensions among the subcultures were partly the reason why DEC as an economic entity ultimately failed to survive.

Some organizational researchers and managers of the twentieth century use the term “culture” to refer to the climate and “practices that organizations develop around their handling of people, or to the espoused values and credo of an organization” (Schein, 2006, p. 13). Simply put, culture for an organization has to do with certain values that managers are trying to inculcate in their organizations. In terms of understanding organizational culture, culture gives us a basic assumption about human relationships (e.g., collectivistic versus individualistic orientation, hierarchy, and universalism versus particularism). In sum, conceptualizing culture as “the way of life of people” opened the door to defining organizational culture as the way of life within an organization. It also helps to explain how organizational culture “arrived” within the symbolic and modern perspective of organizational theory around the same time but in a different way.

Organizational Culture

It is a common misperception that the first known reference to organizational culture appeared in a 1979 article by Andrew Pettigrew published in *Administrative Science Quarterly*. In fact, with the publication of his book *The Changing Culture of a Factory* in 1952, British sociologist Elliott Jaques was the first organizational theorist who described organizational culture. He defined “organizational culture,” stating that “the culture of a factory is its customary and traditional ways of thinking and doing things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all its members, and which new members must learn, and it least partially accept, in order to be accepted into service in the firm”(Jaques, 1952, p. 251). Jaques’s work inspired organizational scholars like Barry Turner and Andrew Pettigrew in the United Kingdom, who were soon joined by Pasquale Gagliardi in Italy, Gareth Morgan and Peter Frost in Canada, and Lou Pondy and Linda Smircich in the United States, among others.

Today, the main views on organizational culture as practical, interpretive, critical, and postmodern characterize cultural studies of organizations. Organizational cultures emerge from organizational members’ individual and collective symbol-using practices. These various symbolic expressions combine to create a “unique sense of place” that defines an organization’s culture (Pacanowsky & O’Donnel-Trujillo, 1983). Scholars and practitioners often focus on one or more of those symbolic expressions, referred to as cultural elements, to learn more about or to transform an organization’s culture. Metaphors, rituals, stories, artifacts, heroes and heroines, performances, and values are the

elements of organizational culture. Different approaches towards each of the elements can lead to different understandings.

In a pragmatic or prescriptive view, organizational culture is something that an organization “has” and that can be managed. Organizational culture provides meanings for routine organizational events and shapes employees’ work ethic and behavior. Schein (1994) offers a variation of this idea in his statement that “An organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that have been invented, discovered, and/or developed by a group as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptations and internal integration.” The term “organizational culture” stands for the actions, ways of thinking, practices, stories, and artifacts that characterize a particular organization. The culture of an organization can be studied by closely examining and observing its symbolic environment. It also involves comprehending the meanings of symbols such as topics of conversation, key vocabulary and jargon, treasured accomplishments, and awards. In support of this notion is Kenneth Burke’s classic essay “Definition of Man” (1966) in which he defines human beings as symbol-using animals. Burke’s view helps to further explain why symbols present symbolic possibilities.

Furthermore, the practical view responds to managers’ desires for practical advice and specific communication strategies for enhanced competitiveness and increased employee satisfaction. From this perspective, technology or management style is an organizational feature that can be leveraged by managers to create more effective organizations. Two successful books, both sponsored by the McKinsey Corporation (a management consulting firm), provide the foundation of this view. The first, Terrence Deal and Allan Kennedy’s *Corporate Culture; The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (1982), define the elements of strong cultures as a supportive business environment, dedication to a shared vision and values, well-known corporate heroes, effective rites and rituals, and formal and informal communication networks. The second book, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America’s Best-Run Corporations* (1982) by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman Jr., made the *New York Times* bestseller list for nonfiction. In it, the authors studied sixty-two financially successful companies and found eight common characteristics of their cultures: a bias for action; close relations to the customers; autonomy and entrepreneurship; productivity through people; hands-on and value-driven; stick to the knitting; simple form, lean staff; and simultaneous loose-tight properties.

Many of the early works on organizational culture were normative in orientation. Culture was treated as something to be managed, a tool to enhance organizational effectiveness and competitiveness. Meanwhile, organizational

culture researchers who adopted the symbolic perspective began expressing doubts about the ease with which organizational cultures might be manipulated to managerial ends.

The Modernist Perspective in Organizational Culture Theory

Robert Cooke and J.C. Lafferty exemplify the quantification in organizational culture research associated with the modern perspective. They developed the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) in the 1980s as a means to measure the extent to which an organizational culture is supported by each of twelve different behavioral norms. Although modernist studies of culture such as those based on the OCI provide knowledge that is readily translatable into normative prescriptions for management, they are limited to studying dimensions of organizational culture that are predefined by the researcher and are common to numerous cultures.

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch organization theorist, explored national influences on organizational culture through differences he first observed in the international subsidiaries of IBM. His enormously influential work in defining dimensions of difference between cultures around the world was complemented by work being done at the same time by American social psychologist Edgar Schein. Hofstede measured and studied cultural differences quantitatively. Hofstede's model shows how organizational communication is impacted by national cultures.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions are power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term/short-term orientation. Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Individualism and collectivism refer to the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. Masculinity and femininity describe the distribution of roles between the genders; for example, assertive and competitive versus caring and nurturing. Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, and long-term and short-term orientation illustrate the focus and values of a culture (Itim, 2009). Schein's theory of organizational culture states that a set of basic assumptions forms the core of a culture. The three levels of culture according to Schein are comprised of basic assumptions, values, and artifacts. Basic assumptions represent what members of a culture believe about their reality. Values are the social principles, goals and standards that cultural members

believe have intrinsic worth. Artifacts are manifestations or expressions of the same culture core that produces and maintains the values and norms.

Modernists claim that if culture shapes behavior via norms and values, then it should be possible to manage the culture of an organization in such a way that desired behavior is more or less guaranteed. However, some postmodern organizational theorists challenge a “grand narrative” conceptualization in organizations and organization theory, criticizing the ideological function of modernist narratives and stories, including modernist theory and modernist writing styles. One of these, American communication scholar Dennis Mumby (1988), suggests that organizational narratives lead to a systematic distortion of organizational culture because they reproduce and maintain particular meanings that support existing relationships of dependence and domination.

Socialization: A Recent Trend in Organizational Culture Research

The cultural approach to organizations centers on organizational socialization, a process of assimilating members into an organization’s culture. Socialization is a process by which people learn the rules, norms, and expectations of a culture over time and thereby become members of that culture. To support this notion, one can refer back to Schein, who stated that spontaneous interaction in an unstructured group gradually leads to patterns and norms of behavior that become the culture of that group—often within just hours of the group’s formation. Organizational socialization is a process through which new people or employees learn to adapt to an organization’s culture and norms. Due to the introduction of information communication technology (ICT) and other technological advancements, the way in which organizations are working is changing rapidly. Social media is a form of computer-mediated communication and is one of the major modes of communication. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking sites as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (in Veltri and Elgarah, 2009).

The world is currently undergoing a radical change regarding assumptions about the use of technology, and organizations must adapt to such paradigm shifts in the interest of their sustainability. One such paradigm shift is the way in which communication takes place within and outside of organizations. It is argued that Web 2.0 is not characterized by technological innovation, but by a shifting understanding of the status of information, knowledge, and the use of

social media in information applications. Web-based platforms allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organization, (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners, (3) post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others, and (4) view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organization at any time of their choosing. In relation to new social media, differences in individualistic and collectivistic cultures are apparent in users' communication and behavioral styles. Rosen et. al (2010) describe how people from individualistic cultures focus on meeting new people and being seen by many people, rather than maintaining their already existing relationships. In contrast, people from collectivistic cultures utilize social network sites to "maintain close relationships with a small number of ties instead of creating new connections with people" (Rosen et. al, 2010). Qualman (2012), in his book *Socialnomics:How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business*, quoted numerous thought-provoking statistics about the advent of social media.

The emergence of ESM (Enterprise Social Media) has typically followed one of three primary paths into organizational contexts: (1) use of publicly available sites like Facebook, Google+, and Twitter; (2) private implementations of open source or proprietary software, either installed on a company's own servers or acquired as a hosted (cloud-based) software service; or (3) in-house proprietary solutions, often built as prototypes by software vendors for later incorporation into commercial offerings. Social media has also played a vital role in enhancing relationships among employees within organizations. It helps them to connect, coordinate, and cooperate. It makes them productive. "People who do surf the Internet for fun at work—within a reasonable limit of less than 20 percent of their total time in the office—are more productive by about 9 percent than those who don't" (Coker, qtd. in Qualman, 2012, p. 251).

Social Media

The term "social media" refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. It also means the use of media for social interactions. Social media is a broad term; it encompasses a large range of websites. But one common link between such websites is that people are able to interact with the website and interact with other visitors. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are few forms of social media. The best way to define social media is to break down the term. Media is an instrument of communication, like a newspaper or a radio, so social media would be a social

instrument of communication. In Web 2.0 terms, this would be a website that not only provides people with information but also interacts with people while giving them that information. This interaction can be as simple as asking for their comments or letting them vote on an article, or it can be as complex as an application recommending movies to watch based on the ratings of other people with similar interests. Regular media is a one-way street where one can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but it provides one with very limited ability to express thoughts on a particular matter.

Here are some examples of social media websites:

- Social bookmarking: interaction through tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people (Del.icio.us, Simply)
- Social news: interaction through voting for activities and commenting on them (Digg, Propeller, Reddit)
- Social Networking: interaction through adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups, and engaging in discussions (Facebook, Hi5)
- Blogs and microblogs (Twitter)
- Social photo and video sharing: interaction through sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions (YouTube, Flickr)
- Wikis: interaction through adding articles and editing existing articles (Wikipedia, Wikia)

Social media integrates technology, social interactions, and content creation using the wisdom of words to collaboratively connect online to provide information. Through social media, people can create, organize, edit, comment on, combine, and share content. It refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to transform monologic communication into an interactive dialogue. One main fact of social media is its emphasis on creating and maintaining relationships. Social media is changing people's relationship styles in several important ways. First, it is allowing us to connect with more people more rapidly. Secondly, it is easy to over-estimate the level of intimacy of our online relationships. Third, it makes us more susceptible to a sort of social media contagion effect, which means that we may possibly start adopting behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs from those within our social network. Finally, social media facilitates comparing ourselves with others, which may lead to positive as well as negative effects.

Studies also suggest that about 80% of interactions on social media are with “known” people who might as well strengthen their relationship, but social media enables them to be virtually present somewhere else; that is, the online world has the potential to destroy a physical community. This phenomenon can be identified through a close observation of the techniques used in the 2008 U.S. presidential elections. Social media contributed to public engagement and political participation. The author of “From Networked Nominee to Networked Nation: Examining the Impact of Web 2.0 and Social Media on Political Participation and Civic Engagement in the 2008 Obama Campaign” (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011) found that “the Obama campaign created a nationwide virtual organization that motivated 3.1 million individual contributors and mobilized a grassroots movement of more than 5 million volunteers” (p. 189).

In contrast to a rosy view of social media, Haque (2010), in his blogged article “The Social Media Bubble,” states that “Despite all the excitement surrounding social media, the internet isn’t connecting us as much as we think it is. It is largely home to weak, artificial connections, what I call thin relationships.” In spite of all of the critiques as well as demonstrations of advantages, I think that there is an unexplored connection between organizational culture and social media. There is a significant relevance of social media for organizations and cultures as a means for developing better understanding, and for enhancing communication connections between people, ultimately contributing to the success of an organization.

Conclusion

Social media does not have a longstanding history. It is one of the recent trends in organizational culture. Research has shown that organizations who have not adapted to the paradigm shifts of this kind have come back to nothing from something, or perhaps everything. Social media is one such shifting paradigm in the twentieth century. Potential benefits of the use of social media among employees or team members within an organization are cooperation, collaboration, a healthy competitive environment, and networking, all of which will ultimately help in the reduction of conflict. Challenges of this model of communication can range from security and privacy issues to the understanding of effective and efficient communication failure. Potential challenges in this approach are issues pertaining to online security, privacy, and lack of time management. Indeed, one of the major prospective challenges may be poor time management. Social media is an attractive as well as distractive mode of

communication. Hence, it would be unfair to say that people may end up using more time than required in such mediums and interactions. Moreover, issues of identity may impact the cultural and communicative dimensions of teamwork.

An area that deserves more research is the relationship between social media and organizational participation. Can one contribute to the other? Can better connections between employees and employer increase participation? Can the network help an organization to identify significant trends? Can social media help in creating organizational cultures? Can social media assist in bringing an organization together as one strong unit? Would the relationship online give more scope for critical thinking in an environment of individuals connected socially? The possible connection(s) between organizational culture and social media must be explored in more depth in order to support or weaken the finding that the two are connected for the betterment of an organization.

There is a bright prospect for future research in this new area of communication. The deep reach of social media can be harnessed by any form of an organization for better communication between the employees, resulting in better outcomes. With the advancement of technology and resources, the channels of communication are not just altering but developing at such a fast pace that it would be challenging for individuals to track it comprehensively. The fact that this area of communication research is growing and changing rapidly is an amazing challenge. It would be interesting for communication scholars to study how social media creates an opinion leader and influences its surroundings, be they in an organization or a community.

I believe that the use of social media will have a positive impact on organizational culture, resulting in what we may call "The Webbed Society" or "The Networked Culture" in various organizations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND EDITORS

Pooja Bhangay is a second-year M.A. student and a Graduate Teaching Associate in the Communication Studies Department at California State University, Los Angeles. She earned her B.A. in 2012 with an emphasis in mass communication and journalism from India. Her areas of interest include new media, intercultural communication, and organizational communication. She also holds a Gold Medal for her outstanding performance in a national level sports tournament. She is a handwriting analysis specialist and a yoga enthusiast.

Robert E. G. Black is an M.A. Student in the Communication Studies Department at California State University, Los Angeles. He received his A.A. in Social Science and his B.A. in History. Additionally, he had a prolific career in Collegiate Speech and Debate and currently coaches for CSULA. He is also a father of three children, and in his spare time, he enjoys movies and LEGO blocks.

Rachel Blumenberg is a continuing M.A. Student in the Communication Studies Department at California State University, Los Angeles.

D. Robert DeChaine is a Professor in the Departments of Liberal Studies and Communication Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. He teaches courses in classical and contemporary rhetoric, cultural studies, social movements, and border studies. He is author of *Global Humanitarianism: NGOs and the Crafting of Community* (Lexington Books, 2005) and editor of *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier* (University of Alabama Press, 2012). He is also the incoming editor of *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, a journal of the National Communication Association.

Alice Fritz received her B.A. in English from California State University, Los Angeles, and is now pursuing a graduate degree in Communication Studies at the same institution. Her particular areas of interest are Cultural Studies and Rhetoric. Alice is currently working on her Master's thesis, which examines how social media can be used to enhance the effectiveness of HIV prevention programs.

Moya Márquez is a senior undergraduate student enrolled in the Honors College at California State University, Los Angeles and majoring in Communication Studies with an emphasis on Organizational Communication and Public Relations. He has previously worked for several nonprofit organizations, including Plaza de la Raza (through the Getty Multicultural Undergraduate Internship program) and Mixed Roots Stories. Upon graduation, he hopes to continue working in the nonprofit industry.

Andrea Smith is an M.A. student in the Communication Studies Department at California State University, Los Angeles. She received her B.S. in Public Relations at Cal Poly Pomona and plans to continue her research and education in media studies in a Ph.D. program upon graduating from CSULA.

Samantha L. Wasielewski recently received her M.A. in Communication from California State University, Los Angeles.

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D. Robert DeChaine
Supervising Editor, *Colloquy*
Department of Communication Studies
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 University Drive
Los Angeles, California 90032-8111
ddechai@calstatela.edu