

THE MILITARY OFFICER: ANALYZING THE ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC
OF DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS

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THE MILITARY OFFICER: ANALYZING THE ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC
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To Thaddeaus I. Williams – May your joy continue to live on through others

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I.

THE MILITARY OFFICER: ANALYZING THE ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC OF DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS

Organizations are inherently persuasive enterprises (Cheney & McMillan, 1990). Consider efforts dedicated to advertising campaigns directed at the public to buy a product, join a cause, or purchase a service. Beyond advertising efforts, organizations persuade for, “recruiting, motivation, mobilization... retention... image making, identity maintenance, and political influence” (p. 91). People today are so intertwined with organizations that single efforts at persuasion very frequently incorporate some form of organizational life, and they are ubiquitous in that they impacts people’s lives on every level in a multitude of ways regardless of individual affiliation (Johnson & Fauske, 2005). Organizations exist to help individuals accomplish goals otherwise inconceivable and build a sense of community. They are the foundation of modern society and act as vehicles through which collaborative action occurs (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006). Further, Burke argued that it is the natural condition of humans to be “goaded by hierarchy or moved by a sense or order,” (Burke, 1966). The process of organizing raises important questions about what organizations are and why they succeed or fail in meeting their goals. Implicit in these questions are questions about the nature of the relationships

between organizational members. If we are, in fact, naturally inclined to search for order and impose hierarchy, questions about organizations must include questions about leaders and members, management/employees, superiors/subordinates, officers/enlisted, etc. Although followership has received some scholarly attention (Bligh, 2011), it pales in comparison to the literature devoted to understanding leadership (Barnard, 1948; Bryman, 2011; Burges, 1854; Machiavelli & Bull, 2003; Stogdill, 1950; Tzu, 2002). However, the bulk of research devoted to leadership asks questions about approaches to leadership, and questions of style.

There are multiple ways to cognitively frame leadership (a more comprehensive overview of leadership will be provided later in the chapter). A functional approach infers leaders perform tasks and functions to achieve organizational goals (Beebe & Mottet, 2010). Styles approaches suggest leaders have preferred sets of behaviors in leadership roles. Situational approaches suggest leaders adapt their style to context. Transformational approaches infer leaders inspire and create a vision. The presiding approach of the 20th century concerned the classic argument of nature versus nurture. Are leaders born with specific traits that predetermine their leadership capabilities or are leadership skills developed through proper training and guidance? Although certain traits are certainly more desirable in a leader, “just having these traits does not necessarily mean that a person will be an effective leader... there is no single set of traits or characteristics that predicts who will be a leader” (p. 16). As such, the trait approach has been largely rejected (Grint, 2011). Possibly, as a result of this shift, leadership development programs are increasingly popular and have received increasing scholarly attention (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2012). These programs are important to those who

are interested in organizational leadership because they announce what “good leadership” is for the organization (the rhetorical process of defining) and provide insight into how these organizations persuade would-be members to adopt a their sanctioned type of leadership.

But how do these programs, and the organizations that support these programs, persuade individuals to adopt their view of what a “good leader” is? This thesis will not simply look at what leadership is, but how people convince others to lead in a desired fashion. More specifically, what rhetorical strategy does the military use to persuade would-be members to adopt their version of leadership? The primary focus of this section is to argue that we should pay attention to formal organizational socialization processes because they “sanction” the organization’s type of leadership. They reveal how the organization persuades would-be members into accepting their type of leadership. Analysis of leadership training materials provides us a way to offer a critical examination of these two leadership phenomena. Before delving into the aforementioned, it is important to understand the relevance of the military as an organization, the process of socialization within organizations, and the existing perspectives on leadership.

The Military Organization

Military influence is not limited to its membership but permeates society in both material and rhetorical ways. Beyond its primary purpose of defense, military organizational influence is evident in the industrial and economic complex of society. The Department of Defense consumes approximately 20% of the federal budget and is the largest employer in the United States, more than Exxon, General Motors, Ford, and General Electric combined (“National defense budget,” 2011). With a stagnant economy

and dwindling job opportunities, more Americans are turning to military employment; last year over 175,000 people entered active duty service (“DOD,” 2012). Beyond its industrial influence, the language of the military and war is entrenched in everyday rhetoric.

Rhetorically, the language of war permeates society. Consider references to warfare as a metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, in debate there are *winner*s and *loser*s, positions are *defended* or *attacked*, arguments get *shot down*. Political parties *launch* campaigns and place *targets* on congressional districts, oil companies come *under fire* after environmental disasters, and corporations pull the *trigger* on business deals. Metaphors act as cognitive references that “carry explanatory structures from a familiar domain of experiences into an other [SIC] domain in need of understanding or restructuring” (Krippendorff, 1993). The war metaphor serves the same function. The military’s span of influence and relevance to American society make understanding its functioning as an organization subject to interesting inquiry.

Organizations need leaders to function effectively. Without leadership the organization lacks direction and purpose (Mendonca & Kanungo, 2007, p. x). The need for competent, successful United States military leadership is apparent in today’s economic and political environment. Currently, 487 billion dollars in defense budget cut will be implemented within the next decade (“DOD,” 2012). The need for adequate leadership, measured against needs to maximize gains and cuts costs, make being true to oneself and character increasingly arduous (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Military officers need the necessary leadership capabilities to move their organizations forward despite recent force reductions, budget constraints, and

ethical issues arising from continuous combat (Youseff & Luthans, 2005). In recent years, social, ethical, and psychological issues have given rise to a series of highly publicized incidences and ongoing problems.

Highly publicized military scandals have raised questions about the importance of competent military leadership. The events of soldier misconduct and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, to include physical, psychological, sexual abuse and homicide, demonstrate a severe breakdown in military leadership (Jones & Fay, 2004). In general, military leadership has been unsuccessful in addressing the problem of sexual misconduct within the armed forces. Recently, an Air Force sex scandal where over forty women reported sexual harassment or rape led to “new leadership” and several policy changes (Christenson & King, 2012). One in five female veterans has sustained some form of sexual assault. Behaviors demonstrated during these scandals and ongoing issues conflict with the espoused core values of the military and call forth the need for effective leadership.

Increases in diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and staggering military suicide rates add to this need. PTSD and suicide are seen as the “greatest source of frustration and heartache within the U.S military” and former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta claims that both dilemmas are moving “in a troubling and tragic direction” (Mulrine, 2012, p.1). Identifying PTSD and handling suicide prevention stems from effective, engaged leadership (Berman, 2010). One in three returning United States service members shows signs of post-traumatic stress, 1100 military personnel have taken their lives since 2006, five active-duty service men and women attempt suicide every day, and the rate of suicide deaths has surpassed the number of combat related fatalities

(Phelan, 2012). Reoccurring scandals and the complex state of affairs in the military necessitate an increased focus on moral and ethical leadership.

Ethical leadership is taught and reinforced through effective development during the organizational socialization process. The assumption is that newcomers enter the organization with existing morals. The organization has preferred morals conducive to the success and good order of the organization. The goal is to mold individuals into leaders with coinciding moral fiber. Consequently, ethical leadership should be examined:

The need to explore the phenomenon of ethical leadership in organizations is prompted by the increasing societal concern that it is unacceptable for organizational leaders to be indifferent to moral responsibility, much less engage in unethical behavior (Mendonca & Kanungo, 2007, p. x).

Aristotle discusses ethical leadership in *Politics* where the state comes into existence to provide law, but to also insure proper law and noble actions (Reeve, 1998). All organizations should consider, “whether the action is likely to promote the public good, to advance the basic beliefs of our society, to contribute to its stability, strength and harmony” (Drucker, 1968, p. 461). There is an accumulating realization that leaders in organizations need to be more cognizant of moral obligations to society as a whole, to include governments, communities, employees, consumers, and stakeholders (Friedman, 1970). Evidence suggests that simply having codes of ethics and policy in place does little to promote an organization’s ethics:

Specific characteristics of the formal ethics or compliance program matter less than broader perceptions of the program’s orientation toward values and ethical

aspirations. What helps the most are consistency between policies and actions as well as dimensions of the organization's ethical culture such as ethical leadership, (Trevino, Weaver, Gibson, & Toffler, 1999, p. 131)

Beyond simple transcription, ethical concerns need to be demonstrated and reinforced by organizational leaders. The simultaneous development of both the leader and the organizational member, make the socialization of military officers a particularly interesting dynamic.

The military's commitment requirements, strict hierarchy, and heightened emotional symbolic status make it unique amongst institutions (Mills, 2003). Ethical leadership is at the core of the military profession (Barnes & Doty, 2010). Ethics in organizations are said to trickle down from the top and permeate throughout the organization. Military "leaders at all levels set the ethical tone for subordinates in their units either by omission or commission and have a significant impact on how their subordinates act and perform" (2010, p. 1). Military training and development programs, and the materials supplementing those programs, attempt to persuade trainees and persuade the behavior and moral foundation of aspiring leaders and officers.

Military officers can earn their commission in multiple ways. Officer Training Schools are condensed (time and material) leadership training programs that include a rigorous academic and physical curriculum designed to assess leadership capabilities. Aspiring officers may also commission through the more involved process of attending a military academy, for instance, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). The USAFA is a four-year military institution. The mission is to "educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character, motivated to lead the United States Air

Force in service to our nation” (Muenger, 2011, p. 2). Other military academies have near-identical missions. The third means of commission is through Reserve Officer Training Corps programs (ROTC) or similar programs associated with civilian campuses. These exist on more than a thousand campuses across the nation and commission more officers than any other program (“Rotc programs”). Military organizations transform newcomers from civilians into part of an effective fighting mechanism (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1990). These programs are designed to socialize civilians into military leaders and officers. With their completion, brand new officers will immediately outrank and be in charge of experienced, enlisted personnel.

This topic poses significance to both communication researchers and the military. The socialization, leadership, and organizational rhetoric literature emphasizes the interplay between the fields. This thesis could act as a nexus linking organizational rhetoric, socialization, and leadership development, which ultimately will give more insight into the selection of ethical leadership development programs. The study is also significant to the military. Successful training makes for better workers, increased efficiency, and improved overall effectiveness while saving the organization money (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2012). The analysis could provide a better understanding of how rhetorical strategies contribute to leadership development and assist in the realization of organizational goals. The general purpose of this thesis is to examine the socialization process of the civilian into future military leaders through a rhetorical lens.

Organizational Socialization

Socialization within organizations is inherently rhetorical (Prible, 1990). Prible makes the case for studying it through rhetorical frameworks:

During socialization, differences between personal values and ethics of newcomers and those of an organization are most salient, as would be rhetorical efforts to convince newcomers to embrace the organization's ethical stance. Modification of personal values and ethics can be considered a cost of continued employment for employees. Rhetorical efforts encouraging newcomers to significantly modify their values and ethics in exchange for employment warrant rhetorical study and analysis. (p. 255)

In order to fully understand the significance of examining the socialization process and its ethical implications within the realm of organizational rhetoric, it is important to locate its place within organizational studies.

Defining the Organization

Forwarding one definition of an organization has its challenges. Different authors of different academic backgrounds offer a variety of frameworks. Waldo (1961) articulates the intricacies of defining organizations:

A definition of organization is a theory of organization – at least a crude sketch of a theory – for it must necessarily try to state in general, more or less abstract, terms what the essentials are and how they relate. Who has not tried his [SIC] hand at framing a one-sentence (or even one-paragraph) definition of organization has denied himself an educational experience of high value. The abstract nouns and adjectives that are the conventional building blocks will be found to be unbelievably complex, awkward, misshapen. (p. 11)

Several authors have attempted this educational opportunity and as such, we have multiple and conflicting definitions of the concept. Many classical organizational

theorists define the organization as a “machine” emphasizing specialization or division of labor, standardization, and predictability (Miller, 2012). An economist would describe them as corporate enterprises exchanging resources to meet political objectives or acquire profits (McManus, 1975). Some authors prefer to avoid the messy undertaking by avoiding the chore of defining all together leading some to argue, “It is easier, and probably more useful, to give examples of formal organizations than to define the term (Simon & March, 1958, p.1). Examples of organizations include corporations, small businesses, labor unions, government agencies, religious institutions, political affiliations, activists groups, lobbies, professional associations, etc. (Cheney & McMillan, 1990). Deetz argues “the conception of ‘organization’ is often reduced to a site...” (p. 5). This reduction proves problematic in that positing organizations as buildings or tangible structures reifies the misrepresentation and marginalizes their inherent social nature.

In order to avoid reifying the organization, some authors focus on the communication and social aspects of organizing (Barnard 1969; Aldrich, 1979). Other definitions focus our attention directly on communication by offering a communication-organization equivalency definition (Ellwood, 1995; Deetz, 2001; Cooren, Taylor, & Van Every, 2006; Heath, 2011). Individuals “do not experience organizations; they experience the communication organizations issue and the communication about organizations” (1995, p. 3). Communication cannot be reduced merely to part of what an organization does. It isn’t a tool used by organizations but a way of organizing through symbolic messages and interaction. Communication constitutes the organization.

Organizational Rhetoric

If the communication constitutive perspective of organizations is to be useful, we must consider the nature of communication as we interrogate the process of organizing, including the argument that communication is an inherently persuasive process. Crable (1990) boldly argued “Whatever else they are, organizations are inherently rhetorical; and whatever else it is, rhetoric is inherently organizational” (p. 217). This controversial claim centers our attention on the rhetorical nature of organizing, but we can also examine rhetoric as a product of organizations. Since organizations are rhetorical it follows that the messages they produce are also rhetorical. Focusing our attention on rhetoric as an intentionally created product, Hoffman and Ford (2010) define organizational rhetoric as “the strategic use of symbols to influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences important to the operation of the organization” (p. 7). This rhetoric can be aimed at external and internal audiences.

External organizational rhetoric is required to establish a shared reality with the public to effectively align appropriate interests (Heath, 2011). Purposes of external rhetoric include image construction, identity maintenance, political advantage, marketing, public policy, and crisis and risk management (Cheney & McMillan, 1990; Heath, 2011; Hoffman & Ford, 2010). External organizational rhetoric attempts to persuade and influence environments to acquire leverage (Ellwood, 1995). However, distinguishing boundaries between external and internal communications has become increasingly difficult and problematic (Cheney & Christenson, 2001). Messages directed at external audiences are difficult to justify if internal audiences do not accept them; likewise, internal messages lack credibility if they disconnect from external rhetoric. Although

some messages are undoubtedly directed at particular audiences over others, they disseminate to various audiences and are hardly ever exclusive. Despite this overlap, organizations attempt to construct messages specifically for organizational members. This “internal” organizational communication is used for socialization, retention, and organizational change (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Retention occurs after newcomers are socialized into the organization and is necessary to maintain member loyalty. Organizational change rhetoric is needed when organizations experience modifications. Organizations must be flexible and be able to adapt to keep up with environmental changes, both expected and unexpected (Zorn, Page, & Cheney, 2000). However, these processes do not exist without initial socialization into the organization.

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization is the progression employees experience in becoming a part of the organization (Bullis, 1993). It is the process through which organizations venture to persuade individuals to meet organizational needs (Jablin, 2001). Advantages and goals to organizational socialization include the strengthening of newcomer expectations and attitudes, mentorship, and knowledge transfer (Saeed et al., 2012). It also allows newcomers to comprehend organizational norms, politics, values, and business relationships. Most authors define socialization as a chronological process from anticipatory socialization, to organizational entry, metamorphosis, and organizational exit (Hoffman & Ford, 2010; Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010, Miller, 2012). Anticipatory socialization is the socialization process that occurs prior to entry in organization. Newcomers are recruited in this stage and begin to establish expectations. Organizational exit is the disengagement from the organization. This process can happen prior to official

release from the organization and influences those who leave as well as those who remain in the organization (Miller, 2012). Pre-entry and exit are more distinguishable due to their clear place in the chronology. The intermediate boundaries between organizational entry and metamorphosis are less apparent.

Organizational entry happens when newcomers officially enter the organization. This is also sometimes referred to as the encounter stage (Miller, 2012). This stage attempts to mold the individual to behave in the best interest of the organization and is marked by novelty and contrast while the newcomer attempts to make sense of the environment (Kramer, 2010). Another primary goal of the entry stage is to have the new member embrace the ethical stance of the organization (Pribble, 1990). A great deal of stress and anxiety is often associated with this phase, especially if expectations established during the anticipatory socialization phase are not met; when organizations are not what they “should” be and expectancies are violated, newcomers experience reality shock similar to culture shock (Hughes, 1958). Prolonged stress and anxiety associated with organizational entry diminishes over time, and employees experience a considerable change, which is so fundamental and is likened to a metamorphosis.

Metamorphosis occurs when the employee adjusts to the organizational climate and makes the transition from an outsider to a full-fledged member (Miller, 2012). A common issue faced by scholars is determining when one stage of socialization ends and the next begins (Jablin, 2001). This is particularly true of organizational entry and metamorphosis. This makes sense, in that some employees take longer to acculturate to new organizations. A probationary period may last a year, but an employee may be well past the organizational entry period; likewise some organizational climates are so in-

depth and complex that newcomers may take years to adjust and feel like they are on board. Additionally, workers are constantly exposed to organizational change in both policy and leadership. Changes cause employees to experience anxieties to those of the encounter stage. Lines between these periods are dynamic and vary depending on the individual. This thesis will focus on the organizational entry phase, with the understanding that stages of socialization are not mutually exclusive to another and overlap may exist.

Organizational entry, as well as all other rhetorically focused organizational functions, can be categorized heuristically in a variety of ways. Specifically, organizational message types include, “directives, charters, memos, announcements, advertising, policy statements, informal exchanges, public relations, resolutions, issue advocacy, image management, treaties, lobbying efforts, declarations, performance appraisals, doctrines, surveys, (and) annuals reports” (Cheney & McMillan, 1990, p. 99) More broadly, rhetoric can be organized as impersonal to personal, public to private, internal to external, formal to informal, universal to particularistic, expert to non-expert, or significant to unimportant. These are some of the many ways to assess the variety of organizational messages. For example, small talk around the office concerning the football game this weekend might be considered *internal* and *unimportant*, while an official message constructed to respond to an organizational blunder might be considered *formal* and directed to an *external, public* audience.

Formal communication during organizational entry consists of orientation and development programs. Orientation programs largely deal with the nuances of acclimating new employees:

Formal orientation programs may serve a variety of objectives, including welcoming the new employee and helping him or her feel comfortable; providing the person with information on organizational history, products and services, policies, rules, mission, and philosophy and the interpretation of these principles; (and) introducing the recruit to key staff in other units and departments in the organization (Jablin, 2001, p. 757).

Training and development programs are frequently incorporated into organizational entry and include, “any behavior, strategy, design, restructuring, skill or skill set, strategic plan, or motivational effort that is designed to produce growth or (positive) change over time” (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2012, p. 12). These programs are specifically designed to enhance communication and leadership competencies while motivating newcomers to coalesce skills learned into what they do within the organization. Therefore, “training is a rhetorical process: you are implicitly – and sometimes explicitly – persuading trainees to change their behavior...” (p. 17). Included in the training and development process (within the socialization context) is the attempt to modify personal values and persuade newcomers to embrace the ethical stance of the organization (Prible, 1990). Thus, programs socializing leaders must develop leaders that contribute positively to organizations and represent the morals and values of the organization.

Perspectives on Leadership

The sociological roots of organizational studies date back to the late 19th and early 20th century (Cheney & Lair, 2005); per contra, recorded principles on leadership date back to ancient Egyptian times, approximately 2300 B.C. (Bass, 2008). Much of what leadership scholars know about its principles hailed from conflict:

It should already be clear that war is a critical component in the early developments in the early developments in the practice of leadership. From Sargon of Akkad (c. 2334 -2279) in what is now the Middle East, to Ramesses II (Ramesses the Great) of Egypt and from the early Cretan civilization from around 3000 BC to the Harappan civilization in the Indus valley at the same time, and across to the Huang Ho walled settlements in China, we know that military leadership played a crucial role in the quest for survival and domination. (Grint, 2011)

One of the most significant ancient texts on leadership and, “probably the first prescriptive text that achieved significant success in both its own time and space – ancient China – and *continues* to beguile business executives to this day is Sun Tzu’s (400-320 BC) *The Art of War*” (2011, p. 4). He was one of the first to transcribe espoused tactics and strategies an individual could use to lead and influence the masses (Sun Tzu, 2002).

Around the same time Sun Tzu was developing theories about leadership, Plato was philosophizing about political leadership (Plato, Grube, & Reeve, 1992). He argued against democracy and supported a meritocracy. Plato advocated for philosopher kings and saw wisdom as the prevailing quality in a leader. His student, Aristotle, agreed with this notion. Roughly one thousand and eight hundred years after Plato and Aristotle, Machiavelli laid out a sort of practical “by any means necessary” approach to leadership in his book, *The Prince* (Machiavelli & Bull, 2003). Napoleon suggested it was “The only book worth reading” (Grint, 2011, p. 7). Napoleon happened to be a fairly successful political and military leader.

Most influential classical works on leadership refer to conduct of war or what Clausewitz accredited to being an extension of war by alternate means, politics (1956). The origins of the leadership as a discipline rest heavy in warfare. The reciprocal relationship between the military and the study of leadership is apparent. In order to understand and better locate what the military defines as a good leader, it is necessary to preview the existing literature on leadership. This section will provide various facets and approaches to leadership, ultimately funneling down to what appears to be most relevant to the artifact.

The multifarious approaches disseminated over 3000 years of scholarly inquiry make compartmentalizing perspectives on leadership quite Herculean. Over just the last 60 years, approximately 65 categorical methods were developed to classify leadership alone (Northouse, 2010). From 1990 to 2008, academic research and study of leadership increased 100% (Bass, 2008). Beyond its longevity as a discipline and multitude of approaches:

Leadership perspectives and research increasingly draw on a broad range of disciplines, including (social) psychology, sociology, history, political science, anthropology, cultural studies, philosophy, education, military studies, health and social welfare and religious studies... Precisely because it is such a productive field, it is difficult for new scholars to break into it. (Bryman et al., 2011)

The task of stratifying approaches to leadership has been attacked from various angles. The SAGE Handbook of Leadership (Bryman et al., 2011) gives an overview of leadership then organizes it into macro, sociological, political, philosophical, psychological, and emerging perspectives. Beebe and Mottet (2010) organize leadership

into six approaches – trait, functional, styles, situational, transformational, and servant – while offering four assumptions or categories of leadership: classical, human relations, human resources, and systems. As stated before, the trait approach to leadership is now seen as inconsistent and has thus been discounted (Grint, 1997). Much of the leadership approaches of the last century coincide with how the leader fits into the organization.

Organizational Leadership

The industrial revolution and the rise of massive corporations gave way to a scientific approach to leadership studies known as classical leadership. Management was focus was shifted to cost-control and increasing profit (Grint, 2011). Good leaders were defined by how profitable they could make their company. Economic acquisition was the measure of success. F.W. Taylor introduced a mechanistic approach, where specialization of labor and efficiency were emphasized, and individuals were often invalidated (Miller, 2011). Taylor's goal was to objectively measure production. He attempted to direct leaders to socialize employees into doing whatever behavior would maximize profit through tangible incentives (money).

Taylor's approach was largely discredited by Hawthorne, who in the 1920s directed experiments on workers at a General Electric plant and concluded that the act of measuring individuals itself altered their behavior and performance (Grint, 2011). The research team realized a number of other factors played into performance, and ultimately concluded that simply offering incentives to maximize output was not the most effective way to lead. The team concluded that social factors and satisfying needs played a significant role (Miller, 2011). Hawthorne experiments led to a shift away from the scientific approach and led back to a more normative, relational approach.

Maslow and McGregor catapulted the human relations movement in the mid-20th century. Maslow emphasized the leader's ability to motivate by satisfying needs (Maslow, 1954). He proposed five types of needs from most basic to the highest order: physiological, safety, affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization. The higher level need a leader can satisfy the better leader they will be. Basic needs within organizations must be satisfied before higher level needs:

An individual will not attempt to satisfy affiliation needs until need for physiological functioning and safety have been provided for. Thus, in the organizational context, social relationships on the job will not be satisfying if the organization has not provided adequate wages and working conditions. (Miller, 2011, p. 42)

Douglas McGregor continued the human relations movement with his Theory X and Theory Y (1960). He provides a stark contrast in approaches to leadership. Theory X managers demonstrate all the negative aspects of approaches from the early 20th century and argue these types of leaders are, "responsible for organizing and motivated to fit organizational needs; and that without intervention and direction, people would be passive or resistant to the achievement of organizational needs" (Miller, 2011).

Alternatively, Theory Y managers demonstrate all the positive qualities of the human relations movement. They see their subordinates as independent, competent, and look to satisfy higher level needs in order to motivate.

The human resource approach also seeks to validate workers and moves away from the classical approach. It differs from the human relations movement by focusing on individual empowerment versus just positive encouragement. Beebe and Motett (2010)

assert that “some people view the human relations approach as a way to manipulate people by being nice to them so that they work harder... the human resources leadership approach, seeks to empower people to participate in the work of the organization or team” (p. 35). The valuing of the individual and emphasis on empowerment led organizations to seek ethical leaders.

Ethical Leadership

What is the good leader? This question alone can be analyzed in multiple ways. What is good? Good can mean a multitude of things: effective, efficient, competent, timely, organized, or mild-mannered. Emphasis on the word good distinguished the ethical leadership approach, “with good including both a morally commendable, normative component as well as a pragmatic, performance oriented component (Ciulla & Forsythe, 2011, p. 230). The good ethical leader must be grounded in the right moral philosophy while demonstrating functional leadership capabilities. There are three elements to the ethical leader:

1. *What* a good leader does or the outcomes.
2. The process of leadership, or *how* the good leader does things.
3. The motivation or *why* the good leader does things.

In order for the ethical leader to in fact be “good,” all aspects must integrate without discrepancies. In other words, “good” leaders are motivated for the right reasons to do the right thing in the right way.

Justification of Artifact

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the following question: how do the organizations mold perceptions and influence newcomers to adopt a certain kind of

leadership during the socialization process? The artifact for analysis is *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006). This was chosen for a specific reason: primarily, it represents a sweeping collaborative effort by all five branches of the U.S. government to curriculum of all future military officers with focus on ethical leadership. It acts as the lowest common denominator for how a military officer should lead.

The text, *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006), was initially written in 1950 by Brigadier General S.L. A. Marshal. His original version was drafted with the belief that all military officers should reflect common ground morally and ethically. For years the book was given to officers upon commissioning and editions were drafted (1975 and 1988) prior to this most recent one. In 2002, shortly after the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers, a conference on character development was held at the United States Naval Academy. After, an effort was forged to unite all service academies to define the twenty-first century military officer. This newest edition takes the previous versions of the book, expands on them, and adapts concepts to reflect the modern day officer. The forward of the book clearly states its intent and asks the reader (intended audience being the aspiring military officer) to:

Reflect on the timeless themes outlines in this book and consider what honor, integrity, selflessness, commitment, and the greater good mean to you. They define the ethos of our profession of arms, a philosophy that has moral leadership at its core. As you read these pages and think about their meaning, do so expecting to be called upon to apply moral leadership in situations where your life, the lives of your troops, and the safety and security of the United States hang in the balance. (p. iii)

The authors intended the book, “to be the first volume in the professional library of newly commissioned officers; the first brick in a lifetime of professional military education” (p. v). It is provided as part of the curriculum for aspiring officers in various leadership development programs. The book is intended to be the cornerstone of ethical and moral leadership development for military officers. *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) provides a snapshot into the values of organizations attempting to socialize desired ethical leadership capabilities into future military officers. The sanctioned message on military leadership establishes precedence for leadership decision-making and organizational behavior.

Preview of Methods

Rhetorical analysis determines what the military thinks a “good leader” is and how one should behave. The goal is to locate the precise mechanisms in the text that identify the sanctioned message of “good” leadership. The rhetorical analysis determines how the military persuades would-be officers to adopt ethical leadership. The nature of the military training environment makes a critical perspective intriguing:

When socialization efforts maintain the status quo, they produce and reproduce relationships of domination and subordination that marginalize certain individuals. This happens quite clearly in settings like military training. (Kramer, 2010, p. 191)

A critical rhetorical analysis will help identify the construction of power and identity as it relates to the socialization of military officers.

Preview of Chapters

In this chapter, the study is justified followed by an overview of the context surrounding the military as an organization, a review of organizational socialization within organizational studies, and brief perspectives on leadership. The chapter ends with justification of the text and a preview of methods. The next chapter explains the rhetorical methodology. The third chapter will include both the descriptive and rhetorical analysis of the texts. The final chapter will discuss conclusions and the implications of the study, limitations to the study, and directions for future research concerning both organizational communication scholars and the military alike.

II.

ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORICAL CRITICISM

This thesis utilizes rhetorical methodology. The primary goals of this project are a) to determine the military's notion of ethical leadership as forwarded in their training publication *The Armed Force Officer* (2006), and b) to determine how the text specifically persuades new members to adopt that definition of ethical leadership. Once these questions are attended to, further evaluation concerning "voice" and "choice" are used to draw critical conclusions. To this end, this methods section lays out the rhetorical analysis process that will be used to determine what "ethical leadership" means within the text and the persuasive strategies used to get would-be members to adopt the military's espoused version of leadership.

This chapter begins with a rationale and justification for choosing this method to analyze organizational rhetoric. Subsequently, this chapter provides an explanation of the rhetorical method. The chapter will conclude with specifics on how the method will be applied to analyze *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006).

Rationale of Methods

There a couple reasons for choosing rhetorical analysis. Initially, because existing literature utilizes rhetorical methods to analyze socialization, the military, and leadership.

More specifically, Pribble's (1990) rhetorical analysis on internal organizational rhetoric argued that during organizational entry, values of the newcomer are most salient and the organization must capitalize on this opportunity to establish a moral premise. Most scholars examining the junction of rhetoric and the military focus on practical implications. Carpenter (2004) looked at the rhetoric of commanders during various wars and concluded rhetoric can be a deciding factor in the outcome of a battle. Along the same lines, Yellin (2008) used a genre-based rhetorical analysis to analyze the discourse used to motivate troops right before battle. Concerning communication and leadership, Fairhurst (2011) is one of the leading communication scholars pushing for discursive approaches to leadership and distinguishing them from social psychology. Demonstrating aspects of ethical leadership and rhetoric, Olson (2007) analyzed Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* through the lens of neo-Aristotelian criticism and concluded that his effective use of language, motivational tools, presentation, evidence, and demonstration of moral character (amongst other factors) asserted successful rhetorical leadership and social advocacy. Representing an intersection between rhetorical analysis, leadership, the military, and socialization (training and development), Mills (2003) utilized a Foucauldian-centered analysis to develop training techniques for aspiring military intelligence officers. These previous rhetorical critiques incorporating aspects pertinent to this thesis demonstrate the utility of the method and identify potential gaps in the literature.

The modified Aristotelian approach designed by Hoffman and Ford (2010) is appropriate for studying organizational rhetoric. Aristotle defines rhetoric as the faculty of discovering the available means of persuasion in any given situation (Aristotle, 1932).

Analyzing persuasive strategies is essential to the critic examining organizational discourse:

Critics begin by slicing into a text by identifying the rhetorical strategies found in a piece of discourse. These strategies are the most basic elements commonly found in almost any sample of rhetoric, no matter what the rhetor's goals may be. A critic of organizational rhetoric must be able to identify the types of persuasive choices made by rhetors... knowing how to see and name strategies will help us make more conscious choices about how we receive and act upon organizational rhetoric... learning how to see the rhetorical strategies in a piece of discourse is the first step in becoming an informed consumer of rhetoric. Although people have been studying rhetoric for thousands of years, some of the oldest concepts still provide the best framework for understanding how messages work. (Hoffman & Ford, 2010, p. 24-25)

The authors note that although the method is based on an Aristotelian frame, contemporary research (Rowland, 2000) contributes to their frame and makes it more similar to a neo-Aristotelian frame modified for organizational rhetoric.

In summary, communication scholars use rhetorical analysis to examine socialization, leadership, ethics, and the military, but gaps exist in the literature. This thesis attempts to potentially fill those gaps. Additionally, the organizational rhetoric frame (Hoffman & Ford, 2010) is advantageous to exploring persuasive strategies, which is a primary goal of this analysis. This provides rationale and justification for the method.

Rhetorical Analysis

The five canons of rhetoric most often associated with neo-Aristotelian criticism provide an appropriate framework to evaluate and understand the persuasive strategies within the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006). The canons consist of invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory. The canons, particularly the first three, provide useful frames for analyzing rhetorical strategies in written texts. Hoffman and Ford (2010) provide an adequate and clear framework for applying Aristotle's traditional canons to present day organizational rhetoric.

Invention

Invention "refers to the creation and development of ideas in rhetoric. When critics analyze invention in a piece of organizational rhetoric, they identify the arguments made by the author and how they are supported and developed," (Hoffman & Ford, 2010, p. 27). The canon of invention consists of types of reasoning and both inartistic and artistic proofs. To be persuasive evidence must be accurate, objective, qualified, and timely, which are all determined by the situation. The inartistic proofs function as evidence that supports certain rhetorical strategies.

Inartistic proofs are collected as objective pieces of evidence; artistic proofs are a collaboration of inartistic proofs to formulate an argument (Aristotle, 1932). Artistic proofs are divided into three separate types. Rhetors persuade through ethos by building credibility, pathos by making emotional appeals, and logos by making rational arguments. All three appeals can work individually or in tandem to persuade audiences, and in this case would-be officers, to accept the message (proposed ethical leadership).

Ethos: Credibility Appeal.

When rhetors establish rapport with their audience, the audience is more receptive of the message. Ethos is essentially the accrediting of credibility. Aristotle claimed:

The character of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; for as a rule we trust... more quickly, about things in general, while on points outside the realm of exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely. (1932, p. 8)

According to Aristotle, good will, character, and intelligence are incorporated into the ethos of the speaker. Good will concerns the level of concern the speaker has for the audience. Character refers to the juxtaposition of the speaker's values compared to society's values. Intelligence speaks to knowledge, intellectual capacity, and the articulation of that wisdom. The nuances of credibility multiply in organizational rhetoric.

Often organizations send messages and convey a unified voice. For example, "Google does not condone the use of..." or "The Red Cross is not responsible for..." are representative of this unified corporate voice. Due to this phenomenon, credibility inherently takes on a different role within organizational rhetoric (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Cheney and McMillan (1990) originally suggested this idea in their discussion of the *corporate person*. Years later, organizational credibility was included in the theory of *Corporate Social Legitimacy*:

Corporate social legitimacy theory argues that corporations exist in a state of dependency upon their social environments, and, hence, can only survive to the

extent that they can convince their social environment that their use of exchange power is “rightful and proper” (Hearit, 1995, p. 2)

According to Hearit, in order for organizations to demonstrate credibility they must demonstrate competence and community. Competence refers to the ability of organizations to deliver an acceptable product. Community refers to an organization’s ethical conduct regarding society. Both are essential to organizational ethos.

Pathos: Emotional Appeal.

Pathos appeals work to generate a desired emotion (Aristotle, 1932). By putting the audience in the appropriate state of mind, the rhetor can better coordinate the delivery of the message to identify with their state of mind (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). The three modern approaches to pathos address needs, identification, and values.

From the most basic needs to self-actualization, individual needs have the potential to significantly sway emotions and hence the extent emotions play in the ability to be persuaded. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, from most basic to advanced, are physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Shutz (1958) proposed the three communication needs of affection, inclusion, and control. Rhetors find ways to meet their audience’s needs because doing so motivates and influences changes in behavior and thoughts. Hoffman and Ford (2010) provide good examples of internal organizational rhetoric that influences through meeting needs:

If... an organization sends out a pamphlet asking employees to make payroll-deduction contributions to the United Way or some other charitable organization, the authors may suggest that every contribution is important – thus appealing to the need for reassurance of worth. If an employer needs workers to stay late, he or

she may appeal to the need for inclusion or love and belonging by advocating that teammates stick together until the job is completed.

When analyzing organizational rhetoric, critics catalog calls to needs by casting communiques that create both existing and contemporary needs for audiences that are comparable to ones classified in current research.

Complementing needs appeals are values appeals. Here, rhetors attempt to demonstrate a set of common values with their audience. Within organizational rhetoric, values appeals “are often statements meant to demonstrate that the values of the organization align with the values of the audience or society in general (Hoffman & Ford, 2010, p. 31). *Values advocacy* (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994) represents a practice developed by organizational communication scholars that identifies goals and strategies concerning values appeals. Rhetors appeal to values in order to “enhance the image of the organization... minimize the impact of criticism to the organization... or to help prepare audiences to accept future arguments about policy issues” (2010, p. 32). Organizations appeal to value needs strategically by making explicit appeals to shared values, showing organizational products uphold common values, participating in charities to enhance image, and by praising and rewarding individuals (or other organizations) who align with their organizational values. For example, businesses around military bases may introduce patriotic themes to appeal to military members and restaurants may identify with certain Christian customers by closing on Sundays. Common organizational values include hard work, honesty, loyalty, discipline, integrity, self-made achievement, equal opportunity, and liberty. The critic should attempt to identify symbols and statements that coincide with ideals that are commonly viewed positively.

Both needs and values are largely incorporated into identification. By making this appeal, rhetors essentially attempt to demonstrate that they are just like the audience. Organizations often attempt to make members feel like they fit in. Identification is, “the idea that humans seek to feel a part of a larger group or groups, and that they derive part of their personal identity from membership in those group” (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Burke (1984) concludes, “In America it is natural for a man to identify himself with the business corporation he serves” (p. 264). Rhetorically, organizations provide members with reasons to identify. Highly identified members make decisions based on the values of the organization (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Organizations make identification appeals to both internal and external audiences. One case in point is:

Much of the internal rhetoric created by organizations – items like newsletters, training materials, and employee events – have as one of their goals creating and maintaining identification from employees. Even people who are not employees may identify with the organization, so rhetors directing messages to external audiences try to invite identification... Brand loyalty is also a sign of identification among external audiences – using the product or service has made the consumer feel a part of the organization. (Hoffman & Ford, 2010, p. 35)

Organizational rhetors make these appeals through four identified strategies. The initial basic three strategies are offered by Burke (1984). The common ground technique emphasizes identifying commonalities (goals, values, and ideas) and exploiting them. Identification through antithesis targets bilateral “enemies” to establish a unified cause. Common enemies include competing organizations, protestors, and regulating agencies (Cheney, 1983; Hoffman & Ford, 2010). The third strategy of identification “invites

audience members to identify with an organization by using the term *we* in a way that includes audience members as part of the organization (2010, p. 37). By using *we* (also referred to as the *transcendent “we”*) organizational rhetors subtly assume membership and audience membership allegiance to a particular group. The final strategy used to establish identification (Cheney, 1983) emphasizes the “use of unifying symbols in organizational rhetoric (which) helps to reinforce the identity of the organization, and may even allow individuals to wear those symbols of their identification” (2010, p. 37). The military uniform is an example of an organizational, unifying symbol that establishing identification. Pathos appeals draw on emotion through meeting needs, sharing values, and identifying with audiences.

Logos: Logical Appeal.

Logos concludes the artistic proofs, and is made up of argument and reason (Aristotle, 1932). The initial part of the argument is the claim (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Supporting data (inartistic proofs) follow claims. Reasoning frames the claim with the logic and can be done both inductively and deductively.

Inductive reasoning moves from specific occurrences to general conclusions (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). The three types of inductive reasoning include reasoning by example, reasoning by analogy, and causal reasoning. When “we generalize to a larger claim from a number of specific cases, we are using argument by example” (2010, p. 39). This is common in the rhetoric of socialization and organizational rhetoric in general. Military recruitment material might show smiling service members hugging family or jumping out of the back of aircraft. Would-be members are persuaded by these portrayed examples that military life is always happy and exciting. Organizations use inductive

reasoning often to say, “If it was true here, it must always be true.” Analogy is used similarly to example but concludes with specific examples. For instance people might reason, “They are likely to donate to my preferred cause, so I will give them my business” (2010, p. 40). Causal reasoning establishes partnerships between an espoused caused and effect. Organizational leaders might claim organizational shortcomings on the economy versus poor management.

Organizations also argue deductively. This takes place when organizations offer general principles to provide answers to and conclusions to particular instances (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). According to Aristotle (1932), deductive reasoning can be classified into syllogisms and enthymemes. Syllogisms have a major premise (general) and a minor premise (specific), followed by a conclusion which logically follows the premises. A company might socialize newcomers by communicating the following: (a) all great employees go above and beyond (b) Dave goes above and beyond (c) Dave is a great employee. This is one of the most basic forms of argumentation. An enthymeme is essentially the same thing, except one of the premises or conclusion is excluded. This is typically more powerful because audiences are left to draw conclusions for themselves and identify more with an idea when it appears to be their own. Tompkins and Cheney (1985) argue that workers who identify with organizations will automatically fill in the organizational norms, values, and goals when presented with an enthymeme. Critics must thoroughly analyze how organizational rhetoric influences through rationale and argumentation.

Organization

Although often overlooked for its impact on argumentation, organization of a text can greatly alter its effectiveness and persuasive capabilities (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). It represents how the artifact is structured or patterned. When considering organization, critics should pay special attention to how rhetoric captures the attention of the audience. Within texts, special attention should be paid to layout and graphics that encourage continued reading. Critics should also be mindful of the order in which ideas are presented. While dissecting printed texts “it is sometimes easy to identify an organizational pattern because a speech or a text occurs in a predetermined order” (p. 45). Finally, critics should be aware of how organizational rhetors conclude their rhetoric. Organizational discourse often solicits a call to action (i.e. buy this product, sell more services, adopt a particular ethic or leadership style).

Style

Style is the third canon. It is also known as elocution, and “refers to the aesthetic or artistic choices made by the rhetor in order to make the message more persuasive” (Hoffman & Ford, 2010, p. 46). It includes devices like similes, metaphors, parallel structure and alliteration. Included in contemporary stylistic considerations are visual aesthetics, like graphics, color, and photographs. Important initial questions about style include inquires in style selection, attention getters, emotional appeal through imagery, image use as argumentation, and questions on how images contribute to structure. Likewise, organizational critics should be mindful of contradictions between stylistic aesthetics and verbal messages. Brands often have the potential to contradict verbal messages. They represent the organizations identity and can include slogans, color,

shape, signatures, names, and symbols (Blackett, 2004). All of these are important factors to consider while utilizing the canon of style as a frame of critiquing rhetoric.

Delivery

The fourth canon, delivery, was originally concerned with how rhetors made presentations. Critics investigated the manner in which speeches were given and how various non-verbal communications (inflection, proxemics, etc.) manifested and influenced. Critics examining printed material often have a more mundane task. However, recent developments largely attributed to advances in electronic communication, have arguably expanded the scope of non-verbal communication to the digital world (emoticons☺, ALL CAPS, **bolded letters**, etc.). Beyond these non-verbal considerations, the canon of delivery also draws our attention to the delivery method itself. For instance, an organization may choose to persuade audiences via direct mailings, newsletters, and increasingly, twitter, Facebook, and a host of digital media sources. Organizational critics analyzing delivery should ask if the delivery method is suitable for the desired audience (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). In the case of this project, the selected delivery method is a hard-copy training manual, which is typical of the type of text used to formally socialize new organizational members.

Rhetorical Questions

The critic will use four out of the five canons (minus the “lost” canon of memory) to analyze the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006). After the rhetorical analysis, critical implications are assessed in the conclusion. The following provide a set of questions that will guide the analysis for inquiry within each canon.

Invention:

What is the main argument being made about ethical leadership and how do the authors develop and support their argument?

Ethos: Appeals to Organizational Credibility.

How do authors make characters appealing to audiences? How do they demonstrate competence and community?

Pathos: Appeals to Emotions.

What needs are appealed to? What values (explicit, demo of services, discussion of philanthropy, and praise of individuals who embody desired organizational values) are appealed to? How is identification established (common ground, assumed “we”, antithesis, or unifying symbols)?

Logos: Use of Claims and Evidence.

What are the existing claims? Are there definitions either explicit/implicit of ethical leadership? Are there other explicit/implicit definitions? What kind of evidence is used (statistics, testimony, examples, narrative)? Is inductive reasoning (example, analogies, casual reasoning) or deductive reasoning being used?

Organizational Strategies

How is the discourse introduced/concluded? How is it organized and navigated?
How is the text patterned?

Stylistic Strategies

What language choices were utilized (similes, metaphors, parallel structure and alliteration)? Were language choices simple or complicated? How are aesthetics incorporated and do they contradict verbal messages? Is there a common brand?

Delivery Strategies

What form is the rhetoric presented in and does it fit?

Summary

The goals of this project are accomplished through rhetorical analysis in order a) to determine the military's notion of ethical leadership as forwarded in their training publication *The Armed Force Officer* (2006), and b) to determine how that text specifically persuades would-be officers to adopt that definition of ethical leadership. Aristotle's canons (minus memory) will provide the framework for the rhetorical analysis as presented by Hoffman and Ford (2010). This frame is justified because it is the primary influence to all rhetorical criticism and aspects of it are used to analyze subjects pertinent to this thesis. Subsequently, the frame is advantageous to exploring rhetorical strategies, which is a primary goal of this analysis. Invention, organization, style, and delivery function as tools to analyze. Afterwards, the critics will draw critical implications of the study concerning "voice" and "choice".

III.

AN ANALYSIS OF *THE ARMED FORCES OFFICER* (2006)

This chapter is divided into two sections. Following descriptive information of the text chapters, a rhetorical analysis provides an overall assessment of the text through evaluating the canons of invention, organization, style, and delivery. The overall assessment will reveal the military's notion of ethical leadership as forwarded in their training publication *The Armed Force Officer* (2006), and how the text specifically persuades new members to adopt that definition of ethical leadership.

Description of Text

This description begins with general information concerning *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006), followed by descriptions of each chapter. The book's title, "The Armed Forces Officer" is bolded and located on the lower half of the cover. Encompassing the entire background is an American flag slanted at downward and to the right. The text is 180 pages long. The table of contents is followed by a foreword, introduction, nine chapters, six appendixes, recommended readings, acknowledgements, and instructions for comment and reproduction. Each chapter and section is bolded (some with bolded quotes that follow) and end with cited resources.

Authors who represent all of the service academies contributed the book. A total of ten authors, two women and eight men, drafted chapters individually while edits were done cohesively. All authors were either active duty or retired military officers or civilian faculty members employed at military academies. Individual authors of chapters are not identified. As stated by the authors of the text, the exigence for this updated edition of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) yielded from a military conference on character development and “Professional Military Ethics” (p. 1). According to them, the purpose of this revised edition is to “define what it means to be a commissioned officer in the twenty-first century” (p.2). In addition to the explicitly stated purpose of defining the commissioned officer, it is important to keep in mind that this revision of the text was released during a time of heightened military and civilian attention to questions of military ethics. Prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and questions concerning interrogation techniques at Guantanamo brought increased scrutiny. Additionally, the elevated use of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), more commonly known to the general public as drones, raised ethical concerns related to conducting warfare so removed from actual theatre. RPA pilots were essentially (and still are) conducting missions from thousands of miles away from the battlefield, dropping ordinance resulting in multiple enemy casualties, and having dinner the same night with the spouse and children. Public questions concerning when and if this type of warfare was morally acceptable, to what extent the potential desensitizing effects of distance would alter moral standards, and various other aspects concerning ethics and legality of RPAs were merely in their early stages and would receive increased attention in years to come. All of these aspects combined served to

bring exigence to a text designed to define the desired military officer with special attention to morality and ethics.

The forward to the text is written by General Peter Pace, United States Marine Corps Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO), Ranking Member of the House Armed Service Committee. Illustrations in black and white of both individuals are positioned at the top of both pages. An American flag hangs in the background of both portraits. Each foreword concludes with a signature block. The introduction provides justification for the book and defines the meaning of commission pertaining to the military officer. The only illustration is a snapshot of an older congressional document concerning military commission. The end of the introduction provides a preview of each chapter in the book.

The first chapter, *The Citizen-Soldier – An American Tradition of Military Service*, highlights the dynamic of the citizen-soldier. It presents historical accounts of military members to demonstrate the foundations of American military tradition. These historical accounts, ranging from the Civil War (1860) to the Iraq War (2004) “represent a cross-section from American society from all walks of life,” (p.16). All historical accounts seem to demonstrate extraordinary levels of heroism, commitment, and self-sacrifice. Chapter two, *The Profession of Arms*, delves into the elements concerning profession of arms. Essentially, it examines the military profession and its obligation to conducting warfare. The author references several classical scholars and revered military members throughout history. This chapter identifies the moral conundrum unique to the profession of arms, and categorizes ethical obligations of military officers into separate groupings. It concludes by highlighting the ethical dilemmas of present warfare where

enemies are less identifiable and transition between peace and wartime is increasingly ambiguous.

Chapter three, Member of a Profession, distinguishes being a member of the profession of arms and leading as a member of the profession of arms. It highlights the increased responsibilities of military officers versus their enlisted counterparts. The following chapter, Defender of the Constitution and Servant of the Nation, speaks on the responsibility of every military member's pledge to the constitution. It emphasizes the importance of civilian control of the military through historical accounts.

Chapter five, Character: Nobility of Life and Action, focuses on the moral component of being an officer. To lead and inspire others, officers are expected to demonstrate character. Various virtues encompassing the core values of each service are explicitly defined. Chapter six, Leadership, defines the leader and locates the military officer's role as a leader in the American military mission. It addresses what leadership is and what leaders do, with particular focus on competence and functionality.

Chapter seven, Responsibility, Accountability, and Discipline, discusses the three concepts in simplistic terms and provides various military examples. Examples are of younger officers failing at jobs to demonstrate the consequences of not living up to standards. Chapter eight, Service Identity and Joint Warfighting, attempts to emphasize a more unified and joint military force. It demonstrates the need for cooperation amongst military branches while presenting separate aspects unique to each service. Chapter nine, An Ancient Honorable Calling, provides summation of what it means to be an officer in today's military. The appendixes contain the founding and current service documents, the initial chapter of the first edition of the text, and a list of recommended readings.

As a whole, the text defines what it means to be an ethical leader in the military by drawing on the work of philosophers and military strategists as well as historical and contemporary examples of leadership dilemmas. Although this task of definition may not seem argumentative on the surface, rhetorical scholars throughout time have reminded us of the centrality of the defining process to any rhetorical strategy, and the undeniable “power of naming” (for example, McKerrow, 1989). As such, the next step in this analysis is to uncover what definition is being forwarded and how it is being argued.

Rhetorical Analysis

Before examining how the military defines their version of “good” leadership and how it persuades would-be members to adopt such, it is important to reiterate the various ways “good” leadership is defined. As discussed previously, “good” leadership can be analyzed through frames of inherited traits (Northouse, 2010), organizational outcomes (Taylor, 1998), technical skill sets (Katz, 1955), various styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964), situational factors (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969), relational perspectives (Hosking, 2011) and motivations (Ciulla & Forsyth, 2011) amongst others. The authors of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) initially frame “good” leadership as “moral leadership:” (p.iii) “The book aims to educate commissioned officers of all services, as well as interested outsiders, about the basic moral-ethical requirements of being a commissioned officer in the Armed Forces of the United States. Understanding the common foundation of commissioned leadership and command of American military forces is essential...” (p.v). Positioning ethics as paramount to good leadership calls forth matters of motivation.

It is important to note that many authors and theorists use moral and ethical interchangeably (Ciulla & Forsyth, 2011; Mendonca & Kanungo, 2007). Others

distinguish the terms. Foucault (1990) conceptualizes morals as organized prescriptive systems established by those with influence (church, family, school, etc.) while ethics concern the actual relationship and process in which the espoused morals correspond with individual behavior. However, various distinctions lack consistency. This thesis adopts the former and uses the terms interchangeably.

When framing “good” leadership as moral or ethical leadership, three questions are typically raised: What do good leaders do? How do good leaders do it? Why do good leaders do what they do? (Ciulla & Forsyth, 2011) Definitions of ethical leadership that define it through behaviors look at *what* actions leaders perform and *how* they perform them. Definitions of ethical leadership that examine motivation look into *why* leaders act or the thought process that precedes the action. The authors of the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) define ethical leadership by presenting the desired intentions and behaviors of “good” leadership that addresses *what, how, and why*. Using the canons presented in the previous chapter as tools to critique the rhetorical text, ambiguities and contradictions were located in how ethical leadership is defined. This section frames polysemy of ethical leadership within the text in the following manner: “Hazy Heroism: Iconic Inconsistencies,” “Military Métier: Mission and Character,” “Constructing Foundations: Core Principles” and “Absolutely Abstract: The “Good” Leader”.

Hazy Heroism: Iconic Inconsistencies

Historical acts of heroism provide examples of ethical leadership and persuade would-be members to adopt notions of such. Through these examples, the author of the first chapter in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) looks to emphasize the importance of conviction in a set of desired ideals:

As soldier and citizen, today's armed forces officer is a champion of both the nation's defense and the principles upon which the nation was founded. Taking an oath to support and defend the Constitution means swearing to uphold the core values that define the essence of American citizenship; the armed forces officer is first and foremost a citizen who has embraced the ideals of the nation – only then can he or she defend those principles with true conviction... For the armed forces officer, it is not enough to be willing to support the ideas of the Constitution or even be willing to give one's life in their defense. As the nation's trust professionals trained in the art and application of war, we are held to a higher standard – we are required to embody the values we have taken an oath to defend... (pp. 10-11)

This quote draws attention to what motivates the military officer. The initial chapter's overwhelming emphasis on convictions and why the desired military officer carries out certain behaviors initiates questions of organization. By positioning the thoughts and convictions that motivate the ethical leader preceding action within the first chapter, authors of the text attempt to establish prerogative in defining "good" leaders by *why* they do what they do, more so than *how* and *what* they do. The manner in which they explore this prerogative proves problematic.

Prior to perusing the problematic, a disclaimer is necessary. Abutment of heroism – as framed in the text – and hazy is not to diminish selfless and courageous acts by military members both past and present. It is to say that perhaps presenting heroes as examples of "good" leadership ostensibly obscures boundaries between the concept of the leader and the concept of the hero, thus conflating the two and establishing

romanticized and exaggerated perspectives. Additionally audience perspective born of induction, often conflict due to various representations, varying interpretations, and varied levels of identification regarding the heroic leader. Furthermore, when words identifying heroism as a function of leadership perspicuously contravene within the same source, misconceptions conceptualize in the cognizance of the audience.

Specifically, contradicting nomenclature resides in the historical accounts of chapter one of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006), appropriately titled The Citizen-Soldier – An American Tradition of Military Service. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain was a thirty-three year old college professor when requested to serve as an officer in the Union Army. His “unswerving sense of civic responsibility” (p. 10) and adherence to a “higher standard” (p. 11) is presented in the text to argue for a desired set of convictions. Following the above, the author states “*courage is not a matter of heroism or extraordinary strength, but of inner conviction and faith – the decision to do the right thing for the right reason, no matter the cost*” (italics, added, p. 11). Later in the chapter, the story of Lieutenant Commander John Waldron is utilized to highlight the principles of “courage and sacrifice” (p. 12). At the point of no return, and severely outnumbered he commanded a squadron of pilots and gunners to confront the Japanese head-on even though it would mean certain death. Only one crewmember survived. In service to his country, “He embodied the Constitutional ideal of self-sacrifice, finding the resolve to lay his life on the line to promote the welfare of the nation. Waldron demonstrated that from citizen-soldiers, *heroism is a function of our faith and conviction to give all we have for something we believe in,*” (italics, added, p. 13).

Here courage is construed by establishing what it is not, positioning heroism as an antithesis while simultaneously defining the terms near-identically. This contradiction of explicit definition creates added space for interpretation. Additionally, heroism is defined alternately by Waldron as “the principle that ordinary men [SIC] could prepare to meet the enemy in extraordinary fashion” (p. 12). Within just three pages concrete notions of heroism become hazy. However, through this haze, some solidarity and order arise in the final two accounts.

Concluding chapter one of *The Armed Forces Officer*, United States Air Force Lieutenant Lance Peter Sijan “would have never considered himself a hero. However, his commitment as a citizen-soldier to the Constitutional principles he vowed to defend led him to conduct himself in an extraordinary heroic manner,” (2006, p. 14). After being shot down in Vietnam, he evaded and continuously defied the North Vietnamese for approximately two and half months before his eventual death in prison, thus demonstrating an “unwavering commitment to the principle of freedom” (p. 15). About thirty-seven years later, Captain Bill Jacobsen was killed defending “his conviction in the democratic ideals” (p. 16) by a suicide bomber in Iraq. The chapter’s concluding representation of heroism defines it both by antithesis and explicitly. Through Captain Jacobsen’s story the audience is reminded, “heroism is not defined so much in the capacity someone serves, but by the convictions that compel someone to place themselves in harm’s way,” (p. 16). Both accounts emphasize the hero as being convicted in a set of established principles, and takeaway from the stories appear similar, with one minor difference. All of the stories prior to Capt Jacobsen’s were “singular *act(s)* of military heroism” (italics, added, p. 16). At first glance, the historical accounts appear to

be presented merely as chronological. However, ending the chapter with Capt Jacobsen's death by a suicide bomber yet still describing him as a hero serves to prove a point. It reinforces the notion that motivations and convictions are viewed as more important than actual behavior and outcomes. The reader must sift through all the contradictions and ambiguity, but the fundamental thrust of the text seems to establish ethical concerns as *the* top priority.

Military Métier: Mission and Character

Authors of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) discuss the military as an organization, and hence the goal of ethical leadership within the organization, in particular ways. This distinction appears essential because it establishes an alternate perspective to the previous section by proposing organizational effectiveness, functionality, and competence as primary exigencies for developing "good" leaders as appose to moral convictions. For example, chapter six defines leadership as "influencing people – by providing purpose, direction, and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization" (p. 63). This apparent flip-flop is reinforced through metaphor.

The corporate metaphor suggests parallels between the military and business practices. These metaphors throughout the text suggest compensation through ethical leadership, thus persuading and defining the ethical leader as motivated by analysis of costs versus rewards. The metaphor first appears in the foreword, where General Peter Pace proposes "effort spent developing this groundwork (ethical leadership) will pay dividends as you confront new and unique challenges in the years ahead" (p. iii). Later in the introduction, the author discusses "the inevitable costs of war in risk of life in limb"

(p.6). In chapter two, when describing the motivation for participation in the profession of arms, the author argues that “some fight primarily for money” (p. 19), although not endorsing it as an appropriate motivation. Later in the same chapter, the author suggests the armed forces are society’s investment (monetary contributions and people) in exchange for safety and security, and in chapter six, leadership is seen as an officer’s “principal business” (p. 63). These sentiments imply self-interest, which lays in direct contradiction to notions of selflessness and sacrifice espoused throughout the text.

Perhaps the ultimate bargain represented in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) is that, “it (military service) requires no less than a commitment of your life to the service of others, even unto death. In exchange, such service carries with it benefits and burdens of life as a public official in the world’s most successful democracy and membership in an ancient and honorable calling – the profession of arms” (p. 109). Adopting a corporate perspective introduces increased utility and relevance regarding organizational rhetorical methods, hence the heralding of Hearit’s (1995) notion of *competence*. Conceivably, the corporate metaphor functions to offer the would-be member an adequate return on investment, thus demonstrating a serviceable product that meets the standards of public scrutiny and aligns with concepts competence. Although generously scattered, corporate metaphors highlight transactional notions of leadership motivated by perceived costs versus rewards that counter reoccurring themes of selflessness and sacrifice.

Beyond motivation, transactional notions of leadership in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) are relied on to establish ethical leadership behaviors. Although not explicitly a reference to business, notions of costs versus rewards are reflected in the decision making process of ethical leaders, whose “primary ethical code governing the

conduct of war is called the Just War Tradition” (p. 23). According to *jus in bello* (conduct of war) within the Just War Tradition, the concept of proportionality states, “the harm done in any military operation should not outweigh the good likely to be accomplished; that is, it must not be disproportionate to the legitimate gains achieved by a military operation.” (p. 23). This argument functions deductively providing a general principal to guide specific actions. Put in enthymematic form, it functions as such:

Major premise: Ethical leadership follows concepts of proportionality within the Just War Tradition

Minor premise: For war to be conducted justly, gains should always outweigh harm done.

Unstated Conclusion: Ethical leaders conduct war justly by ensuring the military “good” accomplished, outweighs the harm done.

Beyond deduction, this argument functions to build credibility through Hearit’s (1995) notion of *community* by building trust through demonstration of ethically and legally defensible actions. Again, concepts concerning the ethical leader are presented as transactions and discerned through an apparent cost analysis. Positioning ethical leaders as transactional leaders lays tangent to notions of leadership as it relates to organizational effectiveness.

As stated previously, the author of chapter six in the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) defines leadership as completing the mission and improving the organization by influencing others. By arguing for the importance of mission accomplishment while simultaneously prioritizing the importance of personal welfare, the author creates a

potential philosophical conundrum for leaders. Seemingly contradictory claims can be located within individual chapters, such as:

In order to accomplish the mission, whatever it is, the officer *must take care of the troops*. This is critical both because the officer is legally and morally responsible for their well-being and care, and also because if the troops are not well taken care of, it will become difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish the mission. Yet, if the situation requires it, *mission accomplishment trumps the welfare and personal safety of subordinates*. Mission accomplishment comes first. (italics, added p. 63)

And, effective functioning officers are supposed to

get the most out of the unit for which they are responsible, while protecting their charges from unnecessary burdens, but they understand that the final determination of what is necessary will not be made by them... Leaders keep everyone focused on the mission and winning. (p. 65-66)

At the conclusion of the same chapter in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006), the author lists eleven requirements that encompass leadership. Although originally focused on Marine officers, these requirements are provided to act as overarching principles regarding all military officers:

- Be technically and tactically proficient
- Know yourself and seek self-improvement
- Know your Marines and look out for their welfare
- Keep your Marines informed
- Set the example
- Ensure the task is understood, supervised, and accomplished

- Train your Marines as a team
- Make sound and timely decision
- Develop a sense of responsibility among your subordinates
- Employ your unit in accordance with its capabilities
- Seek responsibility, and take responsibility for your actions (p. 71).

Here functionality, individual awareness, and a collective sensibility appear relatively balanced without any explicit mention of one principle presiding over another. However, the initial placement of technical and tactical proficiency seems to reinforce organizational functionality as predominant, thus endorsing notions of the leader as faculty to organizational improvement and effectiveness.

In chapter eight of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) the Army offers a shorter list of leadership principles that “Soldiers serving the nation today embody (called) the Warrior Ethos:

- I will always place the mission first
- I will never accept defeat
- I will never quit
- I will never leave a fallen comrade (p. 95).

Presenting these as absolute (never, always, etc.) designates every principle as principal and creates space for discrepancy, for by always adhering to one (i.e. the mission) another may have to be forgone (i.e. a fallen comrade). One can imagine the enigma this causes military officers making split-time decisions in the heat of battle. Overall, it seems the aforementioned claims on leadership function to influence functionality by

positioning the “good” leader as catalyst to organizational success whilst simultaneously fortifying contradictions through promotion of both mission accomplishment and subordinate welfare.

Beyond the internal contradictions, these claims further counter other portions of the text prioritizing leadership established in ethical convictions. In the foreword of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006), Vice Admiral James Stockdale is quoted as saying, “... even in the most detached duty, we warriors must keep foremost in our minds that there are boundaries to the prerogatives of leadership, moral boundaries” (p. iii). This appears to suggest conscience as *the* imperative to leadership. Contiguous to this concept, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf defines leadership as, “a potent combination of strategy and character.” He goes on to qualify, “if you must be without one, be without strategy” (p. 53). These quotes collectively not only reveal the possible conflict between strategy and morality, but further centralize the issue of this potential conflict to the task of defining “good” leadership.

Constructing Foundations: Core Principles

Core ethical principles essential to leadership in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) are presented both as finite and continuous. Desired core principles of the military officer include, “honor, respect, devotion to duty, service, loyalty, excellence, courage, and integrity” (p. 55). A recurring *foundation metaphor* throughout the text appears to position these principles as fixed and firm upon development. In the foreword, General Pace asserts:

themes that define our profession of arms and guide the actions of our officers apply today just as they did over 60 years ago... They provide a *foundation* upon

which you *build* as you prepare to meet tomorrow's objectives. The time and effort spent developing this *groundwork* will pay dividends... (and) timeless themes outlines in this book... have moral leadership at its *core*. (italics, added, p. iii)

The authors position a “common ethical core” and “common ethical grounding” (p. 2) as universal, objective, and timeless. They also offer perspectives on how and when these ethical foundations are developed.

Most of the text argues this common moral foundation can be learned and developed. However, chapter five of *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) provides a disclaimer. The author continues with a foundation metaphor and argues, “Individuals drawn to careers as officer in the armed forces may enter with similar *foundations* on which the services can *build*; these *foundations* arise from inherent attributes or upbringing” (italics, added, p. 54) The author goes on to quote Ralph Waldo Emerson implying that all character defects are irreparable and, “the character foundation one brings to the service must have the strength and solidness essential to bear the weight of the responsibility the profession requires from members” (p.54). Here, “good” leaders can be developed, but only if they were born with or raised with a particular moral conscience. This assertion appears to endorse a trait approach thus invalidating the need for emphasis on ethics and character development in leadership development programs.

On the following page of chapter five in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006), the metaphor of “sharpening a sword” contradicts the fixed foundation metaphor and incorporates a continuous and emerging perspective to ethical development. The author states, “These qualities (honor, respect, integrity, etc.) are *like the sharpness of the*

officer's sword; the officer must develop and maintain them to serve and lead effectively – and to remain worthy of the risks taken by comrades in arms” (italics, added, p. 55).

The “sharpening of the sword” presents an entirely different notion than a “firm foundation.” The sword metaphor indicates a continuous attention to and refinement of the espoused ethical principles. The foundation metaphor implies permanence and solidarity of principles upon development in which all other aspects of the military officer and leadership are to be based on. The author of chapter nine states, “Great flexibility and courage are required of very junior officers in today’s environment...” (p.110). If officers are to be developed, shaped, and molded into the desired “good” leader, a more fluid and flexible metaphor perhaps would better serve the argument as opposed to a rigid one. Contradicting metaphors framing the same principles essential to ethical leadership as both fixed and continuous indicate inconsistent perspectives on how ethical leaders are developed, which further exacerbates the difficulties of defining “good” leadership and determining how the “good” leader is persuaded.

Absolutely Abstract: The “Good” Leader

Perhaps the overarching potential conflict that encapsulates each of the previous ones listed in this chapter arises in the numerous ideas, definitions, and principles presented as absolute or concrete that may inadvertently seem to *intensify* existing abstractions. This quandary permeates each argument and is initially represented by the organization of the text as established by the ten authors of the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006):

This book was written by a team of authors representing the superintendents of the Military, Naval, Air Force, and Coast Guard Academies, with participation

and support of the Marine Corps University. The authors were serving and retired officers and civilian faculty members, both women and men... The authors drafted the chapters individually and edited them collectively according to an organization, and with a concept of what it means to be an Armed Forces Officer, developed together at the beginning of the drafting process. The effort has been guided by the spirit of the United States of America: *E Pluribus Unum*. (p. 178)

E Pluribus Unum translates to *out of many, one*. Ironically, the individual chapters drafted by authors across various branches leave the text more stratified than unified both in argument and aesthetics. Some chapters read like history lessons, while others read and categorize like a guidebook. Overall, the organization alone seems to reflect the difficulty in presenting a clear message on “good” leadership.

Beyond organization, the leader and types of leadership in the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) formulate in variegated vehicles, thus further contributing to befuddlement. In other words, the multiple names classifying the leader potentially cause confusion. For example, in just two paragraphs encompassing half a page (p. 5), military officers are identified as “armed-forces officers,” “soldiers,” “citizen-soldiers,” “warrior-leader(s),” “American officers,” “leader-members,” “joint service officers,” “defend(ers) (of) the Constitution,” “servant(s) of the nation,” “leader(s) of character,” “inspirational leader(s),” “commissioned officers,” “military leader(s),” “Soldiers,” “Sailors,” “Airmem,” “Coast Guardsmen,” and “Marines.” In addition, the aforementioned leaders are expected to apply forms of “moral leadership,” (p. iii) “officership,” “highly moral-ethical leadership,” “commissioned leadership,” (p. 2) “decisive leadership,” (p. 10) “warrior leader(ship),” (p. 25) “effective leadership,” (p. 34) “battlefield leadership,” (p.

46) “good leadership,” (p. 53) “military leadership,” (p. 67) “direct kind of leadership (and)... unit leadership,” (p. 71) and “established leadership,” (p. 113) to name a few more than a few. It is possible the critical power of naming devitalizes with excessive variance. Overzealous labeling seems to take the “spray and pray approach,” representative of a dissemination model of persuasion more so than a narrow, targeted approach, thus diminishing the possibility of an accurate and definitive definition of “good” leadership.

For what, to whom, and in what sequence the leader’s loyalties lay within *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006) create further abstraction. In addition to the inconsistent definitions of “good” leadership viewed as adherence to moral convictions, subordinate welfare, mission completion and organizational effectiveness, prerogatives are further blurred by charging leaders with “promoting the general welfare” (p. 11) “serving as ambassadors of democracy,” (p. 15) and standing in ultimate judgment by “the American people” (p. 37). Suddenly, questions of priority become increasingly difficult to discern. The author of chapter two attempts to answer this question through a “hierarchy of loyalties, which puts nation above service, service above their comrades in arms, and comrades above self;” (p. 20) and through an alternate “hierarchy of responsibilities to Constitution, service, unit and other soldiers” (p. 21). However, the author of chapter three provides a more encompassing view and tries to capture the nuanced and complex nature of the issue:

Legitimate behavior by members of the armed forces acting as a profession is conditioned by the primary individual loyalty of its membership to the Constitution and to the principle of civilian control... the profession is obliged to

provide all leaders of government dispassionate expert advice... On the other hand, the officer is bound to do so within the limits imposed by... the president as commander in chief. Just as junior officers are expected to give their full support to seniors' decisions (but)... must not intrude on prerogatives of the commander in chief, nor (congress). That rule holds, even when decisions made conflict with what officers consider professionally desirable, (or) are contrary to the popular views of the moment... professionals are bound by their oath to execute legal civilian decisions as effectively as possible – even those with which they fundamentally disagree – or they must request relief from their duties, or leave the service entirely... Where this is not possible, the officer must find his or her own moral guidance... (p. 38).

This argument is designed to clarify what conditions “legitimate behavior” for military officers. However, through presentation of various conflicting allegiances and an elusive conclusion, it only magnifies complexities and contributes to cognitive dissonance. Perhaps it was better left said simply: “The basic idea is that there is always something larger, more important than the individual” (p. 21).

How the text is organized, how leaders are named, and where loyalties and motivations exist in the text lacks precision and contributes to the abstract nature of “good” leadership. The abundance of information presented, which seems to function to provide individuals with the decisive decision making and precise confidence with which to make these decisions, instead leaves room for an abundance of interpretation.

Summary

Ultimately, this chapter acts to describe and analyze *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006). The description provides basic background information of the text and brief overviews of the individual chapters. After, Aristotle's canons function as tools to provide rhetorical analysis of the text so the critic can determine what ethical leaders are and how they are persuaded. Ambiguities, inconsistencies, and contradictions located through analysis were organized in the sections of "Hazy Heroism: Iconic Inconsistencies," "Military Métier: Mission and Character," "Constructing Foundations: Core Principles" and "Absolutely Abstract: The "Good" Leader". Ultimately, equivocation of consistent meanings regarding ethical leadership leave considerable space for would-be officers to extrapolate various perspectives, thus detracting from the text's purpose "to define the common ethical core of all officers" (p. 2).

This thesis concludes with discussion and conclusions. The final chapter evaluates and interprets each section of the rhetorical analysis for critical implications and provides limitations and recommendations resulting from the study. Recommendations incorporate direction for both communication scholars and the military alike.

IV.

AN EVALUATION OF THE “GOOD” LEADER AND THE ARMED FORCES OFFICER

Organizations ultimately exist through cooperative means to achieve goals otherwise unattainable to the individual. If rhetoric is “the use of language as a symbolic means of *inducing cooperation*,” then the two appear intrinsically linked (italics, added, Burke, 1950/1969, p. 43). The military has an elevated need to induce this cooperation, for accomplishment of goals are a matter of national security, life and death. This elevated need for cooperation is reinforced through training programs aimed at socializing would-be members to accept a common cause. The rhetoric used will undoubtedly affect the degree of cooperation. The final chapter provides discussion and conclusions to the study. Each section of the rhetorical analysis interprets and evaluates for critical implications and provides limitations and recommendations resulting from the study. Recommendations incorporate direction for both communication scholars and the military alike. Discussion will be divided into sections mirroring the analysis to evaluate notions of heroism, the military as a corporation, foundational metaphors, and the value of abstraction as they relate to defining “good” leadership and persuading as such.

Heroic Problems

Chapter one of the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) reinforces a desired set of values and convictions as paramount to defining the “good” leader. This works to say, the ethical sentiments that drive or motivate the leader are the fundamental markers that establish “good” leadership – *why* good leaders behave in a certain way is most important. The reader is primarily persuaded through inductive reasoning by way of heroic paradigm to reinforce notions of integrity, honor, selflessness, duty, courage, and sacrifice. Persuasion aimed at developing conviction in an individual calls forth questions of induction and heroism in relation to socializing and leadership development.

Inductive reasoning is generally regarded as a powerful resource of rhetoric, but it is not without problems. It leaves the reader to draw capacious generalizations on morality and values from specific, contextual examples that might not be applicable to existing or future scenarios. For example, examples of courage and sacrifice in war might not cognitively translate well to the courage of justly handling sexual misconduct during peacetime operations. This problem magnifies when multiple examples presented reveal discrepancies in applying these lessons. Contradictory applications leave the audience with the chore of trying to identify through example. When explicit definitions regarding the paradigm conflict, potential variance in how the audience will interpret the lessons increases and the credibility of the source decreases. Parts of the text seem to encourage heroism; others reduce it, while other sections do a bit of both. Inductive reasoning, and the contradictions within examples in the text, leaves little room for tangible application regarding ethics and leadership; space for interpretation increases and room for realistic applicability decreases when leader is presented as a hero.

Juxtaposition of hero and leader largely stems from Thomas Carlyle's near obsession with the "Great Men," (Grint, 2011) of history which views the leader as inherently transcendent, "irredeemably masculine, heroic, individualistic and normative in orientation and nature" (p. 8). Mention of individualism exists because while highlighting the leader's convictions, values, and traits, the context is reduced and other actors in the situation (i.e. followers) are marginalized. Thus by illuminating the leader, we dim other aspects of the situation that might be even more important to outcomes than actual leadership. This explains tendencies to define the "good" leader as both morally and functionally competent during times of organizational success:

Success and morality tend to be confounded in the minds of followers, so that leaders who fail – even though no fault of their own – are often viewed as less moral than those who succeed. Conversely, those who are in leadership positions during times of prosperity or great gain are often viewed as effective and morally praiseworthy, even if they are not responsible for more outcomes. (Ciulla & Forsyth, 2011)

However, promoting the individual directly conflicts with the value of selflessness the text is encouraging. Moreover, boosting the hero as means to persuade would-be heroes appears absurd if, as the text suggests, espoused heroes develop out of reluctance. They do not aspire to be heroes or label themselves as such, and if they do they typically lose their label. The contradictions and inconsistencies not only leave the reader confused about the concepts of heroism and courage, but they conflate heroism and leadership, thus leaving the reader to interpret "good" leadership (rooted in ethics) with heroic

leadership that romanticizes the individual and has an element of self-aggrandizement.

The individual examples selected also hints toward a critical issue.

All examples of heroism presented in the text are similar in important ways. All were of men, all seemingly of a particular origin. The following is one of these accounts in *The Armed Forces Officer* (2006):

In the 1950s, like many boys from small Midwestern towns, Lance Peter Sijan was a Boy Scout who sang in the church choir, earned his own spending money, and used his model airplanes to dream of future adventures in the sky. In his Milwaukee high school, he excelled in academics, lettered in football, and carried a reputation for honesty and genuine commitment to others that followed him through his officer training... (p. 13)

This brief biography certainly seems to speak to certain readers while creating distance from others. While seemingly simply descriptive, the choice to highlight these particular aspects of his upbringing and place them right before his heroic actions speaks volumes. This lets the reader know that these are all desirable behaviors, attributes, and accolades the military wishes a cadet to have prior to entrance into the organization. The example of the Midwestern young man narrows the pathway for identification with diverse audience members and suggests a fairly unattainable ideal as the guiding example. Then there is the abundantly obviously lack of females presented as heroes in the text – as in zero. This reifies the equating of the “good” leader with the “romanticized notions of the heroic ‘tough’ leader... saturated with masculinity,” (Collinson, 2011, p. 188) thus serving to marginalize women and/or individuals with feminine characteristics and dissuade them from pursuing a life as a military officer.

Again, none of this discussion is to say heroic examples mentioned in the text are any less heroic or courageous. The issue lies with the contradictions, the limits of relying on stories of heroism when teaching future leaders qualities and decision-making mechanisms, and the lack of inclusion regarding the selection of heroic examples. Instead, the text should teach them how to *be* “good;” teach them how to *be* humble, selfless, courageous, and committed by diversifying the examples of heroism. Finally, an inconsistency arises in the logic of teaching heroism in the first place. If as chapter six suggests, the good soldier is one who carries out the mission, what is one to do if notions of heroism conflict with the mission?

The Business of the Military

Various portions of the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) reinforce priority in mission completion as paramount to defining the “good” leader. Many of these notions directly contradict the previously established prioritization of moral convictions that were identified in other portions of the text. The suggestion here is that the behaviors that lead to mission completion are the most essential elements that establish “good” leadership – *what* good leaders do and *how* they do it in relation to organizational success are most important. The rhetorical strategy seems to be dominated by a *corporate metaphor* that emphasizes functionality and organizational success. Because the text seems to suggest that personal ethics are the most important ingredient to good leadership in some places, yet the corporate metaphor focuses attention on organizational success (mission), it is worth examining how the corporate metaphor is used in socializing and developing the military officer.

Before examining the corporate metaphor, it is important to clarify the relevance of metaphor to the rhetorical critic. Classic Aristotelian ideas categorize metaphor under the canon of style, marginalizing its importance and positing it as mere theatrical embellishment, (Burghardt, 2010). However, over time rhetorical scholars have broadened their understanding of how metaphors function and often note that metaphors “are more than superficial ornamentation: they are means by which arguments are expressed. Moreover, metaphors may provide insight into a speaker’s motives or an audience’s social reality. A central metaphor may be the controlling persuasive element in a particular text” (p. 346). Metaphors do not just enrich arguments; they constitute arguments and thus contribute to shaping realities.

War metaphors establish realities and permeate both society as a whole and the organizations within (i.e. advertisements *targeting* certain audiences). In fact, the public relations use of the word “campaign” is taken directly from the battlefield (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Likewise organizational metaphors, specifically *corporate metaphors*, often draw on military rhetoric that frames their persuasion in important ways. The existence of the corporate metaphor in the modern day military stems from Toffler’s (1993) notion that “the way we make war reflects the way we make wealth,” (p. 2) thus presenting warfare as transactional or an analysis of costs and benefits. By extension, “One can presume that actors in a war make rational and proper choices when confronted with competing alternatives, each of which has a cost and a payoff or benefit that are known or available to other actors” (Vego, 2012, p. 163). This leaves the audience to assume that these actors, the “good” leaders, are to behave in a way that most profits the organization. Beyond the success of the mission, the corporate metaphor in the text functions to

influence the individual leader that the costs of joining the military are exceeded by rewards. Incentivizing individuals contradicts values of selfless sacrifice, which are also promoted throughout the text. Presenting the “good” leader as one who primarily provides “profits” to the organization marginalizes individual ethical concerns.

The marginalization of ethical concerns leaves the reader with a simplified view of leadership that fails to capture the complexity and human element involved in conducting warfare. Placing completion of the mission above the development of the individuals carrying out the mission while simultaneously saying both are essential not only confuses and leaves space for interpretation, but it positions people as tangible assets. Viewing war in terms of *winning* and *losing*, as referenced several times throughout the text, reduces people’s contribution to the “points” they earn for the team, and in some cases, they become the “points” themselves. The Iraq War illustrates the ethical issues of reducing warfare to a measurable.

The millions of deployments during the Iraq War resulted in record setting suicide rates (235 during deployment alone), a near 10% increase in divorce rate of those deployed, record setting cases of PTSD, and millions of military family members directly impacted. Not to mention the 115,376 Iraqi civilians killed and 2.7 million displaced (Wood, 2013). There is indeed a designated value on human life in times of war:

The insurance payout to the beneficiaries of an American soldier who dies in the line of duty is \$400,000, while in the eyes of the U.S. government, a dead Iraqi civilian is reportedly worth up to \$2,500 in condolence payments -- about the price of a decent plasma-screen TV. (Bacevich, 2006, p. 1)

In this instance, one American life is worth 160 Iraqi lives, thus completely devaluing concepts of equality in human life. I this means of analyzing the “costs” of war ethical?

The use of a corporate metaphor raises egregious ethical concerns and “creates a dangerous perception that warfare is not a messy and bloody affair but rather a nonviolent clash of the opposing interest” (Vego, 2012). What does this say about the ethical foundation and core principles the text is attempting to establish?

Foundational Principles

Desired core principles in the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) are presented as either finite or continuous. They are presented as finished upon development through a *foundation metaphor*. This serves to let the reader know that principles developed during organizational entry are set upon completion and function as the base in which all other leadership education is built on. Key principles are presented as continuous and ever developing through a *sharpening of the sword* metaphor. This highlights the complex nature of ethics and reinforces a continuous need for reflection and refinement. When leaders believe they have ethics all figured out, they tend to deal in absolutes inconsistent with the complex management of warfare. When leaders view ethics as provisional, they may be convicted and unsure when the moment comes to apply those ethics. Adding to contradictions, portions of the text positioning the principles as fixed through inherent traits and upbringing encourage a trait approach to leadership, which completely invalidates the need for leadership development programs. The contradictions leave the audience with conflicting perceptions and added space for interpretation, whilst calling to question *how* and *when* the desired values in the “good” leader are actually attained. If

the reader does not know whether knowledge is complete or continuously being modified, they would seem to be less convicted.

Willingness to take life, sacrifice one's own life, and manage the sacrifice of others requires elevated convictions. Unwavering commitment and firmness in conviction seems essential to the officer tasked with managing violence. This is exemplified in the military's exclusion of conscience objectors and the sworn oath taken prior to entrance. In this light, the language is less reflective of organizational socialization and more representative of indoctrination. This is explicitly represented in the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006):

The nation allows the membership of a profession a high degree of autonomy in recruitment, training, and performance. In return the profession accepts, collectively, the obligations to assure the competence and ethical conduct of its practitioners, advance the knowledge of their *calling*, to train and *indoctrinate* candidates for membership, and to develop their member throughout their careers.

(p. 32)

The language of indoctrination is spiritual in nature and is more commonly associated with religious organizations and cults versus corporations. The foundation metaphor aligns with notions of indoctrination. It functions to persuade permanence while dissuading growth, thus silencing inquiry into ethical issues upon development. Presenting these values as timeless and immovable promotes objectivity. This *decreases* space for debate.

Contrarily, notions of continuous refinement (represented in the sword metaphor) and development *increases* space for debate. It lets the reader know that understanding

ethics and applying it to leadership is inherently complex, thus requiring significant attention and reflection. This allows for introspection and questioning. Proponents of critical studies would likely endorse this more inclusive approach while rejecting notions of ethics as objective.

The text does not appear to advocate one metaphor over the other. Objective and fixed notions of leadership are heavily criticized because they deny the social aspects of leading and context (Grint, 2011). Certain situations and contradicting priorities may require more fluidity when applying ethics. However, by limiting options and reducing alternatives, the reader is left with a more concise cognitive frame of reference. This serves to mask ambiguities and reify notions of ethics and leadership as simplistic. This calls to question the nature of ambiguity and its function in defining and persuading the good leader.

Absolute Ambiguities

The Armed Forces Officer (2006) proposes to provide common understanding and clarity into the essence of the military office. However, the multiple labels and definitions regarding the “good” leader seem to only intensify abstractions. The abundance of information leaves an incredible amount of space for interpretation and contains a great variety of contradictions. However, presenting information as decisive serves to inspire confidence in would-be leaders; but where lies the source of confidence in the cryptic abstraction?

Thus the crux is that an ambiguous notion of the ethical leader creates diverse identification pathways for audience members and functions to incorporate the entire spectrum of tensions in contradictions. The rhetorical strategy at work is enthymeme. It

functions to leave parts of the argument as unstated; the audience is left to fill in the blanks, which typically align with their individual interpretation of organizational values (Prible, 1990). This is more commonly known as strategic ambiguity. Organizational values are strategically presented as ambiguous because

Their equivocal expression allows for multiple interpretations while at the same time promoting a sense of unity. It is therefore not the case that people are moved toward the same views (in any objectifiable verifiable sense) but rather that the ambiguous statement of core values allows them to maintain individual interpretations while at the same time believing that they are in agreement.

(Eisenburg, 1984, p. 231)

This allows the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) to sound explicit, but ultimately to be unclear, introduce multiple contradictions, mask multiple authors, present a variety of definitions, and encompass five different military branches, yet still persuade the audience to identify with *a* (subjective) “good” leader, as opposed to *the* (objective) “good” leader. Thus an answer to the seemingly paradoxical, *E Pluribus Unum*.

Conclusions

Ultimately, this thesis looked to identify what “good” leadership is and the persuasion used to establish “good” leadership during the process of socializing the military officer. This was done through rhetorical analysis. Contradictions and inconsistencies in the text were identified amongst metaphors and within both deductive and inductive arguments. Because of these inconsistencies and the resulting ambiguity, the audience is left without a clear understanding of “good” leadership.

Limitations

Although this study contributes important information to both military and academic audiences about how certain formal socialization materials function, there is room for further inquiry. Primarily, the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006) only encompasses one aspect of a leadership development program. Although it is representative of the collective perspective of how the military defines and persuades “good” leadership, it does not encompass all aspects of the curriculum. Leadership development (also called training and development) consists both of training and education (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2012). The text represents the educational side. It seeks to educate and inspire the would-be military officer with the knowledge and basic understanding of desired leadership and ethics. Although posited as prescriptive at times, it is more descriptive in nature. Training focuses on the teaching of practical skills and the development of the technical aptitude that helps the individual communicate the qualities of good leadership. Essentially, the text educates the aspiring officer by defining “good” leadership in terms of *why* (motivation) “good” leaders do what they do, *what* “good” leaders do and *how* “good” leaders do what they do (behaviors). The training complementing the education provides the individual with the tools to carry out the behavioral aspect of “good” leadership. Analysis of how those tools are taught would provide interesting insight into the instruction of leadership.

Furthermore, the extent to which the text is used in leadership development programs within the separate military branches is unknown. In the *Armed Forces Officer* (2006), authors claim the text is to be issued to every officer candidate prior to commissioning. The artifact is included as part of the curriculum for cadets in Air Force

Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) at Texas State University–San Marcos. However, it is seldom referenced and seems to play only a marginal role within the program. Again, the text represents the military common denominator on “good” leadership but the extent to which it is actually utilized and understood in various officer development programs is unknown.

Finally, the appendixes were not included in the analysis of the text. This is because they act more as supplemental material to the text and are not written by the authors – i.e. constitutional amendments, the oath of office, the initial version of the text, etc. This is not to diminish their rhetorical value. It is simply to say that they function as separate documents essentially cut and pasted into the end of the text.

Recommendations

Understanding the process by which individuals come to understand what it means to be a “good” leader is an important first step, but future research should work to compliment this understanding by assessing outcomes. Assessment of the individual upon completion of leadership development programs (and after reading the text) is necessary to determine whether concepts presented are clearly communicated and if individuals know how to apply the lessons they’ve learned. It would be beneficial to ask officers directly after their training for clarity purposes, but it would also be important to add longitudinal data by surveying and possibly interviewing officers who have been active in the military for a few years. This type of analysis would help refine these socialization materials to determine if the concepts and ideas being taught actually transferred to practical use for the military officer. Assessment could involve both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The method used in this study reveals the dynamics involved in studying the military as an organization. Initially Hoffman and Ford's (2010) method of analyzing organizational rhetoric, which is built on a neo-Aristotelian frame, was used because the military, just like corporations, institutions, non-profit organizations and the like can be understood as "organized voices" through the organization-communication equivalency perspective. To a certain extent, this model serves the purposes of this project well. Organizational rhetorical methods seem appropriate and shed light on the process of organizing when the military is presented as either a corporation or when individual branches are being discussed. The corporate metaphor works to establish identification through *competence* and *community* (i.e. the military service of competent defense in exchange for monetary and public support). Certain unifying symbols, slogans, and branding are more apparent within the separate military branches (i.e. distinct uniforms, "A Global Force for Good," "Every Marine is a Rifleman"). When presenting the military as a business or breaking them up into branches, organizational rhetoric makes more sense. However, the military is not simply a corporation or business, which means some of the concepts, theories and methods of organizational rhetorical analysis don't produce a natural fit. This is likely due to the bias organizational scholarship tends to favor toward for-profit organizations (Meisenbach & McMillan, 2006).

Alternatively, "social movement studies tend to focus on how one kind of noncorporate organization finds and uses its voice," (Meisenbach & McMillan, 2006, p. 124). The abundance of spiritual language the military incorporates into its socializing techniques (i.e. "higher calling") makes this connection abundantly plausible. Perhaps the tools to critique social movements could be applied to the military organization, and thus

used to extrapolate meanings of how leaders are socialized into a particularly unique organization that incorporates elements of indoctrination into socialization. Taking it step further, perhaps a merger between social movement and organizational rhetorical methods can create an entire new methodology conducive to studying military organizations and other non-profit service organizations alike (law enforcement, firefighting, etc.).

There is an increasing need to understand the dynamics of leadership and ethics in the military. During the process of this study, the scrutiny toward the ethics of RPA use (drones) has increased in the public spectrum. The most elevated military leader of this generation, General David Petraeus, came under fire and resigned for ethical violations concerning his affair with the writer of his biography. This led to Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta to task the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin E. Dempsey, with the examination of military officer ethics training (Garamone, 2013). The results of the study yielded a need for increased emphasis on ethics in early officer development. General Dempsey wants, “these values to be less abstract and more real to people” and goes on to say, “In times of conflict, it may be that we tend to overvalue competence and undervalue character, and we need to watch that,” (p. 1). Such starts with the socializing of the ethical leader; perhaps it does not require reducing complexity. One step is to acknowledge the complex nature of ethical decision-making and present it as such in the training materials. This would function to provide a realistic preview of what is to come for newly trained officers. The second step is to listen to the newly trained officer to determine if what is being taught is, in fact, enabling them to serve as a “good” leader.

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