

Drama, Narrative and Charismatic Leadership

The Case of Steve Jobs

Work and Organisational Studies

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or produced by another party in fulfilment, partial or otherwise, of any other degree or diploma at another university or institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

Abhimanyu Sharma

Dedication

For my parents, Atul and Nandita, who sacrificed everything to give me a better life.

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There are many people to whom I owe great thanks. First, thank you to my supervisor, David Grant, whose wisdom, patience and humour has made a tremendous impression on me. I am grateful to Mark Westcott, Diane van den Broek, Arlene Harvey, Susan McGrath-Champ, Bradon Ellem, John Shields and Rages Palanisamy for extending me their time, counsel and encouragement at various stages during the last two years. Thank you also to my family and friends for their love and support; congratulations on enduring the very best and worst of me. Finally, I would like to pay homage to Buddha, whose teachings give me strength, and an unyielding belief that I can make the world a better place.

Abstract

Since the 1970s, management scholars have been captivated by the emotional and symbolic aspects of leadership, particularly charismatic leadership — a form of influence independent of tradition and formal authority. More recently, dramaturgical scholars have sought to augment orthodox understandings of charisma by examining leadership as a ‘performing art’: a ‘front stage’ social interaction between ‘actor’ (leader) and ‘audience’ (followers). Whereas existing research has examined the nature of charismatic leadership through, for example, impression management and social constructionism, this thesis suggests that dramaturgical scholars have largely neglected to demonstrate the value of the theatrical metaphor by testing, evaluating and building on extant theory through a case study leader. The thesis seeks to augment extant theory by revealing the importance of i) ‘narrative and storytelling’, and ii) the ‘stage management’ of leader performance to the audience’s attribution and maintenance of what constitutes a ‘charismatic’ leader. Accordingly, this thesis develops a narratologically informed dramaturgical framework of analysis to examine six public performance texts by a case study ‘charismatic leader’ — Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. The framework is tendered as a useful device through which narrative and storytelling, impression management, organisational outcomes, and the social construction of charismatic leadership may be further examined.

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
Altair	The Altair 8800 computer
Apple	Apple Incorporated (formerly Apple Computer)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Chrysler	Chrysler LLC
CPU	Central Processing Unit
Disney	The Walt Disney Company
DRM	Digital Rights Management
EMI	Electric & Musical Industries Limited
FireWire	FireWire (Port)
Hubbard Foods	Hubbard Foods Limited
IDG	The International Data Group
IM	Impression Management
Mac	(Apple) Macintosh computer
Mac OS 9	Macintosh Operating System (Version) Nine
Mac OS X	Macintosh Operating System (Version) Ten
Macworld	Macworld Conference and Expo
Microsoft	Microsoft Corporation
Motorola	Motorola Incorporated
NCA	National Council on Alcoholism
NeXT	NeXT Computer Incorporated
Nokia	Nokia Corporation
Palm	Palm Incorporated
Pixar	Pixar Animation Studios Incorporated
PR	Public Relations
R&D	Research and Development

RIM	Research In Motion Limited
Sony BMG	Sony Bertelsmann Music Group
Universal	Universal Music Group
US	The United States of America
USB	Universal Serial Bus (Port)
Warner	Warner Music Group
Windows	Microsoft Windows (Operating System)
WWDC	Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference

Chapter One

Introduction

...the high sentiments always win in the end, leaders who offer blood, toil, tears and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and a good time. When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic.

— George Orwell (Orwell et al., 2000: 164)

The charismatic leader captivates the audience like a masterful thespian who graces the stage to deliver a virtuoso performance. An inspiring performance can temporarily ‘suspend’ reality, animating belief in a particular, seemingly absurd, vision or idea — yet, one which the leader’s followers will ungrudgingly sacrifice their own material self-interests to pursue a visionary cause (Yukl, 2006). While there is limited empirical evidence to suggest a positive relationship between charismatic leadership and organisational performance outcomes, companies have nevertheless sought charismatic leaders in recent decades to vanguard corporate turnarounds and transformational change (Khurana, 2002). What is so remarkable about the charismatic leader? What compels followers to willingly compromise their time, money, health, personal relationships, career opportunities, and even job security to work alongside a charismatic leader? Despite great interest in charisma in scholarly literature and the popular press, dramaturgical approaches to charismatic leadership, appraising leadership as a ‘performing art’ (Mangham, 1990; Clark & Salaman, 1998), have been largely neglected in recent research. Moreover, much of the existing research has failed to test, evaluate and build on extant theory through a case study ‘leader’.

This thesis explores the charismatic relationship — a co-construction of the leader's 'charismatic' image by leader and follower — from a dramaturgical perspective, conceiving the leader as an 'actor' and followers as the 'audience'. Charismatic leaders employ 'impression management' in various situations, with existing research illustrating its use to mount the case for transformational change (Conger, 1998; Garvin & Roberto, 2005); construct a favourable social identity for audiences (Walker & Monin, 2001); and even grant a 'stay of execution' in the face of criticism or failure (Clark & Salaman, 1998; Sosik et al., 2002). Importantly, by dramaturgically approaching the study of charismatic leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon between leader and follower, the thesis appreciates impression management as a continuous, iterative and recursive process. Dramaturgists espouse the metaphor of 'theatre' in their examinations of social and organisational life to explain social interaction as complex interplays 'performed' by individuals and group, all of whom adopt a 'social character' during these encounters (Goffman, 1959). Burke's (1969) seminal writings on dramatism justify the conception of human beings as 'actors', arguing that a person's behaviour in a social situation is bound by an imputation of 'motives'. As such, the dramaturgical perspective is commensurate with the social constructionist approach, in which an understanding of language and symbolism forms the basis for the conception of the 'leader' and leadership. This thesis seeks to position itself within, and extend upon nascent theory of charismatic leadership from the dramaturgical perspective.

Amid growing interest in charismatic leadership in the popular press and academic literature, it is perhaps opportune to more closely scrutinise impression management as a product of discourse, particularly 'narrative and storytelling'. Whereas leadership scholars appreciate persuasion and impression management as processual phenomena (Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Garvin & Roberto, 2005), the role of narrative and storytelling as a vehicle through which the leader negotiates self-image remains implicit. Narrative and storytelling features in organisational studies principally as a 'sense-making' device, by meaningfully sequencing ideas, actions or events through a 'plot' (Weick, 1995; Czarniawska, 1998). This thesis explores the ways in which the leader is able to use narrative and storytelling as powerful linguistic symbols, through which they may 'define' themselves and the world for others, and thereby control and integrate followers (Salzer-Möring, 1998). Furthermore, the consumption of these organisational realities by followers intimates the

leader's 'sense-making' as a power-laden process, denoting social difference between the leader and the led. Hence, this thesis argues that narrative and storytelling is, in fact, a centrepiece of the leader's jointly constructed 'charismatic' image.

The dominant purpose of this thesis is to document and examine the publicly practised impression management techniques of a case study 'charismatic leader', exploring how the leader utilises narrative and storytelling in performances to construct a 'charismatic' image for the consumption of followers. In so doing, the study endeavours to highlight the value of the dramaturgical perspective to studies of charismatic leadership.

Espousing a social constructionist view of organisational life, leadership and discursive practices, the thesis analyses the spoken (e.g. keynote addresses, speeches) and written (e.g. essays) public 'performances' of a case study 'charismatic leader' as discursive texts to reveal the leader's embedded narratives. The audiences of the leader's public performance comprises a broad range of stakeholders, comprising employees, Board members, shareholders, business partners, market analysts, competitors, regulatory bodies, consumers, and of course, the media. Each stakeholder consumes a unique impression of the leader, based on their frame of reference, after which they may make a material decision about the organisation. A discourse analytic approach, principally through the 'systematic study of texts' (Grant & Hardy, 2003), enables us to uniquely reflect on the leader as an 'actor', and the narratives and stories they are in; each text contains cues about objects of knowledge, conceptions of self, social status and relationships, and power (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). To observe the case study leader's public performances through a discursive lens thus enables the audience to interpret how 'meaning' is constructed, contested and re-negotiated through discursive interactions between the leader, organisational members and organisational publics (Mumby & Clair, 1997).

Since the nineteen-eighties, scholars and global business have been enamoured by the 'new leadership' paradigm (Bryman, 1992). Corporate social responsibility scandals (*see* Minkes et al., 1999; Michelson & Wailes, 2006) and a long-term decline in corporate profitability led business gurus to shun the once trusted 'company man' CEO who worked his way up the ranks. Instead, they sought someone who could put an end to 'business as usual' (Khurana,

2002). It precipitated the search for the ‘charismatic leader’: a ‘white knight’ capable of satisfying the media’s burgeoning appetite for digestible quantities of business news: business ‘code’ for personalities and ‘rudimentary narratives’ (Khurana, 2002). The recruitment of high profile charismatic leaders has been part of a burgeoning trend in the contemporary business milieu to meet the demands of competitive pressures and globalisation, and has been met with commensurately intense media scrutiny of these leader during tenure (Harvey & Shields, 2007).

The central question of the thesis therefore reads, *‘How does an understanding of narrative inform dramaturgical approaches to the study of charismatic leadership?’*

By answering the core research question, the thesis also endeavours to answer three subsidiary questions. First, the thesis seeks to identify a dramaturgical model of charismatic leadership that captures the narratives and stories performed by the leader, as part of impression management. In the absence of an extant model, a conceptual framework of analysis that is informed by key aspects of the literature shall be developed. Second, the thesis wishes to answer precisely how the leader utilises narrative and storytelling to construct and maintain their ‘charismatic’ image among followers, by examining the framing, scripting, staging and performance of each text. In so doing, the thesis also aspires to augment existing research by envisaging the leader *as* ‘narrative’. That is, how do the leader’s narrative performances perpetuate his or her own ‘grand narrative’? Third, the thesis seeks to determine the significance of ‘stage management’ to the construction and maintenance of the leader’s ‘charismatic’ image among followers, which revisits a postulation in early dramaturgical writings that the segregation of ‘front’ and ‘back’ regions are vital to the social presentation of self (Goffman, 1959). If followers (‘audience members’), for example, encroach on the ‘backstage’, or employees (‘supporting cast members’) ‘leak’ details about the leader’s (‘actor’) performance, what effect, if any, does it have on the leader’s ‘charismatic’ image?

The leader nominated as the case study for the thesis is Steven (‘Steve’) Paul Jobs of Apple Inc., who is widely acknowledged as a charismatic leader in media commentaries and scholarly works (*see* Gardner and Avolio, 1998; Harvey, 2001; Khurana, 2002). Jobs was a co-founding member of Apple Computer in 1976, and remained at the company until his

highly controversial dismissal in 1985. In 1997, Jobs returned to Apple, after twelve years in the ‘wilderness’, and proceeded to revive the company’s fortunes. Jobs is renowned for his public performances, during which he traditionally announces new consumer products and services. This thesis examines six performances by Jobs since his return to Apple in 1997, including keynote addresses, a speech, and an essay. Video and audio recordings, as well as transcripts of the selected performances have been sourced, and are complemented by a variety of online, newspaper and magazine articles about events in the ‘backstage’ and ‘scene’ (context) preceding each performance. In examining each public performance text from a dramaturgical perspective, the thesis calls attention to the framing, scripting, staging and performing of Jobs’ narratives and stories.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first has provided a ‘snapshot’ about dramaturgical approaches to charismatic leadership, highlighting shortcomings in the existing research that have inspired the thesis’ core research question. The second examines key perspectives in the literature on charismatic leadership, dramaturgy, and narrative. Appraisal of the three areas of research form the basis for the conception of an integrated framework of analysis that shall subsequently be applied to the case study leader. Chapter Three articulates the dramaturgically and discursively informed research design and methodology of the thesis. Chapter Four introduces Jobs’ charismatic leadership ‘narrative’ and proceeds to present a narrative analysis of six performance texts by Jobs between 1997-2007. The chapter also discusses Jobs *as* ‘narrative’, fusing his performances together to develop a ‘grand narrative’ about Jobs’ charismatic leadership since his return to Apple in 1997. Chapter Five provides a summary of the thesis’ key contributions; discusses research limitations; and offers suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two

Charismatic Leadership, Drama and Narrative

...charisma is the result of effective leadership, not the other way round.

(Bennis & Nanus, 1985: 224)

2.1 Introduction

In examining charismatic leadership as ‘theatre’, this thesis seeks to ‘rethink’ impression management theory. While impression management has often been regarded as a ‘novelty item’ by some scholars, it has emerged as a useful tool in organisational research. Yet its role and importance to studies of leadership remain largely undefined. In part, scholarly endeavours to anatomise ‘new leadership’ theories have, ironically, led writers to conflate interconnected yet nuanced concepts such as leadership style, ‘emotional intelligence’, rhetoric, persuasion, and impression management, into one. Equally, narrative research maintains a long intellectual tradition in organisational studies, yet the analysis of narrative and storytelling in leadership ‘performance’ remains sparse, if not unprecedented.

Chapter Two commences by chronicling the emergence of the ‘new leadership’ paradigm, and proceeds to evaluate key aspects of charismatic leadership theory (House, 1977; Conger & Kanungo, 1987), including its impact on followers and the organisation. Ensuing, the chapter

introduces dramaturgy and impression management, a lens through which the presentation of self and leadership may be studied as a ‘performing art’ (Goffman, 1959; Burke, 1969; Mangham & Overington, 1987). The chapter also appraises ‘narrative and storytelling’, as well as discursive approaches to the study of leadership, which consider the socially constructed and contingent aspects of leadership often overlooked in orthodox theory. Finally, through examinations of charismatic leadership, drama and narrative, Chapter Two develops an integrated conceptual framework of analysis that synthesises the narrative and dramaturgical construction of the leader’s ‘charismatic’ image.

2.2 Charismatic Leadership

2.2.1 The Emergence of the ‘New Leadership’ Paradigm

Dramatic changes in the global business environment during the 1980s had far-reaching effects, sparking scholarly interest in a ‘new leadership’ paradigm that emphasised affective features: emotion, symbol and charisma (Bryman, 1992). The rise of the Asian economies, as well as European countries such as Germany threatened to usurp the market dominance of North American corporations (Bryman, 1992; House, 1995). According to Conger (1999), the prospect of emerging global competition prompted many of these companies to radically reinvent themselves, only to find that they lacked the expertise to co-ordinate large-scale change management, and that the leadership talent pool was in short supply. Despite improving bottom-line performance, the long-term repercussions of extensive downsizing, flattened hierarchies and strategising were far greater than anyone in corporate America envisaged, fracturing the implicit social contract of life-long employment, and consequently, employee loyalty (Conger, 1999). Meanwhile, explosive claims of unethical behaviour and ‘white collar’ crime levelled against renowned corporations throughout the 1980s had shattered trust among market analysts, private and institutional investors, the media, and the general public (Minkes et al., 1999). ‘Big business’ was now at an impasse, desperate to ‘shake off’ its besmirched image — what to do?

The business elite were soon persuaded that increasing employee commitment and morale would ameliorate company performance, and that the senior ‘charismatic leader’ was right the

person to inspire employees toward the ‘promised land’, equipped with the knowledge, power and resources to orchestrate transformational change (Burns, 1978; Conger, 1999). The impact of charismatic leadership on the corporate landscape over the past three decades is the subject of vociferous debate. Whilst the media and scholars have recounted the innumerable glories of ‘white knights’, ‘shamans’ and ‘turnaround merchants’, adversaries have also found their voice, chronicling many slow and unsuccessful turnaround efforts (Reeves-Ellington, 1998; Conger, 1999). Khurana distils the sceptics’ argument down to the issue of ‘fundamental attribution error’:

Major events are easier to understand when we can attribute them to the actions of prominent individuals rather than having to consider the interplay of social, economic, and other impersonal forces that shape and constrain even the most heroic individual efforts.

(Khurana, 2002: 62)

Nevertheless, leadership scholars have undertaken the challenge of responding to many of these criticisms. Researchers such as Kotter (1988) and Zaleznik (1977; 1990) have sought to disambiguate between ‘leaders’ and ‘managers’, arguing that the manager’s mandate is to be a guardian of the status quo, whilst the leader’s mandate is to commandeer change by taking risks. According to Kotter, change, by definition, is about new systems and ways of thinking, ‘which in turn always demands leadership’ (2007: 97). In the following years, this particular rendering of business history, which observed the mixed successes of corporate turnaround efforts as a case of too many managers and too few leaders, was received favourably by scholars and remains the prevalent view in orthodox research (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1999).

2.2.2 Charismatic Leadership Theory

The word ‘charisma’ is of Greek etymology, meaning ‘gift’ or ‘divine favour’, referring to an innate and indescribable charm found in an ‘exclusive few’ that, when wielded, is a source of great power and influence over others (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2006). In the 1940s, renowned German sociologist Max Weber (1947) studied charisma as a form of influence independent

of tradition and formal authority, based on follower perceptions of the leader’s extraordinary qualities. While Weber regarded charisma as a ‘divinely inspired’ personality characteristic that emerged during crisis conditions, he acknowledged the role played by followers in validating the person’s charisma, which subsequently elevated him or her to a position of leadership in the community.

In the late 1970s, House (1977) published a book about a self-concept theory of charismatic leadership, which claimed that a person is born ‘charismatic’, with personality traits that manifest in specific types of behaviours, and correspondingly, have predictable effects on followers:

Table 2.1: Personality Characteristics, Behaviours, and Effects on Followers of Charismatic Leadership (House, 1977; cited in Northouse, 2007: 178)

Personality Characteristics	Behaviours	Effects on Followers
Dominant	Sets strong role model	Trust in leader’s ideology
Desire to influence	Shows competence	Belief similarity between leader and follower
Confident	Articulates goals	Unquestioning acceptance
Strong values	Communicates high expectations	Affection towards leader
	Expresses confidence	Obedience
	Arouses motives	Identification with leader
		Emotional involvement
		Heightened goals
		Increased confidence

As *Table 2.1* indicates, House (1977) posits that charismatic leaders have dominant personalities, a strong set of morals and values, confidence, and a wish to influence others. For House, the ‘charismatic’ subject’s personality traits beget a predictable set of leadership

behaviours, which subsequently elicit charismatic follower effects. A short period after House publication, Burns' (1978) transformational leadership model corroborated several of House's axioms, believing leadership behaviours were also characterised by the arousal of motives, articulation of goals, and communication of high expectations.

Importantly, for House (1977), the charismatic leader harnesses their dominant personality to influence the attitude and behaviours of followers. The use of spirited and evocative language during spoken performances about a vision is the zenith of the influence process, and furthermore, is reinforced through symbolic acts such as self-sacrifice and personal risk-taking by the leader to achieve the vision (Yukl, 2006). To therefore observe the charismatic leader as an exemplar for the vision is an ostensibly powerful image for followers that is more effective when the leader expresses confidence in them and the vision; invokes a collective identity; and ultimately empowers followers to 'achieve' (Yukl, 2006).

The cogency of House's (1977) theory lies in its discussion of follower effects. The charismatic leader's performance cultivates a trust, affection and loyalty among followers, who also experience a high sense of involvement and self-worth because they identify with the leader's value system, ideology and ambitions (House, 1977; Northouse, 2007). The leader harnesses this social identification, invoking self, vision and organisational promotion to speak to the shared values and work role identities of the group, which evokes a feeling of pride among followers about the meaning and importance of their work roles (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Conger et al., 2000). Furthermore, the leader reinforces and enhances social identification through artefacts of organisational life, including symbols, slogans, rituals, ceremonies, and stories of heroism and past glories (Schein, 1985; Salzer-Mörling, 1998; Yukl, 2006). Finally, the charismatic leader enunciates a relationship between the accomplishment of task objectives and follower's expression of values and self-concept, which equates the follower's work role with their sense of self-worth.

Conger and Kanungo's (1987; 1998) attribution theory of charismatic leadership conceptualises the charismatic qualities of the leader differently to House's self-concept theory, and is based on the leader's behaviour, expertise and the situation. Conger and Kanungo (1987) hypothesise that charismatic leaders fulfil a 'reformer role', observing

opportunities that predecessors and competitors fail to recognise. In championing a vision, often at great personal cost and risk, which radically departs from the status quo (Conger & Kanungo, 1987), the charismatic leader distinguishes him or herself from an ‘administrator’ (Zaleznik, 1977). Of course, a bold vision carries great risks, requiring assessments of organisational and environmental factors; timing considerations; as well as the needs and values of followers (Yukl, 2006). Nevertheless, Conger and Kanungo (1987; 1998) claim that the charismatic leader’s assertive behaviour, self-confidence, unconventionality, and intolerance for the status quo is precisely what enchants followers.

‘Personal identification’ is the central influence process under the attribution theory of charismatic leadership. Conger (1989) describes followers as being in complete awe of the charismatic leader, to the point of idolatry, with a strong desire to emulate their behaviour. For followers, the praise and recognition of the charismatic leader effectively constitutes their own self-worth; followers may be motivated to perform because of a desire for approval, or out of fear of disappointing, or being rejected by the leader (Yukl, 2006). Counter to the Weberian notion that the charismatic leader emerges during a crisis situation (Weber, 1947), Conger and Kanungo (1987) contend that a leader is capable of manufacturing ‘psychological distress’ during periods of prevailing social order to facilitate the emergence of that leader’s charismatic image. In this situation, impressionable followers are convinced of the status quo’s inefficiencies, and readily embrace the ways of the leader to whom they attribute ‘charisma’ — after all, the leader is (putatively) equipped with ‘new ideas’ and ‘unconventional ways’ of accomplishing the appealing vision.

2.2.3 Alternative Approaches to Charismatic Leadership

Whereas self-concept and attribution theories of charismatic leadership attract headline interest in scholarly research, psychodynamic processes and social contagion theory provide unique and valid accounts of the charismatic influence process.

The psychodynamic approach seeks to explain why the charismatic leader comes to be regarded as a ‘spiritual figure’ or ‘superhero’. The seemingly irrational influence of the charismatic leader over followers is explained through (but is not limited to) the

psychodynamic processes of regression, transference, and projection (Yukl, 2006). Lindholm (1988) asserts that followers are attracted to the charismatic leader through narcissistic appeal, viewing in the leader a 'mother' figure that offers empowerment, vitality and intense pleasure. Accordingly, the charismatic relationship constitutes a regression to the most primitive human bond, offering the follower comfort and safety from feelings of fear and guilt. Similarly, followers may wish to overcome their weak social identity and feelings of inadequacy by vicariously experiencing the moral superiority of the charismatic leader, hence attributing 'charismatic' or 'superhuman' qualities to the leader for their own emotional sustenance (Kets de Vries, 1988).

Meindl's (1990) social contagion theory focuses upon the influence processes among followers that lead to their attribution of 'charisma', contending that spontaneous emotional and behavioural reactions are capable of being spread by people — evident in social, religious and political movements. According to Meindl (1990), most people have a 'heroic social identity' that lays dormant in their self-concept. It awaits activation by a worthy leader and cause during a crisis situation, or a threat to self-esteem (Conger, 1999). The contagion process begins with only a few followers that are enamoured by the leader's vision, who proceed to spread the ideology through the imitation of non-conformist behaviour and symbolism (e.g. clothing, gestures, rituals and oaths). At first, non-followers may view the behaviours of followers as abnormal, but as non-followers loosen their inhibitions they become 'converts' and continue the contagion process. Most importantly, Meindl (1990) asserts that follower loyalties to the 'cause' outlive allegiances to the charismatic leader. That is, followers shift support to successive leaders, so long as the new candidate is attractive and qualified for the leadership position. Thus, social contagion explains the attribution of charisma by followers who may not interact with, or even observe the leader from a distance.

2.2.4 The 'Dark Side' of Leadership and Charisma

Studies of historical leaders reveal that charismatic leadership has both positive and negative consequences. While extant theory indicates that charismatic leadership has the potential to inspire and rally followers toward the accomplishment of a goal or vision, there is also a 'dark

side' of charisma that can have a devastating impact on followers and the organisation (Maccoby, 2004).

The self-confidence and optimism of the charismatic leader often conceals flaws and risks in the leader's vision. In fact, followers that closely identify with the leader's vision are less likely to give an objective appraisal of its strengths and weaknesses (Yukl, 2006). Khurana (2002) calls attention to the example of Enron's CEO, Jeff Skilling, whose charisma induced blind faith in his followers about a vision to transform Enron into an 'asset light', 'new economy' company. Skilling's 'think outside the box' refrain to employees rapidly escalated into a 'whatever-it-takes' contest for his praise and approval. What is worse, the Board of Directors and upper management's excessive deference for Skilling created a 'yes-man' culture, which precipitated a series of 'off-the-book' partnerships that would lead to Enron's ultimate downfall (Michelson & Wailes, 2006). While the case of Jeff Skilling is extreme, it highlights the awe, desire for acceptance, and delusions of infallibility that characterised his leadership:

Narcissists have vision — but that's not enough. People in mental hospitals also have visions.

(Maccoby, 2004: 96)

Maccoby (2004) alleges that narcissism is an underlying feature of charismatic leadership, describing them as poor listeners and highly sensitive to criticism. For example, while followers may feel they are offering meaningful and constructive feedback about a vision, the leader experiences criticism as an attack against his or her self-concept, because the vision is an expression of 'self'. Narcissistic leaders also have intensely competitive personalities. They are driven by the promise of 'victory' and the threat of 'extinction' — a binary which generates a competitive narcissism of fear, aggression and distrust (Maccoby, 2004).

Flett and Hewitt (2006) examine 'perfectionism' as another leadership pathology, describing it as the leader's means of coping with the fear of failure and vulnerable self-worth. Unlike neurotic perfectionists, Flett and Hewitt (2006) explain that 'narcissistic perfectionists' aggressively demand a level of perfection from employees that they ostensibly see in

themselves. For followers, the consequences of narcissistic perfectionism include resentment of work roles and the work relationship, workaholism, stress, and even ‘burnout’ (Flett & Hewitt, 2006). In a similar vein, Maccoby (2004) posits that narcissistic leaders lack empathy, and are not particularly mindful of the values, wants and needs of followers. Whereas ‘emotionally intelligent’ leaders are reputedly in tune with themselves (Goleman, 1998; 2000), narcissistic leaders are rarely held accountable for poor evaluations about their interpersonal skills and leadership style – so long as they deliver ‘results’ (Maccoby, 2004).

2.2.5 The Long Term Impacts of Charismatic Leadership

In many ways, the organisational consequences of charismatic leadership outlive the charismatic leader, particularly with respect to the ‘routinisation’ of charisma, and leadership succession. Weber (1947) was intrigued by the extent to which charisma may be integrated into the daily routines and practices of organisations, meaning that the energy, values and positive consequences of charismatic leadership would be survived by the organisation well after the leader’s departure. While Weber discovered incentives for the leader and followers to codify their developments, he concluded that charisma was a largely unstable force that was equally likely to fade. Trice and Beyer’s (1986) case study of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and the National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) contrasted the legacies of its founding leaders. Whereas AA maintained an oral and written tradition preserving the leader’s message and developed an administrative framework independent of the leader, the NCA failed to routinise its founding leader’s charisma in either of these ways (Trice & Beyer, 1986).

Conger (1999) queries whether Weber’s routinisation hypothesis is relevant to today’s globally competitive environment, in which market movements and rapid technological change make the routinisation of charisma near impossible. Accordingly, the fragility of charisma has significantly longer-term impacts for the organisation, in the form of succession dilemmas. During their career, the charismatic leader will receive promotions, move to new organisations, retire or perhaps die — leaving a void in their organisation (Conger, 1993; Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Organisations often endeavour to recruit a charismatic leader to replace predecessors, yet many organisations instead opt for ‘managerialist’ candidates. For example, Robert Eaton succeeded Lee Iacocca at Chrysler, while Roy Disney replaced Walt

Disney at Disney (Bryman, 1993). Given the pace of change and competitiveness in the contemporary business milieu, ‘organisations may simply not be conducive to the long-term institutionalisation of a leader’s charisma’ (Conger, 1999: 170). Rather, the charismatic leader’s reign is ephemeral.

2.3 Drama

2.3.1 Dramaturgy and Impression Management

Kenneth Burke and Erving Goffman’s seminal writings on dramatism and dramaturgy (respectively) underpin studies of leadership as a ‘performing art’. Dramaturgy involves the study of ‘human relations and human motive... via a methodical inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their functions’ (Burke, 1989: 135). Dramaturgical sociologists observe life as ‘theatre’, in which interactions between social agents amount to ‘performances’ of ‘characters’ that are carefully scripted, rehearsed and staged. Accordingly, the philosophy and symbolism of language is fundamental to dramaturgical research, as it forms the basis for the conception of man, and of social relations (Burke, 1989). According to Burke (1969), all social action and interaction is affiliated with and propelled by ‘purpose’:

...the basic forms of thought, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attribution of motives.

(Burke, 1969: x)

Burke (1969) posits that all social action and experience is imputed to ‘motives’. Profound or trivial, true or false — the motives precipitating social action transcend all domains of human achievement, including metaphysical structures; political and scientific works; literature and the law; as well as news and gossip (Burke, 1969).

In ‘A Grammar of Motives’, Burke (1969) devises a dramaturgical pentad that seeks to make sense of a social event and its underlying human motivations. The dramaturgical pentad comprises five key terms that collectively form a ‘rounded statement’ about motives: ‘act’, ‘scene’, ‘agent’, ‘agency’, and ‘purpose’. The ‘act’ refers to a thought or deed that is initiated

by a 'situation' and arrives at an 'end' through a process of action (Parsons, 1937). The 'scene' refers to the background or context of the act, situating 'what happened' in both temporal and spatial terms. The 'agent' is an identification of the subject performing the 'act', which may be modified by friends (co-agents) or enemies (counter-agents), while 'agency' refers to the means (i.e. material or rhetorical instruments) utilised by the agent to accomplish the 'act'. Finally, the 'purpose' alludes to the agent's motivation for performing the 'act'.

Whereas each of the five key terms may be examined independently, Burke (1969) tendered the dramatisic pentad as a synoptic model, establishing 'ratios' between terms to generate further analysis. First, the scene-act ratio represents the notion that the event or performance should be consistent with the nature of the 'scene'. To illustrate this point, Burke calls attention to the grammar between 'scene' and 'act' expressed by Horatio during an early scene in Shakespeare's Hamlet:

*The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears its roar beneath.*

— Horatio (Hamlet: Act I, Scene IV; cited in Burke, 1969: 6)

In this scene, Horatio comments on his desolate surroundings, suggesting that it is enough to occasion thoughts about an act as desperate and absolute as suicide. Burke's use of this example seeks to illustrate how the 'scene' is generative of the 'act' — hence the scene-act ratio. Contrastingly, the scene-agent ratio exemplifies the relationship between the actor and their situation. When 'in ratio', Burke (1969) asserts that the scene and agent are consonant, such that the nature of the scene is reflected in the nature of the scene's agent(s). Of course, Burke demonstrates that the scene-agent relationship may not always be 'in ratio', citing the example of bad working conditions under capitalism (scene) and its 'brutalising' effect upon the people (agents) 'indigenous to the scene' (Burke, 1969: 9). This 'dilemma' leads Burke to consequently examine the act-agent ratio, which is about man's capacity for self-determination:

The agent is an author of his acts, which are descended from him, being good progeny if he is good, or bad progeny if he is bad, wise progeny if he is wise, silly progeny if he is silly.

(Burke, 1969: 16)

Burke (1969) develops a voluntarist conception of human beings, believing them to be ‘authors’ of their own actions, notwithstanding the influence of the ‘scene’. While ‘A Grammar of Motives’ notes further instances of these ratios, as well as their ubiquity in all human relations, the scene-act, scene-agent, and act-agent ratios were of principal interest to Burke in his studies of dramatism.

In contrast, Erving Goffman’s (1959) ‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’ posits that people’s perceptions generate realities, influencing their ideas and basis for intended behaviour. According to Goffman (1959), when an individual enters the presence of others, they desire information about the individual that helps to define the situation. Through social interaction, the group learns of what they can expect of the individual, and the individual learns of what to expect from the group. Correspondingly, Goffman (1959) submits that social agents design their actions to elicit a desired response from others — social interaction may thus be viewed as a ‘performance’ that conveys an impression of ‘self’ to others.

In ‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’, Goffman (1959) proposes the ‘impression management’ (IM) framework to study social establishment — a process by which an individual or team of actors ‘present to the audience a given definition of a situation’ (Goffman, 1959: 238). According to Goffman (1959), the performance routine is prepared in a ‘back region’ that the audience is not usually granted access to. The ‘back region’ houses information not addressed to the audience, as well as secrets that are shared and kept between supporting cast members. While the actor may maintain a healthy ‘working consensus’ with their audience (i.e. agreement is emphasised, opposition is underplayed), they invariably hold opinions that would only express ‘out of character’, in the audience’s absence. As such, when audience members encroach on the ‘back region’, or conversely when the actor commits a ‘faux pas’ or ‘unintended gesture’ on the front stage before the audience, it

will ‘complicate the problem of putting on a show’ because it betrays their social ‘character’ (Goffman, 1959: 239).

Maintaining a congruence between the goals of the actor or organisation and their intended actions lies at the heart of Goffman’s IM framework. Goffman (1959) details a range of defensive IM techniques used by performers to sustain their ‘social character’, including dramaturgical loyalty, discipline and circumspection. First, ‘dramaturgical loyalty’ refers to an actor and cast member’s obligation not to disclose secrets about the team before, during or even after a ‘performance’, whether out of self-interest, principle, candour or otherwise. According to Goffman (1959), dramaturgical loyalty may be enhanced by cultivating solidarity among ‘backstage’ members, and regularly changing the composition of the audience to mitigate the possibility of affective ties. Second, ‘dramaturgical discipline’ describes ‘poise’ — that is, a truly masterful performer must be divorced from spontaneity and emotion during a performance, to avoid ‘disruption’. Of course, if a faux pas or unintended gesture disrupts the performance, Goffman believes the actor must exercise a ‘presence of mind’ and underplay its importance, self-abase, and sincerely apologise for the transgression (Gardner, 1992). Most critically, the actor must practice ‘self control’ and good judgement when moving from private spaces of informality, to public spaces with ‘varying degrees of formality’ (Goffman, 1959). Finally, ‘dramaturgical circumspection’ refers to foresight. Goffman asserts that a successful actor and supporting cast member will prepare for contingencies and exploit opportunities. Accordingly, the actor must endeavour to recruit dramaturgically loyal and disciplined supporting cast members, and favour audience compositions that offer little resistance to the actor and/or performance troupe. Rather, as Goffman explains, the supporting cast reaffirms the actor’s role:

...if a man of influence and power is to make sure that he can take a friendly role in office interactions, then it will be useful for him to have a private elevator and protective circles of receptionists and secretaries so that no one can get to see him whom he might have to treat in a heartless or snobbish fashion.

(Goffman, 1959: 219)

Goffman completes the IM framework by introducing the intriguing practice of ‘tactful inattention’. Whereas the performer and supporting cast endeavour to segregate the front and back regions, ‘back region’-type interactions often must proceed in the company of ‘outsiders’. So, when the actor makes a private gaffe in a public setting that reveals a discrepancy between a fostered impression and a disclosed reality, what is the proper ‘outsider’ etiquette?

...when two sets of persons find themselves in neighbouring booths in a restaurant, it is expected that neither group will avail itself of the opportunities that actually exist for overhearing the other.

(Goffman, 1959: 231)

Just like the restaurant diners, Goffman (1959) suggests that the actor should enjoy the security of tactful inattention, when walls and distance are not available. To that end, if the actor truly wishes to avoid any potential for performance ‘disruption’, he or she must invite supporting cast and audience members that are obsequious and conflict avoidant. By surrounding him or herself with enamoured followers in the backstage and front stage, the actor effectively mitigates resistance and feelings of embarrassment about faux pas and unintended gestures. In sum, Goffman’s defensive and protective practices comprise the IM framework.

While Burke and Goffman approach and utilise the dramaturgical metaphor differently, they are certainly not mutually exclusive frameworks of analysis. First, both writers believe that the social presentation of self is inextricably linked to the imputation of motives. Second, both acknowledge the influence of the broader social situation or ‘scene’ upon the actor’s thoughts and intended actions. In a much broader sense, there is a tessellation between Burke’s dramaturgical pentad and Goffman’s IM framework. For example, impression management techniques (in the rhetorical, material and symbolic senses) are equivalent to Burke’s notion of ‘agency’ — both refer to the *means* by which an act or impression is accomplished. In these ways, dramaturgical sociology deconstructs social action and interaction by examining the motives of social agents, as well as the processes by which it is accomplished.

2.3.2 The Drama of Leadership and Organisational Life

Leadership and organisational savants realised the value of the dramaturgical metaphor in the 1980s, a long time after Goffman (1959) and Burke (1969) completed their seminal works. For scholars, ‘theatre’ emerged as a motif that could be used to study and explain various organisational phenomena, from metaphorical (“organising-is-like-drama”) and literal (“organising-is-drama”) perspectives (Oswick et al., 2001). The metaphor-based approach enables new ‘ways of thinking’ (Morgan, 1986) through abstractions of reality, which project an object or subject’s characteristics on to analogous objects and subjects; drama is thus not the focus of analysis but rather is an ‘analytical vehicle’ to investigate organisational phenomena (Oswick et al., 2001). In contrast, the ‘literal’ perspective appreciates organisations as microcosms of society and its ‘social drama’, concentrating on ‘the intrinsically theatrical and dramaturgical nature of social life as the focal point of analysis’ (Oswick et al., 2001: 220).

A limited but meaningful body of existing research delves into the drama of leadership and organisational life. Rosen (1985) espouses the metaphorical approach to examine the social drama of an annual business breakfast at an advertising agency. Rosen (1985) examines how traditions and aesthetic elements such as venue, furnishings, props, costumes and food inform and reinforce social differentiation — an exercise in office politics, with executives and bureaucrats wielding power and control over employees at the annual ritual. In a similar vein, Walker and Monin (2001) utilise Burke’s dramaturgical pentad to analyse the ‘meaning’ of Dick Hubbard’s — CEO of Hubbard Foods — decision to take the employees of his Auckland-based company to Western Samoa for a weekend ‘company picnic’. While officially a celebration of the company’s tenth birthday, the ‘motive’ of the company picnic was principally to celebrate Hubbard’s public persona. Hubbard wore the traditional local attire (a flax skirt), played cricket, and even had himself confirmed as a ‘Matai’ (leader) in front of his employees at a local Western Samoan village (Walker & Monin, 2001).

In contrast, Mangham and Overington (1987) espouse the literal dramaturgical perspective, arguing that organisations *are* ‘theatre’:

The theatre reminds us that conduct in organisations is a matter of talking, shouting, persuading, manipulating, fighting, politicking – doing. Not a matter of traits and esoteric pronouncements but of actions, interactions, relationships and dialogues – the essence of conduct.

(Mangham & Overington, 1987: 147)

For Mangham and Overington (1987), the privilege of ‘talking, shouting, persuading...’ is bestowed upon senior managers — an exclusive few — whose challenge it is to perform a rich and unique characterisation that rises above mediocrity and stereotype. In a later work, Mangham (1990) demonstrates the literal approach through a comparative analysis of former Chrysler CEO, Lee Iacocca, and nineteenth century Shakespearean actor, Edmund Kean. Excerpts from Iacocca’s keynote speeches and testimony at US Senate Committee hearings illustrate his comfort and penchant for departures from the ‘script’, which like Kean’s depiction of the title character in ‘Richard III’, crafts a ‘triadic collusion between text, performer and audience’ (Mangham, 1990: 112). More recently, Clark and Salaman (1998) observe the carefully crafted image of management consultants, who must not only legitimise their vocation and value to clients, but also stealthily ‘stage manage’ interactions between job candidates and the client during the recruitment process. By design, the clandestine nature of the executive search process ensures the image of ‘failed’ candidates remain intact — *sub rosa* in the backstage.

2.3.3 Dramaturgical Approaches to Charismatic Leadership

Despite burgeoning interest in charismatic leadership and dramaturgy, theoretical frameworks that integrate the two bodies of research are limited. In current research, Gardner and Avolio’s (1998) dramaturgical model of the charismatic relationship — inspired by Goffman’s (1959) meditations on impression management — utilises IM theory to emphasise theatrical and constructionist aspects of the leader-follower relationship. Gardner and Avolio (1998) endorse Schlenker’s (1985) notion of ‘identification processes’, which posits that ‘leader’ and

‘follower’ identities are inter-subjectively constructed. Therefore, while dramaturgical writings may refer to followers as the ‘audience’, they are by no means ‘passive targets’ or receptacles for the performance of the leader’s IM techniques. Rather, followers are active participants, working with the leader via continuous, iterative and recursive processes to construct the ‘charismatic’ image (Bass, 1990; Gardner & Avolio, 1998):

***Figure 2.1: A Dramaturgical Model of the Charismatic
Relationship (Gardner & Avolio, 1998: 35)***

[Exhibit Removed]

Gardner and Avolio’s (1998) dramaturgical model, shown in *Figure 2.1*, is found on the premise that leadership ‘performance’ appeals to the self-system of followers, which motivates them to act above and beyond what is required or expected of them. The affect generated by the leader’s IM performance manifests in what the authors title ‘the charismatic relationship’, and subsequently yields positive social and (potentially) material outcomes for the organisation. Additionally, the primary audience spreads the charismatic relationship to secondary and tertiary audience members through processes of social contagion.

Gardner and Avolio (1998) subdivide the leader IM performance into four sequences: framing, scripting, staging and performing. Framing refers to the management of ‘meaning’, whereby leaders socially construct a reality for themselves and followers (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Scripting builds upon the framing device that supplies ‘definition’ to a situation.

Scripts are written with the intent to enact ideas via casting, dialogue and direction. According to Benford and Hunt, ‘casting’ is an essential part of defining a situation because it identifies ‘antagonists, victims, protagonists, supporting cast members and audiences’ (1992: 39). Meanwhile, ‘dialogue’ refers to the various rhetorical craftings at the actor’s disposal, including metaphors, analogies, and stories (Conger, 1989; 1991). Within each of these devices are also rhetorical methods such as balance, repetition, rhythm, cadence and alliteration — for example, the rhythm and repetition of the refrain ‘Let freedom ring’ in Dr Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous ‘I have a dream’ speech conveyed the emotion and gravitas of his inspiring message. The final component of scripting — ‘direction’ — encompasses the non-verbal cues that are planned by the actor to convey meaning and guide the audience through the performance. To illustrate, charismatic leaders typically convey their confidence, power and presence through their eye contact, body posture, gestures, smile and speaking rate (Bass, 1985; 1988).

‘Staging’ pertains to the aesthetic elements on the front stage, ranging from the actor’s physical appearance (i.e. grooming and costume), settings, backdrops and props. As Gardner and Avolio (1998) note, aesthetic cues reinforce the actor’s dialogue and desired impression on the front stage. ‘Performing’ relates to the ‘actual enactment of scripted behaviours and relationships’ (Gardner & Avolio, 1998: 44), which occurs through exemplification, promotion, and facework. First, ‘exemplification’ is an Aristotelian ‘pathos’ appeal affiliated with charisma that is based on a person’s integrity and moral worthiness, which often stems from self-sacrifice and risk taking behaviours. Second, ‘promotion’ comprises advocacy of the self (Jones & Pittman, 1982), the vision (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), and the organisation (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Third, ‘facework’ alludes to the defensive and protective practices of impression management that feature in Goffman’s (1959) writings, consisting of apologies, self-handicapping, restitution, pro-social behaviour, and accounts (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). Hence, through IM ‘performances’, comprising framing, scripting, staging and performing, the leader seeks to elicit the attribution of ‘charisma’ by followers through what is a continuous, iterative and recursive social process.

2.4 Narrative

2.4.1 Discourse as Social Interaction

Discourse analysis is a mode of scholarly inquiry that investigates ‘meaning’ through a ‘systematic study of texts’ (Grant & Hardy, 2003: 6), and is viewed as an increasingly useful way to make sense of the rapidly changing nature of work and organisation (Hearn & Michelson, 2006a). A ‘text’ may be anything that brings social phenomena into being, including verbal and written accounts, visual representations, buildings, clothes, cultural artefacts etc. (Grant et al., 1998; Keenoy & Oswick, 2003). Keenoy and Oswick (2003) submit that meaning of a text is embedded in a ‘textscape’, which is gained through continual reference to other texts (i.e. intertextuality) — all of which are spatially and temporally located (Schama, 1995; Adam, 1998). Moreover, texts are ‘multi-functional’ in nature, because they constitute forms of knowledge; they are interpersonal, helping people develop self-concept and social identity; and they inform social relations between different actors (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Social constructionist scholars take these ideas a step further, contending that discourse is not only reflective of social relations but also constitutive of it (van Dijk, 1997). From a constructionist standpoint, discursive texts are therefore not merely ‘linguistic’ in nature (that is, words and sentences), rather they are contingent and multi-modal, constituting a ‘system of communication’ that encompasses ‘talk, writing, gesture and perhaps even dress and other visualised kinds of behaviour’ (Iedema, 2007: 932). As Mumby and Clair (1997) note, organisational discourses vivify and reproduce systems of power, inequality and injustice. For example, sexual discrimination and sexual harassment are not simple ideational: they are enacted and realised in the workplace by organisational actors with greater discursive, cultural and political resources than their victims (Hardy & Phillips, 2004; Mumby, 2004). Of course, power is not a property of the individual but rather, to paraphrase Foucault, a product of social construction:

Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian relations.

(Foucault, 1990: 94)

Foucault expounds the socially constructed and contested nature of power, which is material to studies of leadership and organisation. Concomitantly, discursive leadership scholars are less concerned with leadership psychology and trait theory, instead observing how the situation and social context inform and precipitate leadership behaviour (Chen, 2008). Consequently, discursive leadership scholars reject causal models of leadership that synthesise cognitive, affective and conative behaviours (Fairhurst, 2008). A social constructionist perspective ‘de-centres’ the ‘leader’ subject and is less concerned about building generalisable theory — rather, leadership decisions are bound by the minutiae of cultural, economic and political aspects that comprise ‘context’ (du Gay & Salaman, 1996; Grint, 2005; Fairhurst, 2008).

2.4.2 Narrative and Storytelling in Organisational Studies

Narrative and storytelling is a sub-discipline of discourse studies through which scholars seek to make sense of the social and natural world by identifying the significance of people, places, events and objects. Using verbs, the narrator tells the audience what a character did or what happened to them (Gabriel, 2004). Narratives and stories are thus ‘sense-making’ devices that not only infuse ‘meaning’, but continuously contest and re-negotiate understandings of reality through alternative and counter-narratives (Weick, 1995). According to Gabriel (2004), narratives are unique texts, as they privilege ‘meaning’ constructed through temporal chains of interrelated events and actions undertaken by characters. That is, a narrative is *sequenced* meaningfully through a ‘plot’ device, comprising of an ‘original state of affairs’; a catalysing idea, action or event; and a ‘consequent state of affairs’ (Culler, 1981; Weick, 1995; Czarniawska, 1998; 1999).

Several scholarly writings commit the misstep of conflating narrative and storytelling. While stories are also bound by a ‘plot’, they are a product of poetry and creative imagination. They

may not depart from the ‘facts’, but seek to reveal a deeper meaning about them (Ricoeur, 1984; Bruner, 1990). In so doing, storytellers frequently sculpt the ‘facts’ to satisfy the ‘plot’, which many argue is a reflection upon the audience’s own wants and needs (Boje, 1994; Czarniawska, 1998; Rhodes & Brown, 2005b). Gabriel (2004) submits that events in a story may be moulded to satisfy a plot through framing, focusing, filtering, fading, fusing and fitting techniques. At the same time, storytellers may employ interpretative devices — ‘poetic tropes’ — to make ‘sense’ of different narrative sections. Storytellers may attribute motives; establish causal links; attribute responsibility for something to a subject or object; unite characters; ascribe fix qualities; express emotion; denote agency; and proclaim providence (Gabriel, 2000: 36). Hence, unlike the ‘prosaic’ narrative, stories and storytellers may avail themselves to a multiplicity of creative devices to manufacture ‘meaning’.

Gabriel (2004) introduces the ‘psychological contract’ to examine ‘truth’ in narrative and storytelling. Espousing a relativist, poetic understanding of truth, believing ‘the truth of stories lies in their meaning, not in their accuracy’, Gabriel (2004) asserts that the ‘narrative contract’ between storyteller and audience is fragile because it is negotiated during the storytelling process itself. Traditionally, aggrieved audience members, for whom the narrative contract has been breached or broken, contest the ‘meaning’ of stories by challenging the storyteller’s credibility. Nevertheless, while storytellers may ‘stretch’ the truth, ultimately there must be an element of realism or believability about the story for it to resonate with the audience. Else, they will simply ‘tune out’. For this reason, a good narrative or story requires careful thought, preparation and expertise.

Organisational scholars have turned to narrative and storytelling to study a broad range of phenomena, including strategy and change; morality and ethics; learning and failure; culture and communication; and, power and politics. Indeed, narratives have made important contributions to organisational studies through research written in a ‘story-like’ fashion; gathered ‘tales from the field’; interpretative approaches that have viewed organisational life and theory as ‘story making’ and storytelling; and, reflexive critiques about the discipline (Van Maanen, 1988; Czarniawska, 1998). Of course, narrative research attracts severe criticism for privileging the ‘meaning’ of experience over logic and argument (Eisenhardt, 1991; Rhodes & Brown, 2005a). Interpretative and critical scholars offer the riposte that

mainstream management's conception of organisational reality is punctuated by 'unnaturalness' (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Fournier & Grey, 2000), and a 'disembodied abstract realm' in which articles are written that disregard the significance of time, place and context (Zald, 1996).

In many respects, narrative and storytelling is an overarching feature of leader IM 'performance'. The intellectually and creatively gifted leader exercises their framing devices and verbal artistry to identify with the audience, much akin to a narrator or 'storyteller'. The charismatic leader as 'storyteller' is evident in current research, with leaders 'performing' stories for followers to allay fears and manage conflict (Harvey, 2001; Garvin & Roberto, 2005), and to persuade them about the wonders of progress and achievement (McCormick, 2007).

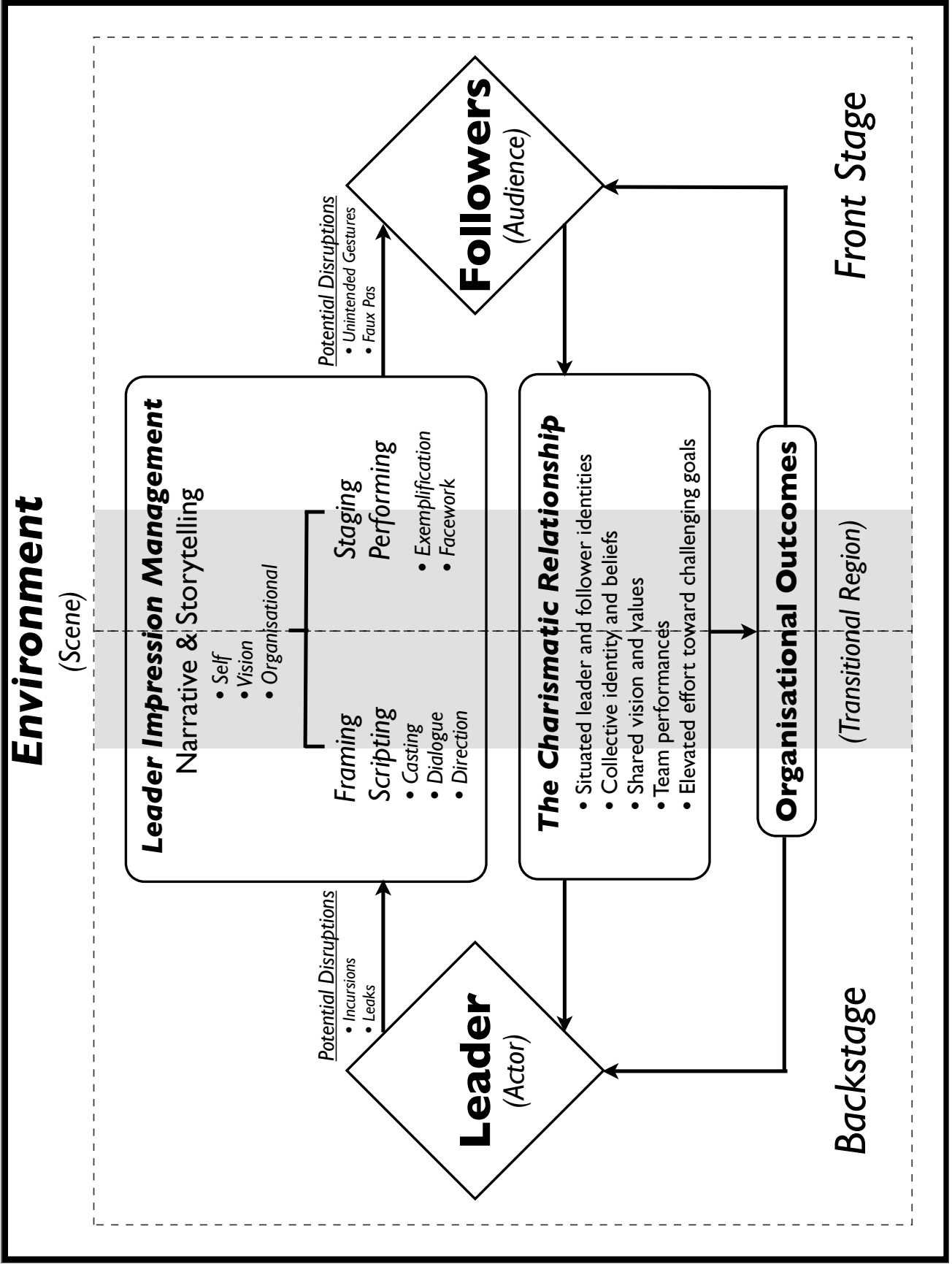
Upon closer examination, it is evident that impression management 'performances' regarding identity, conciliation, and progress conform to the narrative structure. Salzer-Mörling (1998) communicates this poignantly in her case study of Swedish firm, Ikea, which calls attention to founder Ingvar Kamprad's 'rags-to-riches' story. In 1984, Kamprad distributed a small, 80-page booklet to all employees that presented a chronological narrative about the Ikea's heroic rise. The story spotlights Kamprad's humble beginnings and infinite curiosity; his breakthrough idea to sell quick-assembly furniture at low cost; the scepticism and hostility of his 'enemies'; ultimate success; and finally, ambitions to take Ikea 'global' (Salzer-Mörling, 1998). While somewhat embellished and mythologised, Kamprad's story locates his own self-concept, his vision and Ikea's corporate identity. Kamprad's story continues to be retold at internal training seminars, which spread and maintain an oral and written tradition (Salzer-Mörling, 1998).

The Ikea story demonstrates the inherently 'narrative' quality of Kamprad's leadership performance, which not only communicates 'meaning' but also functions as a unifying symbol. At the same time, the potential for narrative and storytelling in organisations to be perceived as 'proselytising managerial monologues' — stifling plurivocality by promoting a 'final statement' or sense of 'ultimate truth' — by followers is appreciable.

2.5 Conceptual Framework of Analysis

Having examined key aspects of the literature on charismatic leadership, drama and narrative, this section combines these three areas of study to construct a conceptual framework of analysis. While the extant theory captures the dramaturgical nature of charismatic leadership — principally through Gardner and Avolio’s (1998) framework — it is insufficiently demonstrated *how* narrative and storytelling plays a role in this process. The extant theory also inadequately communicates the importance of Goffman’s (1959) ‘stage management’ (that is, backstage and front stage) to the cultivation of the leader’s ‘charismatic’ image. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to augment existing dramaturgical approaches to charismatic leadership through a framework, shown in *Figure 2.2* (see page 29), that remedies both aforementioned frailties:

Figure 2.2: A Dramaturgical Model of Charismatic Leadership Informed by Narrative *



* (Based on: Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Goffman, 1959; Burke, 1969; van Dijk, 1997; Weick, 1995; Jones & Pittman, 1982)

Figure 2.2 illustrates a dramaturgical model of charismatic leadership that is informed by narrative, which seeks to extend Gardner and Avolio's (1998) framework in two important respects, including i) narrative and storytelling, and ii) the 'backstage' and 'front stage'.

First, the framework proposes that narrative and storytelling is the discursive centrepiece of leader impression management. Whereas Gardner and Avolio (1998) aptly explain the leader IM process — framing, scripting, staging and performing — they neglect to address precisely *what* it is the leader is performing: what is the performance *about*? In fact, the answer rests with Jones and Pittman's (1982) notion self, vision and organisational 'promotion', which Gardner and Avolio (1998) class as a 'performing' technique. By elevating Jones and Pittman's (1982) three 'promotion' types as an overarching feature of the leader IM process, the framework connotes that the leader's 'performance' is in fact an exercise in 'sense-making'. The performance of self, vision and organisational narrative 'types' are thus bound by a 'plot' and common structure, comprising an 'original state of affairs'; a 'catalyst' idea, action or event; and a 'consequent state of affairs' (Weick, 1995).

Second, the identification and subsequent segregation of 'backstage' and 'front stage' in the conceptual framework seeks to enhance the dramaturgical metaphor by distinguishing between *where* the (public) performance is prepared and delivered. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) notion of 'stage management', the 'back' and 'front' stages are denoted in *Figure 2.2* by two separate, albeit 'porous' boxes (marked with 'dashed' lines), with a 'transitional region' between stages (marked by a vertical 'grey' band). In so doing, the conceptual framework locates the leader IM process. The framing and scripting of the leader IM narrative occurs in the backstage, while its staging and performing takes place on the front stage. By segregating the two stages, the conceptual framework re-emphasises the potential for performance 'disruptions', which may occur through i) 'incursions' and 'leaks' (backstage), as well as ii) 'faux pas' and 'unintended gestures' (front stage) (Goffman, 1959).

Having explained the two key extensions to Gardner and Avolio's (1998) framework, we may now piece together how the model 'works'. Using self, vision and organisational narratives — which are principally framed and scripted in the backstage, and staged and performed on the front stage — the actor (leader) delivers a 'performance' that establishes and/or sustains 'the

charismatic relationship'. The charismatic relationship is found upon a collective sense of identity, visions and values, which elevates the audience's efforts to achieve social and material organisational outcomes. The directional flows, shown in *Figure 2.2*, indicate that the leader IM process is continuous, iterative and recursive (van Dijk, 1997), and is subject to backstage and front stage 'potential disruptions'. Critically, while the stages may exist in an ontologically 'real' sense, they are simultaneously porous because they are informed by the 'scene' (environment).

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter Two has discussed and examined key aspects of the literature on charismatic leadership, dramaturgy and narrative. For the most part, charismatic leadership theory appears to be at an impasse, perhaps entrapped by the orthodoxy of trait and self-concept theories from the 1970s and '80s. In contrast, interdisciplinary approaches, comprising dramaturgical sociology; social constructionism; and narrative and storytelling have revitalised studies of leadership and organisation by appreciating the nuances of complexity. Inspired by the dramaturgical writings of Goffman (1959), Burke (1969), and Gardner and Avolio (1998), this chapter has proceeded to develop a conceptual framework of analysis that augments dramaturgical approaches to charismatic leadership, calling attention to the important roles played by i) narrative and storytelling, and ii) 'stage management' in this process. In seeking to highlight the value of the dramaturgical perspective, the thesis shall proceed apply the conceptual framework of analysis to a case study leader in the ensuing chapters.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology and Design

Facts rarely speak for themselves — and never in isolation. Narratives and stories enables us to make sense of them, to identify their significance, and even, when they are painful or unpleasant, to accept them and live with them.

(Gabriel, 2004: 62)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter expounds the research method, research design, and data analysis applied in the thesis. Chapter Three commences by revisiting the core research question, and proceeds to explain the underlying paradigmatic assumptions of the conceptual framework of analysis that is developed in Chapter Two. Ensuing, the chapter discusses the case study approach of the thesis, which introduces and justifies the selection of Steve Jobs as a prime ‘charismatic leader’ candidate for this study. Finally, the chapter identifies the sources of data to be used, and details how the data shall be analysed.

3.2 Research Question

In Chapter One, the core research question was identified as, *'How does an understanding of narrative inform dramaturgical approaches to the study of charismatic leadership?'*

Having developed a conceptual framework of analysis through an examination extant theory (thus answering one of the subset questions articulated in Chapter One), two subset questions remain:

- i) How does the leader utilise narrative and storytelling to construct and maintain their 'charismatic' image among followers?*
- ii) What is the significance of 'stage management' to the construction and maintenance of the leader's 'charismatic' image among followers?*

The thesis aims to answer the core research question and subset questions through an empirical investigation of a case study leader. In so doing, the thesis seeks to augment dramaturgical approaches to the study of charismatic leadership.

3.3 Methodology

Burrell and Morgan (1979) argue that the work of social theorists may be grouped into four mutually exclusive sociological paradigms, based on meta-theoretical assumptions about the 'subjective' or 'objective' nature of science, and society's propensity for 'regulation' or 'radical change' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Each sociological paradigm is thus informed by an ontological, epistemological, human nature, and methodological position. Ontology is concerned with the study of 'being' (i.e. *'what is'*), while epistemology is concerned with the study and foundation of knowledge (i.e. *'how we know what we know'*) (Crotty, 1998). Human nature considers assumptions about the relationship between humans and their environment (i.e. *'can humans change their surroundings, or are they reacting to them?'*) (Kamoche, 2001). The first three assumptions consequently inform the methodological assumption, which queries the process by which researchers approach the investigation of knowledge, and subsequently produce it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Kamoche, 2001). To

articulate the paradigmatic position of the thesis is therefore material to the establishment of its methodological credibility.

By researching the public performances of a case study leader as discursive texts, the thesis makes several implicit and explicit assumptions about the ‘reality’ of the social world. First, it espouses an ontologically ‘nominalist’ position, observing ‘reality’ as a product of individual cognition and inter-subjectively shared meanings, through the deployment of labels, concepts and language (Morgan, 1980). ‘Leadership’ is therefore an expression of social difference between ‘leader’ and ‘follower’, which is enacted through a process of social construction by social agents, and embedded in both time and place (Chen, 2008; Fairhurst, 2008).

Second, the thesis assumes an epistemologically ‘relativist’ position, contesting the notion that social phenomena may be predicted and explained through patterns and ‘endless chains of causation’ (Bilton, 1996). Using discourse analysis, which complements the social constructionist approach, this thesis recognises that knowledge and ‘reality’ are continuously being negotiated and re-negotiated through language and social interaction (Mumby & Clair, 1997; van Dijk, 1997). Additionally, the thesis utilises a particular type of discourse analysis — narrative and storytelling — to examine how leader ‘performance’ contributes to the audience’s attribution and maintenance of what constitutes a ‘charismatic’ leader. A ‘narrative’ is a device that makes sense of the social world, identifying the significance of people, places and things through *sequencing* (Gabriel, 2004). Basic narratives and stories share a common structure, featuring an ‘original state of affairs’; a catalysing idea, action or event; and a ‘consequent state of affairs’, which are meaningfully sequenced through a ‘plot’ device (Weick, 1995; Czarniawska, 1998; 1999). Stories deviate from narrative by fusing poetry and creative imagination with ‘facts’, seeking to reveal a deeper meaning in them (Salzer-Mörling, 1998; Gabriel, 2004).

Finally, this thesis takes an ideographic methodological position, believing that social phenomena (e.g. charismatic leadership) are best understood by engaging directly with the research subject(s), their experiences, background and life history (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 6). The thesis utilises a discourse analytic methodology, which refers to the ‘systematic study of texts’ (Grant & Hardy, 2003), where the researcher examines how texts bring social

phenomena into being. For the purposes of this thesis, a ‘text’ encompasses ‘talk, writing, gesture and perhaps even dress and other visualised kinds of behaviour’ (Iedema, 2007: 932). Of course, in employing a subjectivist methodology, the researcher is inadvertently party to the research process. Every aspect of how research is designed, conducted and presented is shaped by, and subsequently shapes ‘meaning’ (Fournier & Grey, 2000; Rhodes & Brown, 2005a; 2005b). Thus, this thesis accepts Alvesson & Deetz’s (1996) assertion that all empirical research is interpretative in nature, such that researchers construct and collect data principally to interpret it.

Hence, this thesis seeks to study charismatic leadership from the interpretative paradigm, espousing a subjectivist approach to ‘reality’ and the social world.

3.4 Case Study Approach

Having developed a conceptual framework of analysis in Chapter Two, this thesis seeks to examine the social phenomenon of ‘charismatic leadership’ by locating it in a broader social context (Kitay & Callus, 1998). A case study approach enables precisely this by studying a ‘charismatic leader’ candidate in-depth, collecting and interpreting a range of information about the leader; followers; the organisation; the locale for important actions and events; and the social, political, cultural, technological, economic and business context of the time. Therefore, through a case study research design, the paper seeks to answer “how?” and “why?” questions (Yin, 1994: 6) about charismatic leadership.

The candidate nominated for study — Steven (“Steve”) Paul Jobs, the current CEO of Apple Inc. — is widely recognised as a ‘charismatic leader’ in the personal computer, technology and entertainment industries. Jobs’ career spans more than three decades, having worked at Apple between 1976-1985; NeXT Computer between 1985-1996; and, once again, Apple from 1997 to present (Kahney, 2008). Since Jobs’ career is so extensive, this thesis only focuses on the period from 1997 to present (i.e. Jobs’ return to Apple). Stories about Steve Jobs’ charisma have been well documented by people who have worked alongside him (*see* Hertzfeld, 1981; Sculley & Byrne, 1988; Kawasaki, 2006; Wozniak & Smith, 2006); in (unauthorised) biographies about his life and career (*see* Young, 1988; Deutschman, 2000;

Young & Simon, 2005; Kahney, 2008); and in news and media commentaries about business and technology. Jobs is also frequently referred to in scholarly articles to illustrate qualities and behaviours of transformational and charismatic leadership (*see* Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Conger, 1999; Harvey, 2001; Khurana, 2002; Reeves-Ellington, 1998; Sosik et al., 2002; Maccoby, 2004). Ergo, Steve Jobs is an ideal candidate for this study.

3.5 Data and Data Analysis

This thesis seeks to study the public performances of Steve Jobs as discursive texts, calling attention to the narratives and stories in each performance. For the purposes of this study, a ‘public performance’ principally refers to Jobs’ keynote speech performances at Apple events, where he traditionally announces and demonstrates new products, services and features before a ‘live’ public audience. Jobs’ performances are also viewable later (online), either in part or in its entirety, by secondary audiences. Collectively, the primary and secondary audiences comprise Apple employees; Board members; shareholders; business partners, competitors; software developers and accessory makers; business and technology critics; and Mac enthusiasts and consumers. From these performances, this heterogeneous set of stakeholders consumes an impression of the leader that has the potential to influence material decisions made about Apple Inc.

In most cases, the Apple iTunes Store, Mac ‘enthusiast’ websites, and other online sources were used to acquire video and audio recordings, and where available, transcripts of each performance by Jobs. The search for public performances by Jobs from 1997 to present revealed an extensive list of performances. Of course, the purpose of the thesis is not to catalogue each performance but rather to identify ‘key discursive moments’ in Jobs’ recent past that call attention to his utilisation of narratives and stories to construct and maintain his ‘charismatic’ image. The thesis also draws on a broad range of supporting texts, including online, newspaper, and magazine articles; online ‘blog’ postings; and biographical materials to contextualise important occurrences in the backstage and ‘scene’ (environment) preceding a performance by Jobs. These secondary sources also provide an insight into the attitudes, expectations and motives of audience and supporting cast members about the leader and organisation.

The conceptual framework of analysis developed in Chapter Two shall be used to analyse the data set, which comprises six performance texts by Steve Jobs. The examination of each performance commences with a content analysis that pinpoints key issues and events in the the backstage and ‘scene’ (environment), and also identifies the composition of the attending or ‘intended’ audience (followers). A description about aesthetic arrangements on the front stage ensue, encompassing details such as stage backdrops, lighting, sound, props, and costumes, with a view to explain how these elements inform Jobs’ performance. The analysis shall proceed to examine the narratives and stories told by Jobs, featuring discussions about the the type, structure, ‘stage management’ and purpose of narrative(s) in each performance text. Finally, by combining and sequencing the six performance texts, a plot may be devised to reveal a ‘grand narrative’ about Jobs’ leadership at Apple from 1997 to present.

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter Three commenced by revisiting the core research question, which sought to examine how an understanding of narrative informs dramaturgical approaches to the study of charismatic leadership. The chapter proceeded to explain the thesis’ interpretative paradigmatic position, which calls on dramaturgical, social constructionist and discourse analytic approaches to study charismatic leadership. Chapter Three also introduced the nominated case study leader, Steve Jobs of Apple Inc., who is renowned in the popular press and scholarly bodies of literature for his charismatic leadership. The data set for the thesis comprises six public performances by Jobs from 1997 to 2007, which shall be examined as discursive ‘performance’ texts. The data set shall be analysed using the conceptual framework of analysis devised in Chapter Two, which involves a content and narrative analysis of each text. In so doing, the thesis seeks to reveal the importance of narrative and storytelling, as well as ‘stage management’ to the leader-follower co-construction of charismatic leadership.

Chapter Four

Narrative Analysis: The Case of Steve Jobs

Charisma, a gift given to few people, is a complex skein of many threads. Nature bestowed that gift on Steve Jobs, along with a spellbinding ability to captivate a crowd that is the hallmark of evangelists and demagogues. To witness one of his hours-long performances is to watch a master showman deliver an unscripted, free-ranging monologue about nothing but technology — and the world according to Steve Jobs.

(Young & Simon 2005: 1)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter applies the conceptual framework of analysis (developed in Chapter Two) to the nominated case study leader, Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. Chapter Four commences by introducing Jobs and his leadership ‘narrative’, chronicling his journey from 1976 to present. Ensuing, the chapter delves into the ‘ritual’ public events at which Jobs traditionally performs, calling attention to the materiality of the front stage to Jobs’ charismatic image. Combining dramaturgical, discourse analytic and narratological approaches, the chapter proceeds to examine charismatic leadership as a ‘performing art’, by observing the narratives and stories in six ‘performances’ by Jobs between 1997-2007. Each vignette is subdivided into three sections, featuring i) an explanation of the ‘scene’ (environment) and backstage

events preceding the performance; ii) a description about the aesthetic arrangement of the front stage, which informs the leader's performance and the audience's 'charismatic' impression of the leader; and iii) an in-depth discussion about the narrative(s) performed by Jobs. Finally, the chapter meaningfully combines and sequences the six performance vignettes to make sense of Jobs' leadership 'grand narrative'.

4.2 Steve Jobs' Charismatic Leadership 'Narrative'

Steve Jobs enjoys great respect and admiration for his contributions to the personal computer, technology and entertainment industries. Jobs revolutionised computing in the 1970s and '80s with the 'Apple II' and 'Macintosh', which, for the first time, made it possible for everyday people to use computers at home. To create but one masterpiece in a lifetime would satisfy almost any artist, architect, novelist or engineer — but not Steve Jobs. Jobs' dismissal from Apple in 1985 prompted him to enter one of the most creative periods of his life, mastering the art of producing animated feature films at Pixar, and the 'science' of computer operating system (OS) design at NeXT. Jobs' return to Apple in 1997 has been acclaimed as a wonderful 'second coming' that not saved the company from near bankruptcy, but also reinvigorated its passion for making beautiful consumer electronic appliances, such as the iMac, iPod and iPhone. More recently, as if these achievements were not enough, Jobs has dragged the music, television and movie industries 'kicking and screaming' into the 'digital millennium', convincing them to sell their content online through Apple's iTunes Store.

4.2.1 'Beginnings'

Having dropped out of college and risked everything on his passion for computers, Steve Jobs co-founded Apple Computer in his garage with friend Steve Wozniak on April Fool's Day, 1976 (Young & Simon, 2005). In reality, the partnership was a fusion of Wozniak's engineering genius and Jobs' vision and marketing prowess. Unlike the first 'do-it-yourself' Altair computer kit released in 1975, Jobs' vision was to build a computer — the 'Apple I' — which was a 'finished' consumer product that featured the 'revolutionary' keyboard, screen, and mouse (Young & Simon, 2005). In 1977, Jobs and Wozniak released the first truly 'usable' computer on the consumer market — the 'Apple II' — whose commercial success

would endure until the early 1990s. Following Apple II, Jobs was acclaimed as the ‘young prince of technology’ and attracted national media attention for his meteoric rise. In 1980, after Apple Computer’s first day of trading on the stock exchange, Jobs went from multimillionaire to being worth over US\$200 million (Young & Simon, 2005).

4.2.2 ‘Macintosh’

On January 22, 1984, Apple announced itself to the world in its now infamous ‘1984’ or ‘Big Brother’ Super Bowl television commercial:

On January 24th Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you’ll understand why 1984 won’t be like 1984.

Airing only once, the Ridley Scott-directed commercial featuring a sledgehammer-wielding heroine was so stunningly different and original, that it was repeated on evening news bulletins across the US — generating millions of dollars in free exposure. The commercial was a prelude to one of the finest moments in Jobs’ career: the unveiling of the ‘Macintosh’ personal computer at Apple’s annual shareholder’s meeting.

Exhibit 4.1: A Video ‘Still Image’ of Steve Jobs at the Launch of the Apple Macintosh in 1984 (Source: TextLab, 2005)

[Exhibit Removed]

Hair side-parted, and dressed in a double-breasted jacket and polka-dot bow tie, Jobs stands at a lectern and addresses an audience of thousands, comprising shareholders, employees, and journalists. Jobs walks to a podium at the centre of the stage and removes the Macintosh from a silver, futuristic-looking sports bag, after which the stage lights dim. A montage, set to Vangelis' theme from the film 'Chariots of Fire', showcases the Mac's features for two minutes. The montage features a sketch of Jobs' face in a still image of the 'Mac Paint' program, and concludes with one of Jobs' favourite refrains scrawled across the Mac's screen: 'insanely great'. Jobs re-emerges at the lectern to add a few words, 'Today, for the first time ever, I'd like to let Macintosh speak for itself'. The audience is hushed:

Hello, I'm Macintosh. It sure is great to get out of that bag... So, it is with considerable pride that I introduce a man who's been like a father to me... STEVE JOBS.

With these words, the audience breaks into rapturous applause for Macintosh and Jobs. While the launch was a triumph of ingenuity, it was, in many ways, also a celebration of Jobs' ebullient persona. The performance's underlying narrative is Jobs' conception of 'self' as Macintosh's progenitor. On the front stage, Jobs accepts all the credit for Macintosh's invention. Yet the true 'heroes' — Macintosh designers, programmers and engineers seated in the audience — seem unperturbed.

4.2.3 Dismissal from Apple

By 1985, despite initially positive reviews, it was apparent that Steve Jobs' Macintosh was a commercial failure. However, Jobs' push to deliver the Macintosh had come at an even greater cost: internal division. As the head of the Macintosh division, Jobs created an unhealthy rivalry between the Macintosh and Apple II groups. Jobs' Macintosh division worked ninety-hour weeks, but had more resources. They enjoyed the latest engineering and design tools and working in better offices, while Apple II employees, who felt they were keeping the company 'afloat', were under-resourced, excluded, and even 'demonised' by Jobs (Deutschman, 2000). After a months-long power struggle with CEO John Sculley, Jobs was

finally dismissed as the head of the Macintosh division in May, 1985 (Sculley & Byrne, 1988).

What I'm best at doing is finding a group of talented people and making things with them. And if there's no place for me to make things there, then I'll do what I did twice before. I'll make my own place.

— Steve Jobs (cited in Young & Simon, 2005: 123)

Jobs' departure from Apple marked a new chapter in his career in which he learned the lessons of failure. It was a humbling experience; the fickleness of media and friends hardened Jobs, rendering him more circumspect and mistrusting of other people (Deutschman, 2000; Young & Simon, 2005). From 'young prince', Jobs was now officially 'old news'. In September, 1985, Jobs established another company called NeXT Computer, which would cater exclusively to the education market (i.e. university-level research labs) (Deutschman, 2000). Between 1985-1996, Jobs pursued his passion for making great computer hardware and software at NeXT, but was unable to emulate his successes at Apple.

4.2.4 Return to Apple

In late-1996, Jobs agreed to sell NeXT Computer to Apple for over US\$400 million (Deutschman, 2000). The early 1990s had been unhappy years: while Apple's product range and R&D spending increased, sales declined quite sharply. The NeXT acquisition gave Apple access to NeXT's burgeoning talent pool and superior NeXTSTEP operating system, however the underlying hope was that Jobs would revive Apple's fortunes (Young & Simon, 2005). Realising the company was only months away from insolvency, Jobs' first order of business was to prove his commitment to Apple's turnaround — he asked the Board of Directors for a salary of only US\$1 (a sum he still receives today) (Deutschman, 2000). Over the next few months, Jobs started from 'scratch' and conducted a 'one man focus group' of the entire company, deciding which divisions to save and which to close:

...it comes from saying 'no' to 1,000 things to make sure we don't get on the wrong track or try to do too much. We're always thinking about new markets we could enter, but it's only by saying 'no' that you can concentrate on the things that are really important.

— Steve Jobs (BusinessWeek Online, 2004)

Jobs' despotism generated a very simple business plan: Apple was going to focus on making four computer products *really well*: one consumer desktop, one consumer portable, one professional desktop, and one professional portable (Kahney, 2008). Despite many job cuts, Jobs' sharp decision making skills saved Apple from certain bankruptcy, and laid the foundations for its subsequent successes.

4.2.5 'Renaissance'

Steve Jobs' return to Apple and reinstatement as the public face of the company has been hailed as one of the great 'second acts' in business history (Deutschman, 2000; Young & Simon, 2005). Jobs exhibited outstanding leadership when he slashed Apple's product matrix to only four products, arresting financial haemorrhaging and stabilising the company's 'bottom line'. Even prior to his return in 1997, Jobs confidently stated that Apple needed to restore its culture of innovation and excellence:

The cure for Apple is not cost-cutting. The cure for Apple is to innovate its way out of its current predicament.

— Steve Jobs (Linzmayr, 2004: 264)

Apple and Jobs' renaissance began in 1998 with the introduction of the 'iMac' — an 'internet-ready' computer that integrated the monitor and CPU into a single, translucent, egg-shaped enclosure. Critics rhapsodised about the computer's originality, colours and connectivity, and consumers responded similarly — the iMac was a 'breakthrough' product for Apple. Jobs followed up the success of the iMac with a range of increasingly functional and beautifully designed products, including the 'iPod' digital music player (2001); 'iTunes' music software (2001); 'Mac OS X' operating system (2002); 'iTunes Store' (2003); 'MacBook' family of

laptop computers (2006); and the ‘iPhone’ (2007) (Kahney, 2008). Moreover, as Apple’s profitability appreciated, Jobs personally oversaw the launch of the company’s retail stores, as well as a range of customer services (Cruikshank, 2006).

In many ways, it has been Jobs’ return to the ‘stage’ that has rekindled enthusiasm for all things ‘Apple’. Every major new Apple product or service since 1997 has been introduced and demonstrated to the world by Jobs himself at Apple conferences, or specially organised events. Of course, being rejected by his own company and twelve years in the wilderness has changed Steve Jobs: it has ‘humanised’ him (Young & Simon, 2005). A younger and more callow Jobs would have unashamedly taken all the credit for all of Apple’s new inventions (see *Section 4.2.2*). Today, humbled by failure and perhaps mellowed by age, Jobs accepts the audience’s thanks at each event on behalf of all his colleagues:

I get to come to work everyday and work with the most talented people on the planet, at Apple and Pixar. The best job in the world. But these jobs are team sports.

— Steve Jobs (Young & Simon, 2005: 2-3)

4.3 The Stage: Macworld, WWDC & Apple Special Events

For years, scholarly works, media articles and unauthorised biographies have attempted to unearth the secret to Steve Jobs’ incredible success, rhetorical gifts and charisma. So much so, in fact, that in 1981 an Apple manager coined the term ‘reality distortion field’ to describe Jobs’ unique framing and persuasive abilities:

The reality distortion field was a confounding melange of a charismatic rhetorical style, an indomitable will, and an eagerness to bend any fact to fit the purpose at hand. If one line of argument failed to persuade, he would deftly switch to another.

(Hertfeld, 1981)

Of course, Jobs’ ‘reality distortion field’ has always been a double-edged sword. Stories in Silicon Valley about Jobs’ narcissism, temper, epic tantrums and bad behaviour are as legendary as his feats (Sculley & Byrne, 1988; Deutschman, 2000; Maccoby, 2004; Young &

Simon, 2005). For example, Deutschman documents a stunning incident in which Jobs publicly admonished a software programmer's work, stating: 'You've baked a really lovely cake, but then you've used dog shit for frosting' (2000: 137). Yet, many people who have worked alongside Jobs describe him in more compassionate terms, as a misunderstood person who demands perfection from others and himself. As Kahney lightheartedly reminds us, 'Steve Jobs gives almost as much thought to the cardboard boxes his gadgets come in as the products themselves' (2008: 1).

Steve Jobs' ability to establish and maintain a powerful 'charismatic' image with followers, in spite of his temperament, is largely due to effective 'stage management'. Stories about Jobs' 'dark side' are, for the most part, repressed by backstage supporting cast members who feel a strong sense of 'dramaturgical loyalty' (Goffman, 1959). Jobs himself is quite adamant that secrets about business activities and unannounced products are not to be shared on the front stage (i.e. the public eye). In December, 2007, 'ThinkSecret' — a website devoted to rumours about upcoming Apple products — was successfully sued and subsequently shut down by Apple for publishing details in 2005 about the company's forthcoming 'Mac Mini' desktop computer (Fried, 2005; Shaw, 2007). For Jobs, the unsolicited broadcast of trade secrets on the front stage not only compromises Apple's competitive advantage, but also diminishes the impact of his performance about the new product or service.

Since 1997, Steve Jobs has primarily used Apple conferences and special events as his stage to perform and communicate with the public. The Macworld Conference and Expo is an annual trade show dedicated to the Apple Macintosh platform, which was first held in 1985. The event is organised by IDG, the parent company of 'MacWorld' (the most widely read Macintosh magazine in North America), and is generally three or four days in duration. Whereas the Macworld Conference and Expo has travelled to New York, Boston, Paris, Tokyo and London, its spiritual home remains San Francisco's Moscone Centre, which hosts the event every year in the second week of January. While officially 'guests' at the event, Jobs and Apple's are given total control of the front stage. In recent years, it has emerged as tradition for Macworld to be launched with a keynote address by Steve Jobs. Audience members at the keynote (or "Steve-note") principally comprise Apple employees and Board

members; invited journalists; and software developers, accessory makers and enthusiasts — all of whom pay large admission fees for the privilege.

Exhibit 4.2: The Set Design and Audience at Macworld 2001 (Source: Paris, 2001)

[Exhibit Removed]

Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) is an annual conference that showcases the company's latest software and technology for developers. WWDC is also held at the Moscone Centre in San Francisco, California, attracting between 2000-4000 developers — all of whom pay fees to attend the keynote address and/or conference sessions. Like Macworld, WWDC is traditionally opened by Jobs' keynote address, where he usually introduces and demonstrates a new software product or new features in Apple's 'Mac OS X' operating system, and occasionally new hardware. In contrast, Apple special events usually held in an auditorium at Apple headquarters in Cupertino, California, and are 'low-key'. Due to limited audience capacity, Apple special events are normally 'by invite only'. For these events, Apple's PR department has some 'fun' with journalists and market analysts, who

receive an email invitation a week prior to the event, which contains tantalising ‘clues’ about the forthcoming product(s).

4.4 Narrative Analysis

4.4.1 Macworld, 1997: The Microsoft Deal

The ‘Scene’ & Backstage

Having installed himself as Apple’s untitled but de facto leader in July, 1997 (Young & Simon, 2005), Steve Jobs shifted his attention to August’s Macworld Conference in Boston. As his first order of business, he arranged to meet with the people producing the event and then fired the man responsible for Apple’s last major conference, describing it as ‘the worst thing I’ve seen in my life!’ (Deutschman, 2000: 247). Backstage dealings to save Apple were taking their toll on Jobs. While Apple’s spectacular fall from grace in the 1990s was very public, the gravity of its financial predicaments were not. Unless Jobs dramatically changed things, and fast, Apple would be insolvent in three months. With his supporting cast members all in one room, Jobs revealed at the end of the meeting that he would be announcing a US \$150 million investment by Microsoft in Apple, as well as their promise to continue writing software for the Mac for the next five years (Cruikshank, 2006). Jobs shared his ‘big news’ in the strictest confidence, promising to those present, ‘If it does [leave this room], I’ll fire you’ (Deutschman, 2000: 247).

The Front Stage

Steve Jobs’ announcement of the Microsoft deal at Macworld 1997 features a number of aesthetic arrangements on the front stage. First, the Boston stage is minimalist, only featuring a black lectern at ‘stage right’. Stage lights with a flaxen glow at the forefront of the stage illuminate and track Jobs’ every movement. The backdrop features a big screen that is flanked by two vertical banners sporting the Apple logo. Second, Jobs’ costume for the performance comprises a white mock turtleneck shirt (with sleeves rolled up) accompanied by a black, half-buttoned cardigan, with grey business pants. Jobs’ distinctive dress and his rolled up sleeves give his performance a casual feel, much akin to a ‘town hall’-style meeting.

The Leader's Impression Management 'Narrative'

Steve Jobs' announcement of the Microsoft deal is an enigmatic performance, in which he intertwines 'self', 'vision' and 'organisational' narrative types. At the same time, it is a performance in which faux pas and unintended gestures undermine Jobs' 'charismatic' image, which subsequently prompts him to depart from the 'script'. Jobs' performance meta-narrative comprises three sub-narratives, including: details of the Microsoft agreement; a guest appearance by Bill Gates (via satellite link); and finally, an impromptu counter-narrative.

First, Jobs constructs a 'vision' narrative that casts Apple's partnership with Microsoft as vital to the company's survival (i.e. a 'consequent state of affairs'). Jobs announces myriad new software agreements: a settlement over patent disputes; 'Microsoft Office' for Mac development; 'Internet Explorer' software; and 'Java' platform collaboration (i.e. catalysing actions). The jingoistic Macworld audience is less than enthused about partnering with its 'sworn enemy'; each of Jobs' announcements are greeted by a medley of loud 'boos' and tepid applause. However, Jobs reveals one more thing:

And lastly, Microsoft is making an investment in Apple. Microsoft is buying \$150 million dollars worth of Apple stock at market price [audience 'boos']. It is non-voting shares... [audience applauds loudly] ...and they've agreed not to sell them for at least three years.

The audience's unanticipated response generates a palpable friction between actor and audience. Unaccustomed to audience interruptions, Jobs first purses his lips at the audience's 'boos', and then frowns in response to their applause about Microsoft's non-voting shares. Recognising that the audience's reactions do not bode well for his second sub-narrative, Jobs restates his excitement about partnering with Microsoft.

Jobs' second narrative reinforces the first, featuring a 'special guest' via satellite link. A technical glitch delays broadcast of the video feed on the big screen for several seconds. Finally, Bill Gates — Microsoft's Chairman and CEO — appears on screen, which elicits a deafening chorus of 'boos', 'hoots' and jeers from the audience. Gates is forced to pause, grimaces, before finally delivering a scripted monologue in which he expresses delight about

investing in, and partnering with Apple. While the audience maintains a respectful silence, the symbolism and imagery of the moment is powerful: Gates, on the big screen from thousands of miles away, is overshadowing a much smaller Jobs, who is standing directly below on stage:

***Exhibit 4.3: Steve Jobs' [left] 'Big Brother' Moment with Bill Gates
at Macworld 1997 (Source: Hiner, 2007)***

[Exhibit Removed]

The 'moment', shown in *Exhibit 4.3*, is a pastiche of Apple's very own '1984' Super Bowl commercial, in which a female heroine hurls a sledgehammer at 'Big Brother' — a brooding figure also on a 'big screen'. Only, in this case, Jobs is unarmed, seemingly emasculated. As the satellite link with Gates closes, Jobs offers a vote of thanks to Gates before commencing his third narrative:

...if we want to move forward and see Apple healthy and prospering again, we have to let go of a few things. We have to let go of this notion that, 'For Apple to "win", Microsoft has to "lose"'. okay? [Applause] We have to embrace the notion that, 'For

Apple to “win”, Apple has to do a really good job’. If others are going to help us, that’s great — because we need all the help we can get. If we screw up and we don’t do a good job, it’s not somebody else’s fault — it’s our fault.

Jobs’ impromptu counter-narrative is indignant, resentful of the Macworld audience’s dogma and ‘ego’ at a moment critical to Apple’s survival. Jobs invokes collective voice, repeatedly using the ‘we’ pronoun, to communicate his vision. For Jobs, the ‘zero sum’ paradigm constitutes an ‘original state of affairs’, a vestige from the Apple-Microsoft rivalry of the 1980s. The catalysing event is the ‘paradigm shift’, whereby Apple is now ‘self’-focused and takes ownership of its failures and successes. The paradigm shift thus precipitates a ‘consequent states of affairs’, which Jobs describes as a ‘healthy and prospering’ Apple Computer:

The era of setting this up as a competition between Apple and Microsoft is over as far as I’m concerned.

Realising their haste to judge the Microsoft deal, the audience is humbled by Jobs’ unscripted sermon. In unison, the audience roaringly applauds in approval of Jobs’ narrative. They had been enlightened — Apple and Microsoft was no longer a ‘zero sum’ game.

4.4.2 Apple Special Event, 2001: The iPod Introduction

The ‘Scene’ & Backstage

In 2001, Steve Jobs finally relented, deciding it was time for Apple to enter a brand new product category: MP3 music players. The device, named ‘iPod’, was a true labour of love. Jobs was manic to the point of paranoia, demanding complete secrecy — ‘dramaturgical loyalty’ and ‘discipline’ — from supporting cast members during its development. So much so, in fact, that Jobs even hid the iPod’s design from his own programmers during testing by sealing each unit in a ‘separate reinforced plastic box’ that was much larger than the unit itself (Young & Simon, 2005: 282). When iPod was finally ready for release, Jobs titillated interest by sending mysterious invitations to journalists and market analysts: ‘This coming Tuesday, Apple invites you to the unveiling of a breakthrough digital device (Hint: It’s not a

Mac)' (Cruikshank, 2006: xi). On October 23, 2001, Jobs spoke before an audience of employees, special guests and invited media at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California.

The Front Stage

Steve Jobs' iPod introduction is performed in a small auditorium, housing only a few hundred people at most, at Apple headquarters. Jobs' stage is undecorated, featuring only a lectern that is not used during the performance. Spotlights at the rear of the auditorium illuminate the front stage with a 'sunny' glow. The stage backdrop features a screen, onto which Jobs' presentation slides are projected. Jobs is attired in his traditional 'uniform': a black mock turtleneck shirt, a faded pair of blue Levi's jeans, and sneakers (see *Exhibit 4.3*). Moreover, microphone leads looped around Jobs' neck and connected to a main unit in his jeans back pocket are discernible, if not slightly tacky. In one hand, Jobs wields a remote control to direct his presentation.

***Exhibit 4.3: Steve Jobs on Stage at the 2001 Apple Special
Event for iPod (Source: Nobihaya, 2006)***

[Exhibit Removed]

The Leader's Impression Management 'Narrative'

Steve Jobs' iPod introduction is a performance that establishes his 'charismatic' image through 'vision' and 'organisational' narratives. Jobs sequences his thoughts, ideas and key decisions using logic and causality, such that the performance 'reads' as a meta-narrative. The meta-narrative comprises four sub-narratives, including: Apple's rationale for market entry; an analysis of the marketplace; an overview of iPod's features and technical specifications; and finally, a glimpse at iPod. Using a two-axis graph, Jobs commences by examining the potential for market entry into one of four quadrants: digital video, photography, television and home theatre, and music:

The field that we decided to do it in, the choice we made, was music. Now, why music? Well, we love music, and it's always good to do something you love. More importantly, music's a part of everyone's life — Everyone. Music's been around forever. It will always be around. This is not a speculative market. And because it's a part of everyone's life, it's a very large target market!

Jobs employs a conversational tone with the audience, invoking collective voice to describe Apple's passion: 'we love music...'. Jobs almost engages in a persuasive 'dialogue' with himself, propounding the market size and enduring popularity of music in the culture as merits for market entry. As Jobs proceeds to the second narrative, he identifies the lack of a 'market leader' (i.e. an 'original state of affairs') — despite the best efforts of companies like Creative Technologies, Sonic Blue and Sony — as an opportunity for Apple to establish itself as a trusted brand (i.e. a 'consequent state of affairs'). Using a table on his slide presentation, Jobs performs a 'live' analysis of music player 'types' on stage, considering the cost-per-song ratio of CD, flash memory, MP3 CD, and hard drive jukebox players:

...Or, you can go buy a hard drive jukebox player for about \$300. It holds about a thousand songs and costs about thirty cents a song. So, we looked at this and studied all these, and that's [hard drive players] where we want to be. And we're introducing a product today that takes us exactly there, and that product is called iPod — iMac. iBook. iPod.

Jobs' 'live' analysis is performed to explain, but also involve the audience; it is a facade that casts them as pseudo 'participants' in the iPod's invention. The use of the 'we' pronoun also speaks to the collective identity and beliefs of Apple employees (even if the decisions were made unilaterally by Jobs in the backstage). As he transitions into the third narrative about product features and specifications, Jobs slows down his speech rhythm and cadences his voice to accentuate the iPod's ultra-thin size, fast synchronisation speed, and long battery life. Through repetition and rhetorical device, Jobs conveys the 'breakthrough' nature of iPod:

How do we get the thousand songs onto iPod? We don't want to wait, so we've built in FireWire [connectivity]... You can download an entire CD into iPod in five to ten seconds. An entire CD. So let's take a look at how it compares with USB [connectivity] ... On a USB player, you're talking five minutes.

Jobs' cadenced voice expresses his incredulity at iPod's fast file transfer speeds, gesturing his left hand to emphasise the point. Having prefaced his iPod introduction with a market analysis in the second narrative, Jobs creates comparisons to disparage competing products. Mindful of consumer, reporter and analyst cravings for technical specifications, Jobs is also very comfortable about sharing and using technical jargon (e.g. 'FireWire' and 'USB') with the audience.

The true mastery of Jobs' performance, however, arrives in his final sub-narrative: revealing iPod. To this point, the audience is enamoured by the iPod 'concept', yet they haven't even seen what it looks like, or how it operates. Jobs frames iPod as an engineering and design marvel, comparing its size to a deck of cards (using a picture slide). Finally, Jobs shares still images of iPod on the big screen, capturing it from rear, side and front angles. Of course, Jobs has one more secret:

'Boom! That's iPod. I happen to have one right here in my pocket, in fact... [reaches into jeans pocket] There it is, right there!'

After tantalising the audience for over eight minutes, iPod finally materialises in Jobs' left palm. As Jobs holds iPod high for all to see, the audience breaks their pregnant pause with laughter and warm applause.

4.4.3 WWDC, 2002: The Mac OS 9 'Eulogy'

The 'Scene' & Backstage

One of the problems Steve Jobs inherited upon his return to Apple in 1997 was an operating system (OS) architecture that was nearly fifteen years old (Cruikshank, 2006). Having been 'jerked' around by Apple during the 1990s, software developers were annoyed and tired of migrating their applications from one pointless OS upgrade to the next. Even worse, backstage leaks from Apple's own programmers about OS problems and shortcomings were undermining Jobs and the company's image (Kahney, 2008). Fearful that developers would abandon the Mac, Jobs announced and previewed a next generation OS, 'Mac OS X', in 2000 — a completely overhauled and more stable platform, with which developers could write more powerful applications. Internally, Jobs became 'like Khrushchev, banging his shoe on the table' (Kahney, 2008), decreeing that all Apple supporting cast members were no longer allowed to publicly criticise the new Mac OS. In April, 2002, Jobs declared, 'With Mac OS X taking centre stage, it's a very exciting time to be a Mac developer' (Apple, 2002). Having given enough time for developers to migrate their applications to Mac OS X, Jobs decided that Apple must officially cease developer support for Mac OS 9. On May 6, 2002, to convey the gravity of his announcement, Jobs performed a mock funeral for Mac OS 9 'live' on stage at WWDC, in San Jose, California.

The Front Stage

Steve Jobs' eulogy for Mac OS 9 is elaborately staged, containing several aesthetic arrangements. First, the stage itself is fully illuminated using 'bright white' stage lighting (positioned directly above) to create a 'heavenly' feel. The stage backdrop features a three-storey screen that is flanked by dark blue stage curtains. The image of a beautiful church interior with stain-glass windows is projected onto the screen, while a thick layer of white smoke blankets the stage floor (see *Exhibit 4.5*). Second, the scene contains two key props. As the event commences, a black casket rises from a trap door beneath the stage; inside the

closed casket lies an oversized version of the Mac OS 9 product packaging. A stirring rendition of Bach's 'Tocatta and Fugue' is played on the organ, which recedes into the background once Jobs begins speaking. Finally, Jobs' attire for the occasion once again features a black mock turtleneck shirt, a faded pair of blue Levi's jeans, and sneakers. Whilst the costume conveys Jobs' 'maverick' CEO image, it is perhaps ill-suited for the impending mock funeral.

***Exhibit 4.5: Steve Jobs Delivering the 'Eulogy' for Mac OS 9
at WWDC 2002 (Source: Story, 2002)***

[Exhibit Removed]

The Leader's Impression Management 'Narrative'

As the tune of Bach fades into the background, Steve Jobs emerges from 'stage right' onto the smoke-blanketed stage, wearing a sombre look on his face. Jobs walks to the closed casket and opens one half, propping up the oversized Mac OS 9 product packaging for the audience to see. Holding a hard copy of his eulogy, Jobs moves to the front of 'stage right' and stands at attention, before commencing his tribute:

Mac OS 9 was a friend to us all. He worked tirelessly on our behalf, always hosting our applications, never refusing a command, always at our beck and call. Except occasionally, when he'd forgotten who he was and needed to be restarted.

Jobs utilises personification to evoke nostalgic memories of Mac OS 9 in the developer-packed audience, remembering it as a diligent and faithful servant with the words, 'always at our beck and call'. At the same time, Jobs lightheartedly recalls Mac OS 9's flaws that required it to be 'restarted'. Stepping into character, Jobs exhibits several scripted gestures to lend his performance credence — pursing his lips; reading from a hard copy of the eulogy; and gazing across the audience at regular intervals. Startled by the unusual and elaborate nature of the performance, Jobs exercises pause at the close of each sentence to gauge the audience's reaction — warm laughter. Ensuing, Jobs defines Mac OS 9's legacy:

He was mentor to many younger technologies, including Sherlock, Keychain and Auto Updating. He helped to make them to what they are today. He was a humble guy too... Mac OS 9 is survived by his next generation, Mac OS X, and thousands of applications — most of them legitimate.

Jobs' scripted dialogue sustains the motif, repeatedly invoking the 'he' pronoun when referring to Mac OS 9. Concurrently, Jobs 'sense-makes', assembling a narrative about Mac OS 9's past that informs a 'vision' about the future of software development on the Mac. Jobs' 'plot' device establishes causality, casting Mac OS 9 as an 'original state of affairs' and Mac OS X as progeny (i.e. a 'consequent state of affairs'). For Jobs, the 'many younger technologies', citing the examples of 'Auto Updating' and 'Keychain' (a password utility), acted as a 'catalyst' for Mac OS X's genesis. In seeking to positively frame Mac OS X, Jobs alludes to the 'thousands of applications' already created by audience members, and praises their efforts with a droll reference to birth: '...most of them *legitimate*'.

Steve Jobs casts aside backstage disruptions about Apple's OS problems and imposes his own interpretation of the past on the audience. Jobs' eulogy is a storytelling performance that romanticises Mac OS 9's capabilities (despite the pre-existing and largely negative counter-narratives by Apple programmers and software developers) and seeks to cast a vision for the

future: Mac OS X. Jobs' 'self' and Apple's 'organisational' narratives are also captured in the subtext of the performance. For developers, Jobs' ostentatious and witty performance is a statement about Apple's rich culture: a 'self actualised' company that is unrepentant about celebrating accomplishment and reflecting on failure. Thus, as Jobs' finally closes Mac OS 9's casket and places a single long-stemmed rose upon it, it is a sanguine moment. Remaining solemn, 'in character', Jobs offers some final words before taking pause, 'Please join me in a moment of silence as we remember our old friend, Mac OS 9'.

4.4.4 Stanford University, 2005: Commencement Address

The 'Scene' & Backstage

In January, 2005, Stanford University President John Hennessy announced that Steve Jobs would deliver the Commencement address to its graduating class in June, citing Jobs as someone who 'personified the spirit and creativity that have characterised Stanford since its founding' (Stanford News Service, 2005). Months earlier, Jobs announced, in an email to Apple employees, that he underwent surgery to remove a cancerous tumour from his pancreas. Jobs stated that he had been diagnosed with a rare form of pancreatic cancer that required no ongoing treatment, and that he would return to work in a month (MacWorld Magazine, 2004; The Associated Press, 2004). Jobs' email to backstage cast members was soon 'leaked' onto the front stage, sparking an outpouring of sympathy from the 'Mac community' — websites and online forums were flooded with messages of goodwill for the 'dear leader' (Kahney, 2004). Jobs' Commencement address at Stanford was thus infused with greater expectations, as it would be his first major public appearance since January's Macworld Conference.

The Front Stage

Steve Jobs' Commencement address is a unique performance, in which he is not at all involved in the aesthetic arrangement of the front stage. The Stanford University campus and the audience members are foreign to Jobs, who is an invited guest at the event. The event's outdoor stage is situated on an American football field and features a plain layout, comprising seating for the official party and a speaker's lectern. Temporary seating on the playing arena and stand seating accommodate the large audience, composed of graduating students, parents

and their friends, with stadium speakers broadcasting the lectern input. *Exhibit 4.6* shows Jobs attired in an academic gown, minus mortarboard, and sporting a grey, neatly trimmed beard for the occasion. Importantly, Jobs does not make use of technology or props in this performance; he stands at the lectern and reads from a printed ‘script’.

***Exhibit 4.6: Steve Jobs’ Costume for his 2005 Commencement Address
at Stanford University (Source: Stanford University, 2005)***

[Exhibit Removed]

The Leader’s Impression Management ‘Narrative’

Steve Jobs’ Stanford Commencement address is a masterful storytelling performance in which he constructs a ‘self’ narrative. Jobs opens with humour, ingratiating himself with the audience by revealing that he was a college ‘dropout’, and that today was the closest he had ever come to graduation. Jobs promises to share three stories from his life with the audience. His first story, ‘connecting the dots’, is about the promise (i.e. an ‘original state of affairs’) his ‘middle class’ adoptive parents made to his college-educated birth parents — that Jobs would

go to college when he grew up. Despite finally making it to Reed College, Jobs remembers withdrawing after only six months (i.e. a ‘catalysing event’), feeling uncertain about what he wanted to do with his life, and guilty about wasting his parents’ hard-earned life savings. Having ‘dropped out’, Jobs recalls ‘unofficially’ taking calligraphy instruction classes that fascinated him, where he learned about ‘serif and san serif typefaces’, and the spacing of different letter combinations (i.e. a ‘consequent state of affairs’). Jobs continues:

But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since [Microsoft] Windows just copied the Mac, its likely that no personal computer would have them.

Through ‘sense-making’, Jobs pieces together events in his life and arranges them into a meaningful sequence. Jobs links his passion for calligraphy to the advent of typography on the Mac, simultaneously (and quite brazenly) casting Microsoft as ‘villains’ in his story. The ‘plot’ of Jobs’ story is itself an intriguing commentary on narrative, arguing that ‘you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards’. Jobs utilises exemplification to frame his leadership narrative as *mélange* of fate and fortune, having trusted his own heart, intuition, and even ‘karma’.

Jobs’ second story provides a rare glimpse into his departure and eventual return to Apple. After describing Apple’s early successes, Jobs utilises ‘facework’, comprising equivocal language and defensive framing to describe his fallout with then-CEO, John Sculley:

How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him.

Jobs adeptly uses rhetorical device to ingratiate himself with the audience, verbalising precisely what they are thinking. Wilfully omitting details about his own callow ways during the 1980s, Jobs casts himself as a ‘tragic hero’ for having divergent ‘visions of the future’. In fact, Jobs artfully frames his hiring of CEO John Sculley, as his only personal ‘failure’ in the saga, describing Sculley as ‘someone who I thought was very talented’. Jobs proceeds to make sense of his departure from Apple, positively framing it as ‘the best thing that could have ever happened to me’. Jobs validates this ‘plot’ by chronicling his successes at NeXT and Pixar, and also speaks about his loving marriage and family life. After recounting the circumstances surrounding his miraculous return to Apple, Jobs ‘sense-makes’ his leadership journey:

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love.

Jobs utilises exemplification to establish his ‘charismatic’ image with the audience. Despite earlier using ‘facework’ tactics, Jobs takes ownership and accepts the consequences of past deeds, demonstrating personal growth and moral integrity. At the same time, Jobs continues to exemplify, describing the sacrifice and suffering he endured to realise his visions.

Jobs’ Stanford Commencement address is distinctly different from his performances at Apple-related events, forging a direct communication between actor and audience. Yet, unlike Macworld or WWDC— where Jobs is not confined to a lectern; makes use of technology and props; and, has a knowledgeable, ‘dramaturgically loyal’ audience — Jobs’ ‘self’ is not nearly as effective with an unfamiliar audience. Jobs’ simple diction, pause, and cadenced voice resolves this to some extent, but the audience is nonetheless unsure of whether to laugh or applaud at particular moments. The profundity of Jobs’ stories are perhaps lost on an audience whose thoughts are preoccupied with graduation celebrations and plans for the future. Thus, Jobs’ ‘dramaturgical circumspection’ is curbed by the style and format of the occasion, performing as a ‘guest’ actor with an unfamiliar stage and audience.

4.4.5 Macworld, 2007: The iPhone Introduction

The 'Scene' & Backstage

Throughout 2006, and in the lead-up to Macworld 2007, whispers about a new product called 'iPhone' — essentially an 'iPod' digital music player with telephony and internet capabilities — grew louder among Apple rumour websites (Dolan, 2006; MacDailyNews, 2006), social networking communities (Lam, 2006; Rose, 2006), and market analysts (AppleInsider, 2006). 'Leaks' from the backstage fuelled wild speculations about product specifications, phone service carriers, sales estimates, and product release dates (Dolan, 2006). The effect of these backstage 'leaks' (which have since been pinpointed to supporting cast members at Apple) were mixed. On one hand, it generated an unprecedented level of 'buzz' about the company, while on the other, it established lofty expectations for Jobs' keynote address. On January 9, 2007, Steve Jobs addressed an expectant audience at Macworld, held at the Moscone Centre in San Francisco, California.

The Front Stage

The staging of Jobs' keynote address comprises several aesthetic arrangements on the front stage. First, Jobs is attired in his regular 'uniform': a black mock turtleneck shirt with sleeves rolled up, faded blue Levi's jeans, and a pair of New Balance sneakers. Jobs' physical appearance speaks to his age, sporting a 'five o'clock shadow', and grey hair with pronounced male pattern baldness. Second, the Moscone Centre's stage is elevated approximately one metre above the audience seating, with lighting effects that illuminate the entire front stage. The stage backdrop features a three-storey screen that is bound either side by navy blue stage curtains, upon which Jobs' presentation slides and other media are projected. Finally, shrouded in darkness at 'stage right', are Jobs' props and accessories. For this performance, Jobs utilises a black lectern, upon which lies an iPhone demonstration unit, a booklet with stage directions for the iPhone demonstration, and a remote control to direct his slide presentation. *Exhibit 4.7* shows Jobs juxtaposed against the big screen, with stage lights and lighting effects shifting the audience's attention from Jobs to screen, and back, when desired.

***Exhibit 4.7: Steve Jobs Juxtaposed Against the Stage Backdrop
at Macworld 2007 (Source: Block, 2007)***

[Exhibit Removed]

The Leader's Impression Management 'Narrative'

Steve Jobs' iPhone introduction concocts a narrative that seeks to confer meaning on Apple's past and concomitantly supply a vision for its future. Jobs commences his monologue by proclaiming, 'We're going to make some history together today'. For the next twenty-five minutes, the audience is 'on edge' as Jobs reports quarterly performance figures for iPod and iTunes media; additions to the iTunes Movie Store; and demonstrates a previously announced but unreleased product called 'Apple TV' (a media 'hub' device for the living room). Here, Jobs is 'toying' with the audience's expectations: the announcements are warmly received, but are certainly not 'history-making'. Finally, Jobs takes pause and the screen turns dark. Out of it emerges a silhouette of the company's logo, foreshadowing what is to come:

Every once in a while, a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything. And Apple has been — well, first of all, one's very fortunate if you get to work on just one of these in your career. Apple's been very fortunate. It's been able to introduce a

few of these into the world. In 1984, Apple introduced the Macintosh. It didn't just change Apple, it changed the whole computer industry. In 2001, we introduced the first iPod, and it didn't just change the way we all listen to music, it changed the entire music industry. Well, today, we're introducing three revolutionary products of this class.

Jobs 'sense-makes', identifying two significant moments in Apple's past and meaningfully sequences them. The 'plot' of Jobs' organisational narrative is 'innovation': Apple is a company that has 'changed' the world. Jobs exemplifies and invokes collective identity appeals, repeatedly stating that he and his colleagues had been 'very fortunate' to introduce two revolutionary products. In so doing, Jobs supplies meaning to the present moment, suggesting that his announcement will continue Apple's tradition as a 'revolutionary' company. Jobs continues to 'toy' with the audience, until finally explaining that the 'three revolutionary products' are, in fact, contained in only one device — 'iPhone'.

Having confirmed the iPhone's existence, Jobs proceeds to share a vision narrative that seeks to rationalise the product's design. Jobs embarks on an analysis of the market competition, using 'casting' to depict competing designs as clumsy and perfunctory. He 'names and shames' the 'Motorola Q, the [RIM] BlackBerry, Palm Treo, and Nokia E62' on the big screen as examples of 'smart phones' with small plastic keyboards that are 'there whether or not you need them to be there'. In so doing, Jobs frames the issue in terms of user interface design:

Well, every application wants a slightly different user interface, a slightly optimised set of buttons, just for it. And what happens if you think of a great idea six months from now? You can't run around and add a button to these things... What we're going to do is get rid of all these buttons and just make a giant screen. Now, how are we going to communicate with this? ... Who wants a stylus? You have to get 'em and put 'em away, and you lose 'em... We're going to use the best pointing device in the world. We're going to use our fingers.

By scripting his speech in the present tense and repeatedly invoking the 'we' pronoun, Jobs appears to engage with the audience 'live' and interactively — as if they themselves had a

voice in the iPhone's design. Most importantly, Jobs meaningfully sequences each design decision by using Aristotelian 'logos' appeals as an ordering principle. In so doing, the 'vision' narrative for the iPhone is rudimentary: 'smart phone' keyboards consume space and diminish functionality (i.e. an 'original state of affairs'); starting with a 'giant screen' allows for application-specific inputs; using a stylus is redundant; and the best pointing device is the human finger (i.e. 'catalysing ideas'). Jobs' use of the big screen in this sequence is particularly important, using it to show the audience the limitations of competing phones, and contrast them with the iPhone's simple, large and elegant design.

***Exhibit 4.8: A Booklet of Steve Jobs' 'Stage Directions' for his iPhone
Demonstration at Macworld 2007 (Source: April, 2007)***

[Exhibit Removed]

Using a booklet containing 'stage directions' (shown above in *Exhibit 4.8*), Jobs provides a demonstration of iPhone. A video cable connected to iPhone and a camera situated directly above Job's lectern broadcasts his demonstration on the big screen — for the next hour, Jobs delights the audience by showcasing all of iPhone's features. At the conclusion of his keynote address, Jobs extends his sincere thanks to all Apple employees for their hard work, and to all of their families: 'You don't know how much we need you and appreciate you, so thank you'. Before this moment, however, Jobs revisits the 'organisational' narrative he constructed at the beginning of his performance. With with the Mac, iPod, Apple TV, and now iPhone, Jobs proclaims a catharsis:

So we're announcing today we're dropping the 'Computer' from our name, and from this day forward, we're going to be known as 'Apple Inc.', to reflect the product mix that we have today.

Seemingly inconsequential, Jobs' proclamation elicits a standing ovations from Apple employees in the front rows of the audience, who are joined in applause by the general public. In a small way, the change to Apple Inc. (from 'Apple Computer'), was an homage to their shared vision and identification with Jobs' self-image and performed narratives.

4.4.6 Online Essay, 2007: 'Thoughts on Music'

The 'Scene' & Backstage

The unprecedented success of Apple's iPod music player and iTunes Store generated an unforeseen problem for Steve Jobs: digital rights management (DRM) — an 'anti-piracy' system embedded in all iTunes purchases, which prevents songs from being illegally transferred and copied. Initially included at the behest of the major music labels, Jobs and Apple soon discovered DRM actually increased iPod sales, since iTunes purchases were only compatible with iPods and not third-party media players (Anderson, 2007). In 2006, France became the first of many European nations to demand, on behalf of consumers and competitors, that Apple open its DRM system and put an end to its 'monopoly' in the music market (Hesseldahl, 2006; Kane, 2007). Ignoring the edict, Steve Jobs and Apple maintained an unusual silence on the matter. In January, 2007, Apple was finally named as a defendant in a US class-action lawsuit (in addition to several European filings) for violating anti-trust laws (Gohring, 2007). Threatening to overshadow the media's obsession with iPhone, which he announced only weeks earlier, Jobs decided to break his long silence in February, 2007, by publishing an essay on Apple's website, entitled 'Thoughts On Music'.

The Front Stage

Steve Jobs' essay is a written text that is 'performed' on the front stage by virtue of its publication on Apple's website (*see* Jobs, 2007). Jobs' 'performance' therefore contains no aesthetic staging arrangements. While Jobs does not define the intended audience for his essay, its online publication makes it accessible to multifarious stakeholders, including iTunes

customers, Apple shareholders, the music companies, regulators, competitors, and of course, the media.

The Leader's Impression Management 'Narrative'

Steve Jobs' online essay is a thought-piece that constructs a 'vision' narrative about the future of online music sales, digital copyright laws and regulatory frameworks. Critically, Jobs utilises 'facework' tactics not to appear apologetic but rather affronted. Jobs launches a counter-offensive by 'casting' the music companies as 'antagonists', naming the 'big four' music companies — 'Universal, Sony BMG, Warner and EMI' — and describing their stance on music licensing for legal distribution over the Internet as 'extremely cautious'. Jobs proceeds, explaining that Apple's licensing agreement with the music companies in 2003 was a watershed moment:

Apple was able to negotiate landmark usage rights at the time, which include allowing users to play their DRM protected music on up to 5 computers and on an unlimited number of iPods. Obtaining such rights from the music companies was unprecedented at the time, and even today is unmatched by most other digital music services.

Jobs uses 'casting' and defensive 'framing' techniques to portray himself as a consumer advocate, and the music companies as exigent, using the phrase: 'Obtaining such rights... was unprecedented at the time'. Jobs invokes a comparison between iTunes and competing music services, describing Apple's service as 'unmatched' to remind the audience of iTunes' value proposition. In completing his analysis of the status quo, Jobs elucidates Apple's contractual obligation 'to the music companies to protect their music' when its 'FairPlay' DRM system is decoded or unlocked by computer hackers.

Jobs leverages his interpretation of the status quo to prologue three alternatives for the future of online music sales. Jobs' three 'vision' narratives about the future retain a familiar structure and rhythm, comprising: a hypothesis about the marketplace's configuration, and an explanation of Apple's role in the scenario. In the first alternative, Jobs posits that the industry maintains its current configuration, and draws comparisons between the major online music retailers:

Music purchased from Microsoft's Zune store will only play on Zune players; music purchased from Sony's Connect store will only play on Sony's players; and music purchased from Apple's iTunes store will only play on iPods. This is the current state of affairs in the industry, and customers are being well served with a continuing stream of innovative products and a wide variety of choices.

Jobs draws on examples, using repetition and rhythm to illustrate that DRM is not exclusive to Apple, and that 'the current state of affairs' benefits both consumers and vendors. Moreover, Jobs dismisses claims of 'monopoly', evidencing research that shows only three percent of music on the average iPod is purchased from iTunes. Jobs' second narrative lends credence to the idea that Apple should licence its 'FairPlay' DRM to other online stores and device makers:

It is near impossible if multiple companies control separate pieces of the puzzle, and all of them must quickly act in concert to repair the damage from a leak... Apple has concluded that if it licenses FairPlay to others, it can no longer guarantee to protect the music it licenses from the big four music companies.

Jobs adopts a 'resigned' tone in the second 'vision' narrative, pessimistic about the industry's ability to effectively protect licensed music if third-party vendors are given the 'secrets' to Apple's 'FairPlay' DRM. The negative framing — 'It is near impossible...' and 'Apple... can no longer guarantee' — conveys that Jobs is clearly uninterested in the second 'vision' narrative as a viable solution. Rather, Jobs' preferred alternative manifests in the third 'vision' narrative, in which DRM is abolished altogether:

Imagine a world where every online store sells DRM-free music encoded in open licensable formats. In such a world, any player can play music purchased from any store, and any store can sell music which is playable on all players. This is clearly the best alternative for consumers, and Apple would embrace it in a heartbeat.

Jobs' 'vision' for the future assembles in the final narrative, invoking poetic language that invites the audience to consider the possibilities (unlike the two preceding alternatives). Jobs

‘exemplifies’, maintaining an authenticity of voice in the essay as a champion of consumer interests. Jobs’ meta-narrative establishes collective belief and interest between actor and audience: the best ‘consequent state of affairs’ for the consumer is also best for Apple. As Jobs completes the ‘vision’ narrative, he addresses European concerns about DRM, and utilises ‘facework’ to shift blame onto the music companies:

Perhaps those unhappy with the current situation should redirect their energies towards persuading the music companies to sell their music DRM-free... Convincing them to license their music to Apple and others DRM-free will create a truly interoperable music marketplace. Apple will embrace this wholeheartedly.

In this excerpt, Jobs implores regulatory authorities to negotiate with the music companies, in the wake of his failed attempts. The use of passive voice (e.g. ‘Perhaps those...’) barely conceals his mounting exasperation about Apple’s predicament, which he endeavours to counter-balance through a positive frame: ‘Apple will embrace this wholeheartedly’. Thus, Jobs’ ‘vision’ narrative establishes a ‘charismatic’ image through focused analysis and storytelling. Mindful of the audience’s wants and needs, Jobs cast himself as person of high moral currency, with the interests of customers close to his heart.

4.5 Discussion

Having examined Steve Jobs’ leadership narrative, his stage, and six performance texts, this section reflects on the narrative construction of Jobs’ ‘charismatic’ image; considers the implications of ‘stage management’; and finally, combines the six performance ‘vignettes’ to exemplify how Steve Jobs *as* ‘narrative’ has been constructed.

First, the six performance vignettes demonstrate Steve Jobs’ understanding of narrative as a potent persuasive device. At the most fundamental level, Jobs’ narratives and stories conform to the narrative structure that comprises: an ‘original state of affairs’; a catalysing idea, action or event; and a ‘consequent state of affairs’. In reflecting on Jobs’ performances that feature announcements about new products, this triadic structure is most evident. The Microsoft deal, iPod and iPhone announcements all commence with an analysis of the status quo, which

identifies shortcomings and opportunities in the marketplace for Apple to create value (for consumers and shareholders) — this constitutes an ‘original state of affairs’. The ‘catalyst’ in Jobs’ performances are invariably ‘paradigm shifts’, which present a novel, more elegant and often simpler way of ‘doing things’. To illustrate, Jobs’ iPod and iPhone performances frame competing music player and smart phone designs (respectively) as inferior, proceeding to ideate and then, critically, demonstrate how iPod’s ‘click wheel’ and iPhone’s ‘multi-touch’ technologies resolve various user interface problems (in competing products). Jobs’ ‘paradigm shift’ precipitates a ‘consequent state of affairs’, which in the case of the iPhone introduction was a reflection statement about Apple’s culture of innovation and revolution (hence the front stage symbolism of Jobs’ announcement about Apple’s legal name change). To contrast, Jobs’ announcement of ‘the Microsoft deal’ featured a more rudimentary, desperate and desired ‘consequent state of affairs’: a ‘healthy and prospering’ Apple.

The six performance vignettes also showcase Steve Jobs’ utilisation of ‘self’, ‘vision’, and ‘organisational’ narrative types. Jobs’ presentation of ‘vision’ narratives is particularly striking, employing ‘casting’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘direction’ in his scripted performances with tremendous effect. For example, Jobs’ ‘eulogy’ for Mac OS 9 is a confounding *mélange* of humour, positive ‘framing’ devices and rhetorical flourishes, which are reinforced by the aesthetic arrangements of stage backdrop, lighting, music, and props on the front stage. Jobs’ ‘vision’ narrative itself is a storytelling performance that embellishes the truth about Mac OS 9’s performance capabilities through the motif of ‘death’; the moment is a catharsis out of which Mac OS X emerges. The predominance of the ‘vision’ narrative type in Jobs’ vignettes may be explained by the way traditions and rituals inform the events at which Jobs performs. Macworld and WWDC, for example, are consumer and developer-oriented ‘trade shows’ (respectively); these events are tacitly filled with (audience) expectations that Jobs will announce new products and services. For this reason, Jobs’ Commencement address at Stanford University is not only unique for its ‘self’ narratives, but also because there is no pre-existing relationship or sense of ‘dramaturgical loyalty’ between actor and audience. Even so, Jobs’ ‘self’ narrative is one of his finest performances in which ‘casts’ himself a victim of passion to explain his dismissal from Apple in 1985. Jobs shifts blame onto the ‘antagonist’ — then-CEO John Sculley.

Second, the six performance vignettes demonstrate Steve Jobs' realisation that 'stage management' is critical to 'charismatic' image on the front stage. Upon his return to Apple in 1997, for example, Jobs noticed that backstage supporting cast members at Apple failed to exercise 'dramaturgical loyalty' or 'discipline' by speaking candidly to reporters about problems at the company and flaws in the Mac OS. Practising 'dramaturgical circumspection', Jobs immediately forbade supporting cast members from 'leaking' and speaking out-of-turn, in an effort to restore Apple's much maligned image in the press and marketplace. Jobs' decree appears to have yielded some profits, making the delivery of 'bad news' somewhat more palatable, with customers and shareholders accepting the Microsoft deal in 1997, and developers coming to terms with the planned obsolescence of Mac OS 9 in 2002. In recent years, backstage 'leaks' have re-emerged as a problem for Jobs and Apple, prompted largely by the wild speculation of journalists, analysts and Mac enthusiast websites. However, despite the months-long rumour mongering in 2006, Jobs' announcement of iPhone in 2007 did not appear to diminish the audience's 'charismatic' image of him — if anything, Jobs' 'charisma' was enhanced by the performance, in which he endeared himself with the audience by 'toying' with their high expectations. The aesthetic arrangement of the front stage is equally important to Jobs' presentation of self. The stage; backdrop; lighting and lighting effects; technology; lectern; and props comprise the set design for Jobs' performances. Additionally, Jobs' costumes are an expression of his 'non-conformist' personality and general disdain for corporate uniforms, while his intended gestures, stage directions and interactions with both screen and audience complement the 'spoken' narrative.

Third, by combining and sequencing the six performance vignettes, an understanding of Steve Jobs *as* 'narrative' emerges from the texts. Reflecting on the many chapters of Jobs' leadership 'narrative' (see *Section 4.2*), the performances examined in this thesis comprise a 'grand narrative' about Jobs' charismatic leadership since his return to the Apple in 1997. In the 1970s and '80s, Jobs established this charisma through his penchant for the stage, which culminated in his introduction of the Macintosh in 1984. Despite his extended hiatus from Apple, Jobs has honed his keynote addresses down to a fine performance art. Today, bespectacled and balding, Jobs stands upon the stage, somewhat more cognisant of the actor's duty. Jobs' performance at Macworld 1997 demonstrated a wisdom borne from experience, chiding the audience for its juvenile reaction to the Microsoft deal at a critical moment that

instead demanded circumspection. Jobs' realisation that Apple needed to 'innovate' its way out of trouble, in many ways, precipitated the company's 'renaissance'. Following the success of the iMac in 1998, Jobs' introduction of the iPod in 2001 was an initial sign that Apple was consolidating itself and, for the first time in more than a decade, making elegant, functional and original products. Jobs' 'eulogy' for Mac OS 9 in 2002 was a powerful and symbolic piece of 'theatre' that recaptured his bravado from the 1980s — he was getting rid of the 'old' to make way for the 'new'. Of course, Jobs' close encounter with death in 2004, where he was diagnosed with a non-fatal form of pancreatic cancer, appears to have humbled and mellowed him somewhat. In 2005, a compassionate and circumspect Jobs delivered the Commencement address at Stanford University, which surprised many Jobs followers. Jobs' introduction of the iPhone in January, 2007, featured the 'reality distortion field' in full effect. Jobs' virtuoso performance signalled that he was not ready to depart the stage just yet. A month later, a defiant Jobs returned to defend Apple's position in the DRM debate. Hence, the 'grand narrative' about Steve Jobs' charismatic leadership since his return to Apple in 1997 is an absorbing story of atonement, learning and wisdom. It seems that the callow Jobs of the 1980s has been condemned to the history books, or at the very least — the backstage.

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has applied the conceptual framework of analysis (developed in Chapter Two) to a case study 'charismatic leader' — Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. Chapter Four commenced by chronicling Jobs' leadership 'narrative', which sought to highlight the maturation of Jobs' charisma during his journey. The chapter subsequently examined the importance of 'stage management', and in particular, the ritualistic nature of Jobs' performances at events such as Macworld and WWDC. Chapter Four culminated in a narrative analysis of six performance texts by Jobs between 1997-2007, which explored his charismatic leadership as an interaction between actor and audience — a 'performing art'. Finally, the chapter discussed key revelations about Jobs' performances, including 'stage management' and the invocation of 'self', 'vision' and 'organisational' narrative types. In combining and meaningfully sequencing the six texts, the conceptual framework of analysis enabled the construction of a 'grand narrative' about Jobs' charismatic leadership at Apple from 1997 to 2007.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

...narrative can provide a different, and valuable, form of knowledge that enables researchers to engage with the lived realities of organisational life...

(Rhodes & Brown, 2005a: 182)

5.1 Summary of Contributions

This thesis has sought to augment existing leadership research by investigating how an understanding of narrative informs dramaturgical approaches to the study of charismatic leadership. Whereas dramaturgical and discursive scholars have called attention to the theatrical and situational aspects of contemporary leadership since the 1990s, orthodox studies of charismatic leadership remain enamoured with the self-concept and attribution theory paradigm of the 1970s and '80s. In many ways, this scholarly preoccupation with charisma as an innate, causal and quantifiable set of qualities that reside with the individual has marginalised the inquiries of constructionist researchers, who contend that charismatic leadership is socially constructed through processes of 'impression management'. Herein lies 'the rub' — existing research features very few empirical works written from the dramaturgical perspective, which test, build and extend the extant theory through a case study leader. The 'dramaturgical lens' has thus been in a state of arrested development until the late 1990s. Moreover, although extant theory principally understands leader impression management as a persuasive activity that is enacted via framing, scripting, staging and

performing, it largely fails to acknowledge narrative and storytelling as an intrinsic constituent of impression management.

This thesis commenced by synthesising charismatic leadership, drama and narrative areas of scholarly research, reconciling both theory and practice, to develop a conceptual framework of analysis that was informed by key revelations and findings. The main contribution of the framework lies in its espousal of narrative and storytelling as the discursive centrepiece of leader impression management. Influenced by Jones and Pittman's (1982) notion of 'promotion' as an impression management technique, the framework posits three narrative types: 'self', 'vision' and 'organisational'. While principally inspired by Gardner and Avolio's (1998) dramaturgical model, the second key contribution of the devised framework is the emphasis placed upon 'stage management', which recognises the 'backstage' and 'front stage' as discrete regions that host important leader IM events. The visual representation and segregation of stages in the model revives Goffman's (1959) postulation that social life is indeed a 'performance', commencing with preparations in the backstage that neither the actor, nor supporting cast, would like the audience to observe. Rather, the front stage is the venue for the actor's scripted performance, comprising dialogue, scripted gestures, 'set' design, costumes, props and other aesthetic staging arrangements. The distinction between stages also seeks to highlight the impact of 'potential disruptions' in either the backstage (e.g. 'incursions' or 'leaks') or front stage (e.g. 'faux pas' or 'unintended gestures') to the leader's 'charismatic' image.

In answering 'how?' narrative and storytelling is leveraged to construct the leader's desired 'charismatic' image, this thesis has utilised dramaturgical and discourse analytic approaches to examine each of the selected vignettes as 'performance texts'. The study examined six performances by the case study leader — Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. — and subsequently discussed revelations about his performances. Jobs' understanding of the narrative structure demonstrates his penchant for 'sense-making' on the front stage — indeed, he expounds a context or 'original state of affairs'; a catalysing idea, action or event; and a 'consequent state of affairs'. The scripted performances of self, vision and organisational narrative types occurred at Jobs' discretion, but was, in many ways, informed by the 'scene' and backstage events. Most interestingly, one particular performance deviated from the 'script' when the

audience's visceral reaction to Jobs' 'vision' narrative was received unfavourably; it prompted Jobs to perform a second, impromptu counter-narrative to buttress his first narrative.

While narrative is a vehicle through which the leader may construct and manage their 'charismatic' image, each performance was found to contain a latent or underlying purpose, with social and material outcomes for both leader and organisation. Steve Jobs' audience in the performance texts analysed comprised a disparate group of stakeholders that were internal and external to the company. The stakeholders included employees, Board members, business partners, regulatory bodies, analysts, Mac enthusiasts, and of course, journalists.

The framework of analysis' emphasis on 'stage management' conceptualises the backstage and front stage as discrete regions, which complements understandings of leadership as a 'performing art'. An examination of the 'scene' and backstage events and sagas preceding each performance called attention to the potentially deleterious impact of 'incursions' and 'leaks'. Steve Jobs was shown to practice dramaturgical circumspection quite strictly, demanding absolute 'dramaturgical discipline' and 'loyalty' from supporting cast members, whom he prohibits from speaking about the company's problems and forthcoming products. However, despite Jobs' best efforts, backstage 'leaks' about unannounced products — largely fuelled by media, analyst, and Mac community 'zeal' — continue to be an issue for Jobs and Apple. Whereas consequent front stage rumour and gossip may undermine the 'surprise' and 'theatre' of Jobs' performance, it is open to debate as to whether his image as a 'charismatic' leader diminishes by virtue of these 'disruptions'. Finally, the thesis also highlighted the contribution of aesthetic arrangements on the front stage, such as set design, backdrops, costumes, props and music to the construction and maintenance of the leader's 'charismatic' image. Steve Jobs' recurring costume in the performance texts, for example, conveys his image as a 'non-conformist' leader, while his use of technology and slide presentations and other technology complements the delivery of scripted dialogue.

In returning to Max Weber's meditations on charisma, we are reminded that it is a form of influence independent of tradition and formal authority. Using drama, this thesis has argued that follower perceptions of a leader's exceptional qualities are informed by narrative.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

As with most research, this thesis has a number of limitations. First, the social constructionist paradigm of this paper, which assumes that ‘reality’ is negotiated through language and social interaction via continuous, iterative and recursive processes, has implications for the role of the researcher and research objectivity. Discursive and narratological research in organisational studies inherently requires the investigator to provide a ‘creative re-description of the world such that hidden patterns and hitherto unexplored meanings can unfold’ (Kearney, 2002: 12). ‘Scientific truth’ is thus not the sole prerogative of the discursive investigator, rather it is the pursuit of ‘meaning’, making sense of embodied and lived organisational realities (Rhodes & Brown, 2005a; 2005b). Second, it is difficult to generalise and confer the findings of this thesis’ case study to all charismatic leaders. Limiting the thesis’ scope to Steve Jobs allowed for the devised framework to be applied in-depth, and consequently form a ‘grand narrative’ about the leader. Ergo, the inductive reasoning of this thesis does not seek to make ‘creative leaps’, but rather synthesise and offer important insights about drama, narrative and charismatic leadership.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The narratologically informed dramaturgical framework of analysis in the thesis was developed through a review of key academic literature in the areas of drama, narrative and charismatic leadership. The thesis subsequently applied the framework to a case study charismatic leader — Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. To further validate the utility of the framework, a comparative or large-scale study of charismatic leader performance may reveal new narrative types, ‘stage management’ techniques, as well as a catalogue of framing devices and scripted gestures that were either not manifest or identified in Jobs’ performances.

Whereas the conceptual framework of analysis presupposes charismatic leadership as a socially constructed and negotiated outcome of ‘leader impression management’, this thesis did not consider the material outcomes of the charismatic relationship (i.e. follower behaviours). Ergo, further research into charismatic leadership from the dramaturgical perspective may seek to foreground the material consequences of leader ‘performance’.

Using, for example, in-depth interviews and focus groups could identify how various internal and external stakeholders perceive and consume a leader's 'charisma', and the intensity of their social identification with attitudes, values and beliefs that comprise the 'charismatic relationship'.

The devised dramaturgical framework also calls attention to Goffman's (1959) postulation that the segregation of back and front 'regions' or 'stages' is vital to the presentation of self. For example, backstage 'leaks' about Apple's forthcoming products undermined Steve Jobs' performances (to an extent), highlight precisely why the actor and supporting cast members must exercise 'dramaturgical discipline', 'loyalty' and 'circumspection'. Further research into 'stage management' could evaluate audience reactions to these 'potential disruptions' to discover whether the actor's 'charismatic' image is materially diminished.

Finally, as the case study progressed, succession planning emerged as a theme that may be of further interest to charismatic leadership savants. The 'routinisation' of charisma was an idea that intrigued Max Weber (1947), who sought to find out if the energy, values and positive consequences of charisma could be codified by groups and organisations. Many would argue that in the aftermath of Steve Jobs' dismissal from Apple, the company was directionless and unable to either codify or revive his values, beliefs and cavalier spirit until his return in 1997. Further studies about Jobs and Apple may wish to examine how the company survives what is almost certain to be a second departure (e.g. retirement) by Jobs. More broadly, from the dramaturgical and narratological perspectives, future research may examine how 'self', 'vision' and 'organisational' narratives are either codified and shared, or entirely lost and forgotten by organisations in the post-'charismatic leader' era.

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