Team Panel 2 Roster: Teresa Castillo, Candus Knapp, Melinda Yang

In your Online and in-class discussion leader think about the movie Being There- and how it might serve as a model that illustrates the debate that the concept of leadership (and the role and function of the leader) is a myth (or even a pathological societal invention).

Base your general thesis for the in-class discussion leader on the view presented in the Gemmill & Oakley (1992) article titled, Leadership: An alienating social myth (download from BlazeView).

Objective 1:

• Develop a discussion question for the class that you will post to the BlazeView “discussion” area.
  
  o Note: A discussion thread for this component has been set up and is labeled: “Panel 2: “Being There”

Objective 2:

Use the movie, the article, the online class discussion responses, and any other resources to construct both an in-class presentation and a discussion leader and debate on the topic.

Use the following thought questions and the article as guide for setting up your presentation and discussion leader

• Think about all of the cascading events that occur regarding that lead to ascent of “Chance Gardner” within Washington, D.C. society. In what ways might these events reinforce Gemmill & Oakley’s criticism that studies regarding leadership always portray the leader as a necessary variable in organizational motivation?
  
  • How does almost every person (excluding the housekeeper and the doctor) support Gemmill & Oakley’s purview (noted above)?
  
  • Gemmill & Oakley describe the creation of the leadership myth as part of an iatrogenic (this refers to a pathology) process. In what ways do these various characters serve to perpetuate the leadership myth?
  
  • Is their behavior pathological?
  
  • Or does their behavior reflect some personal or societal need (a deficiency) rather than a social and/or mental illness?
• Why does the Doctor appear be skeptical of Chance as a leader?

  • Might this be due to his social position – and thus, he does not “personally” require a leader as a motivational force in order to achieve his life/career objectives? Or is there a rival hypothesis?

  • Does the President (“Bobbie”) see Chance as a threat to his own real or illusory function as the President; and his role as a leader?

• Without projecting any willful or overt behaviors - how does Chance serve to meet the needs of other people’s expectations; and their perception(s) of a leader?

  • How does Gemmill & Oakley’s notion of a leadership myth emerge in these scenarios?

• Based on Gemmill & Oakley’s point of view, what drives individuals to portray Chance as a leader? What do these individuals appear to be searching for (or need) in a leader?

• How might alienation as a key part of the social myth of leadership (as explicated by Gemmill & Oakley) play a key role in the perception of Chance’ emergence as a leader (in other people’s minds)?

• If leadership according Gemmill & Oakley is a social myth, could a socially and behaviorally incompetent (mentally retarded) person like Chance succeed in a leadership role?

• How does Chance’ selection by discrete individuals possibly reflect a collective (group) motivational process?

  • Given the fact that Gemmill & Oakley cite various classic (and sometimes obsolete) psychological and sociological theories (e.g., Psychoanalysis, Maslow, Seligman’s Learned Helplessness, etc.) to reinforce their points. How might a collective unconscious (as formulated by C. C. Jung) serve to impact those that are impacted by Chance?

  • How might there be mindlessness or learned helplessness akin to what Gemmill & Oakley portray as a Social Darwinism (contagion) with respect to the behavior of the followers/supporters of Chance?

• Given the last scene of the movie, do followers need to elevate their perception of a leader that of a deity? (Might this apply to Jung’s collective unconscious – or Freud’s view in “Moses and Monotheism?”)