

Once Upon a Time, There Was
A Lady Named Tipper Gore

Music plays a part in all of our lives. We work to it, play to it, learn about it, appreciate it, and most of all, we enjoy it. One of the notable elements of music is the power that it has to move us. Music derives its power from the sound of the notes and the meaning of the lyrics. For example, "Vesti la giubba" from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* tells the heart-wrenching, tearful tale of a clown. Glen Miller's "In the Mood" is a popular advertisement for the "Sesame Street" songs, however, these songs had messages that were oriented towards children to help them learn. The longevity of the show, over twenty years, is a testimony to its success in teaching children through music and artful language.

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Running Head: TIPPER GORE

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With the power that music has, many contemporary musicians have used this power to "teach" their listeners. In her song "Luka," Susanne Vega sings about child abuse. The King of Pop, Michael Jackson wants people to help "Heal the World," but everyone has to start by first looking at the "Man in the Mirror." Many time's artists join together to benefit some cause: USA for Africa, Band Aid, Live Aid, Hear 'n' Aid, Farm Aid, and so on. Music shapes our culture, influences our society, and can set our agenda, but what if this power is abused?

Themes of alcohol and drug abuse, violence, explicit sex, Satanism, and suicide are usually not considered to be socially accepted themes and practices in most societies. However, these are themes that can be found on television, in advertisements, in movies (both theater and rentals), and in music, especially rock

music and its subcategory, heavy metal. Some people find the occurrence of these themes, through such easily accessible means, to be quite disturbing. Among these people are such notable women as Susan Baker, Sally Nevius, Pam Hower, and Tipper Gore. These Washington Wives (as they were later dubbed by musician Frank Zappa) are caring mothers with a concern for their children. During the mid-1980's, there was a rise in teenager problems, problems similar to many themes found in rock music (alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, etc.). These four women were shocked to find these themes present in the rock music to which their children listened. In hopes of trying to educate parents and people about these unregulated dionysian practices, these four women formed the Parents' Music Resource Center (PMRC).

Perhaps the best known member of the PMRC was Tipper Gore, wife of the current Vice-President of the United States, Albert Gore. In line with her work in the PMRC, Mrs. Gore wrote a book entitled Raising PG Kids in an X Rated Society. The book contains much of the same basic information that the PMRC used, however it is more in-depth and personal. Mrs. Gore presented the problems facing children, the excesses present in rock music, and her explanations on them. Because of the attempt to explain this chain of events, Tipper Gore's rhetoric in her book can be analyzed by Ernest Bormann's fantasy theme approach. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the rhetoric of Tipper Gore's book using a fantasy theme approach, and to evaluate that rhetoric by the results standard to assess the impact she had on politics.

Bormann's fantasy theme approach to rhetorical criticism

First, one must understand Bormann's fantasy theme approach. Bormann defines the term *fantasy* as the "creative and imaginative interpretation of events that [fulfill] a psychological or rhetorical need" (in Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 86). "The fantasy theme approach analyzes public communication as a fantasy created by a group to answer the questions: What is really happening here and what is the nature of our reality" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 86)? There are two principles that are fundamental to the fantasy theme approach. One, "people use communication to create reality" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 87). By creating a fantasy, people are defining what reality is to them. However, people need some sort of basis from which to begin creating that reality, and communication allows people to gather information; in fact, communication allows people to share fantasies, and in turn, this can cause the creation of fantasies or refinement of existing fantasies. Two, "people can share the symbols they create" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 87). A symbol is something that stands for something else--a kind of "shorthand." Words are symbols; for example, the word *chair* symbolizes a piece of furniture that people sit upon, the word *music* symbolizes a type of sound that one can hear. However, the specific meaning of the word can vary from person to person; *chair* might be a wing chair to one person but a bar stool to another, and *music* might be big band jazz to one and African drum music to another. When people share the symbols they create, there is a synthesis of the symbols and their meaning, and this new symbol and meaning create reality.

The question then arises, why do people need to create reality? This need to create reality, or to fantasize, is done to explain occurrences past, present, and future. Newly forming groups, or zero-history groups, fantasize to create a shared culture. This then facilitates communication by giving the group a frame of reference. Existing groups fantasize to review and revise the group's notion of reality. Fantasizing can occur at any time, but it seems to happen most in times of trouble. "When a situation is chaotic and confusing, and no acceptable interpretation of events is provided, people tend to fantasize a way out of the situation or a way to explain it" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 88). These explanations take the form of *fantasy chains*. Fantasy chains are a "systematic [way] of explaining events" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 88). Since fantasy theme views communication as a drama, it analyzes messages by looking at the characters, the plot, the setting, etc. The fantasy chain consists of these heroes and villains acting out a story "in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now transactions of the group" (Bormann in Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 88). Taken as a whole, the drama presents the group's *rhetorical vision* --the reality that the group's synthesis of symbols has created.

After a group has formed its rhetorical vision, the group can choose to remain the size it is, or it can chose to grow and include more people in their fantasy. If the group desires to expand, they can share their fantasy with others by going public with their reality. To go public with a fantasy is a three-step process. First, there is *consciousness-creating communication*. This is where people synthesize their individual symbols into symbols salient for the group creating the group's rhetorical vision. Second, *consciousness-raising communication* is utilized

to gain new group members. As newcomers are introduced to the group's fantasy, current group members might press them into accepting the group's fantasy. The third and final step in going public with a fantasy is *consciousness-sustaining communication*. In this step, the group reviews and revises its fantasy(s) to maintain their shared vision of reality (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, pp. 88-89).

This process of going public with a fantasy suggests that what is true for a small group can also be true for a large group, yet there had been no medium given through which a small group can share its fantasy with a potentially larger group. The medium most frequently utilized in the sharing of a fantasy is the mass media. Additionally, "much public or mass communication may have its genesis in small-group communication" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 89). For example, a group of women felt that drunk driving was a serious problem that must be dealt with. They formed a group, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), to try to combat the drunk driving epidemic. By using television, speeches, and advertisements, this group made their rhetorical vision a nationally shared vision.

The technique of fantasy theme analysis is comprised of three components: "discovering the communication patterns of fantasizing, considering the elements of the fantasy, and explaining how and why the fantasy works for a particular group of people" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 90). These components have been labeled according to the type of information they contain: fantasy theme, fantasy type, and rhetorical vision, respectively.

The search for fantasy themes is the first step in a fantasy theme analysis. This step is a descriptive one in which all the information related to the fantasy is gathered so the rhetorical critic can describe the fantasy chain. When searching for

fantasy themes, one looks for the "dramatic characters, [the] heroes and villains and their supporting cast; scenarios, the plot lines that develop the fantasy; and setting, the scene in which the action takes place" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 90).

When a group is fantasizing, it is creating a drama; the heroes and villains are selected and placed in a conflict. "Without good guys and bad guys and the inherent dramatic tension of good struggling against evil, there is no drama" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 90).

If a group's fantasy theme has been repeated enough, the group does not need to keep repeating it to get their message across. When the same characters, same settings, and same plot lines are repeated or shared again and again, this is called a fantasy type. (There might be slight variations each time the fantasy theme is repeated, but as long as the same basic fantasy theme is repeated, it is still movement towards a fantasy type). A fantasy type is a way to abbreviate a fantasy theme. This way, when the fantasy type is mentioned (using a *dramatic trigger* i.e. a code word, slogan, jingle, gesture, location, persona, etc.), all the details, meaning, and emotions associated with that drama are recalled--there is no longer a need to go through the lengthy process of repeating the fantasy theme. For example, terrorism is a fantasy type. When terrorism is mentioned, people draw up images of "crazy people" with automatic weapons, hijacking, hostages, death, fear, anger, and so forth. The fantasy type, terrorism, is able to draw up all the images, meanings, and feelings associated with that theme in one, brief word. The question then arises, when has a fantasy theme been repeated enough times to be called a fantasy type? One must gather "a sufficient number of examples of the fantasy so that [one] can observe if, or when, details are no longer provided" (Rybacki &

Rybacki, 1991, p. 93) when the dramatic trigger is given. When one finds no more details being given, then a fantasy type has been created.

Fantasy types are useful in that they allow judgments to be made about a rhetorical activity. One can see just how large a group the fantasy encompassed by analyzing the number of similar responses people make when they observe a dramatic trigger. For instance, the War on Drugs. Similar to a war, people identify with the fact this will be a battle, sacrifices will have to be made, there will be casualties, and eventually, the side of right will triumph. Fantasy types also facilitate communication by categorizing and giving frames of reference. Talking about the entertainment industry might be easier to do if one used fantasy types such as movies or music.

The final step in the fantasy theme analysis is also the goal of fantasy theme analysis: "to explain how and why a fantasy became a shared reality for a group" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 96), and this shared reality is found in the rhetorical vision. The rhetorical vision is "a unified putting together of the various scripts that gives the participants a broader view of things" (Bormann in Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 96). A fantasy theme is one set of characters, setting, and plot. A fantasy type is a shorthand for the fantasy theme encompassing all things about the theme into a short symbol. The rhetorical vision is the total of all the communication that the group has undertaken, and this comprises "the index of the complete drama" (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991, p. 96). The rhetorical vision is the meaningful totality of the group's fantasy. By breaking down the rhetorical vision into its parts (the fantasy themes and fantasy types), examination of why the vision is successful as a reality for this group can occur. Remember, the most important aspect of fantasy is

that people or groups can share their vision as a meaningful view of reality. Those who share the same view make up a *rhetorical community*.

In evaluating a rhetorical vision, one must look at the message and not the rhetor(s). It is the message that can then give insight into the people who created and believe in the vision (the rhetorical community). One can evaluate the message(s) contained in a rhetorical vision by a results standard. Why was one vision successful in gaining many "followers" and another vision not? If a fantasy is to be termed "successful," it is one that is shared. To discover if a vision is shared, one must look at cause-effect relationships between the vision itself (cause) and behavioral and attitude change (effect). (Examining the process of going public is one way to gain insight into the cause-effect relationship). If behaviors and attitudes are affected in a manner consistent with the rhetorical vision, then the vision is successful. There are a great number of visions that different communities share. One medium for many visions is music.

The Music

Some people say that it all started with jazz. Some people say that it started even before that, going back to traditional African tribal music. And some people say it all started when Elvis Presley picked up a guitar and shook his pelvis. No matter when it started though, rock and roll did nothing else but grow more and more popular with the youth of society. One reason rock and roll grew was due to its rebellious nature: Elvis' pelvis, the Beatles having "long hair," countercultural lyrics, hippies, but the most attractive reason by far was that parents hated it. Like

all things that have a "taste" (a bad taste, at least, to parents), that taste either goes away or one gets used to the taste. It is necessary then to get another, stronger taste to "restimulate the taste buds." Rock and roll keeps its taste by shocking. In the late-1950's and early-1960's, Elvis' gyrating pelvis shocked people and the Beatles' long hair shocked parents everywhere. Today, Madonna has left absolutely nothing to the imagination, and growing numbers of men have hair longer than many women (especially those men in the rock industry). However, there was a particularly shocking period in the history of rock and roll. The 1980's was a very conservative time, especially because Ronald Reagan (a staunch conservative Republican) was President of the United States for eight of those years (1981-1989). Of course, there were some things not so conservative, and one of them was rock and roll. Rock music did things extremely left-of-center, and out of that rebellious nature (towards the highly conservative times) grew the beast known as heavy metal. Bands clad in make-up that looked like war paint, leather, spikes, chains, fake blood, pentagrams and all things Satanic sprang forth from radio and television; in fact, it was the early eighties that saw the advent of Music Television (MTV) which visually depicted these bands and their extreme rebellious ways twenty-four hours a day. The bands sung of violence, explicit sex, violent sex, suicide, drug abuse, Satanism, and a myriad of other topics. The bands' music videos would give visual depiction's of the same things they sung about (MTV is on cable television). Even in fan magazines the bands would have pictures of themselves abusing drugs and alcohol, and pictures simulating sexual acts; in interviews, band members would discuss how proud they were to live this way,

Teacher," by the heavy metal band Van Halen, and the girls asked their mother

and they would encourage others to live similarly. All this anti-social excess was just too much for the conservative 1980's.

Tipper Gore and the PMRC

Prince has remained one of the biggest idols in rock music since the late 1970's. With a host of successful albums under his belt, including a Grammy Award for his 1984 album Purple Rain (from his movie of the same name), it is easy to see why Prince has been so successful. In December 1984, an eleven-year-old girl named Kareenna asked her mother to buy her Prince's Purple Rain album. Since Prince was so popular, Kareenna's mother found no problem in doing so. After purchasing the album, the two sat down to listen to it together. The mother became appalled when she heard a song entitled "Darling Nikki:" "I knew a girl named Nikki/I guess you could say she was a sex fiend/I met her in a hotel lobby masturbating with a magazine/ She said "How'd you like to waste some time"/And I could not resist when I saw little Nikki grind" (Prince, 1984).

The song continues with Prince singing about his sexual encounter with Nikki. As one would expect, the mother was quite angry at the fact that such material was so easily accessible to children.

Around the same time, Kareenna's two younger sisters, Kristen and Sarah (ages eight and six, respectively) began to ask their mother about things that they had seen on MTV. The girls had watched a music video for the song "Hot for Teacher," by the heavy metal band Van Halen, and the girls asked their mother

"Mom, why is the teacher taking off her clothes?" (Gore, 1987, p.3) (the video contains scenes of a teacher doing a striptease for the boys in her class). The mother sat down with her children to watch MTV. They saw videos by Mötley Crüe in which scantily clad women were captured and imprisoned by a leather-clad male band; a video by the Scorpions which shows a man tied to the walls of a torture chamber, and another man being strangled by a woman. These images were too violent and extreme for this mother and her children to watch. This mother was Tipper Gore.

Tipper Gore was not the only mother concerned about this problem. Her friend Susan Baker, wife of former U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker, was also disturbed by the same images and sounds as Tipper. Baker was working with two other women, Sally Nevius (former dean of admissions at Mount Vernon College, wife to the former chairman of the District of Columbia City Council, and a mother of an eleven-year-old daughter) and Pam Howar (a businesswoman with a seven-year-old daughter) to take action "on the issue of pornographic and violent images in music" (Gore, 1987, p. 4). Mrs. Baker asked Mrs. Gore if she would like to join in their fight, and she agreed.

The four women established the "nonprofit Parents' Music Resource Center, to be known as the PMRC" (Gore, 1987, p. 4). In May of 1985, the PMRC started on its mission to alert other parents about the excesses present in rock and roll. Their first meeting on May 15 brought more than 350 friends, community leaders, public office holders, and members of the music industry together to discuss everything from lyrics to concert performances to rock magazines aimed at a teenage market. They hoped to start discussions, raise

awareness and begin dialogue with people in the industry. It was interesting to note that of the more than 350 people in attendance, only three were members of music industry: Martha Dale Fritts, wife of Eddie Fritts, president of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and two NAB staff members. Mr. Fritts was unable to attend, but his wife was present with a letter Mr. Fritts. The letter was a copy of another letter that Mr. Fritts had sent out to over 800 radio stations alerting them to the "growing concern among the public over 'porn rock'" (Gore, 1987, p. 5). Following this letter, Fritts wrote the heads of forty-five record companies requesting that they include lyric sheets with their albums so that radio programmers can make better decisions about the music that they play. Initial reactions to the PMRC were mixed. Some radio stations felt that the PMRC's goal was a commendable one. On the other hand, many record companies refused the NAB request. Said Lenny Waronker, president of Warner Brothers Records, "It smells of censorship" (in Gore, 1987, p. 6). This placed an obstacle in the path of the PMRC.

As luck would have it, the PMRC gained an ally within the music industry. This ally was also disgusted with the recent turn that rock music had taken towards violence and pornography. This important member of the music industry agreed to aid and advise the PMRC in their fight under the condition that he never be identified. This ally gave the PMRC a starting point: set up a meeting with Stan Gortikov, president of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA, a trade group representing numerous record companies).

The PMRC felt it was "crucial to publicize the excesses in song lyrics and videos, [which was] the source of [their] concern. [The PMRC] was convinced

that most parents were either unaware of the trends in rock music or uncertain what to do about them. [The PMRC] decided to get the word out and build a consumer movement to put pressure on the industry" (Gore, 1987, p. 7). Consumers expect businesses and industries such as food products and cosmetics to take responsibility for the products they put out. The music industry seemed to be taking little, if any, responsibility for the products it was putting out. From the beginning, the PMRC felt that the only solution to this problem would be some sort of voluntary action taken by the industry itself. The PMRC wanted the music industry to grow up and assume "direct corporate responsibility for their products. The problem was to persuade an industry profiting from excesses to exercise some self-restraint" (Gore, 1987, p.7).

(Gore, With another ally in their fight, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (the National PTA), the PMRC began to ask record companies to voluntarily police their products. They set letters to individual record companies with little response. The PMRC's nameless ally advised for the group to abandon the plan of dealing with the companies on an individual basis. He suggested they present their plans to the RIAA's Stan Gortikov, and take their message to the masses.

The first meeting that the PMRC held May 15, 1985 received a small write up in the "Style" section of the Washington Post. After that article, much of the mass media turned their attention to this group. Over 150 newspaper columns, editorials, and radio stories were done on the porn rock issue. From the New York Times to Newsweek to even the BBC, almost every major media source was covering the PMRC and their mission, and most of the coverage was supportive.

News of the PMRC's battle against porn rock spread quickly. The four women who founded the PMRC found themselves giving speeches, doing radio talk shows, and even television talk shows like "Donahue" and "Today." The PMRC's message was rapidly spreading across the nation, however, the PMRC was still at a standstill with the music industry.

Rock performers and industry people began forming groups, such as Musical Majority, to try to combat the "evil" these women were bringing. Groups such as Musical Majority "defended artists' rights [first amendment rights such as freedom of speech and expression], [while] the PMRC raised questions about the rights of others. . . . [T]he right of parents to protect their children. . . . [T]he rights of citizens not to be bombarded with explicit material in the public domain" (Gore, 1987, p. 10).

Frank Zappa, a middle-aged musician with a strong "cult" following, stepped forward as the industry's spokesman on the issue. Zappa is the one who gave the women of the PMRC the title "the Washington Wives." Zappa even called the women "cultural terrorists," feeling that they had no right to "waste the nation's time on ill-conceived housewife projects such as this" (in Gore, 1987, p. 10). The industry tried to write off the PMRC with sexist comments about how they were bored housewives riding on their husbands' influence. In fact, the PMRC represented numerous other parents who shared similar concerns.

The music industry began crying "Censorship!" in regards to the PMRC's work. The PMRC did not want censorship; they were not looking to ban even the most offensive of albums. The PMRC knew that "censorship [was] not the answer. [They felt that] in the long run, [the] only hope [was]. . . more

information and awareness, so that citizens and communities can fight back against market exploitation and find practical means for restoring individual choice and control" (Gore, 1987, p. xii). To raise awareness about lyrical content on an album so that a prospective buyer can be forewarned, the PMRC had two proposals: one, stickering record albums with a rating system. There is a rating system for movies to assist parents in decisions about what they want their children to be exposed to, so why should there not be a rating system for other forms of entertainment to which children potentially have access? Initially, the proposed album ratings would tell what kind of themes the album contained: an "O" for occult, a "V" for violence, a "D" for drug abuse, and so forth (the record could receive a multiple rating if multiple themes occurred on the album). To simplify things, the PMRC later chose to use just the letter "R" to designate explicit albums. Two, the PMRC asked record companies to print song lyrics on the outside packaging of albums so that people could read the lyrics before they bought the album. Of course the problem of printing an entire album's lyrics on a cassette tape's package could prove to be difficult. In light of this, the PMRC asked the record industry for two things: one, to "create a uniform standard to be used to define what constitutes blatant, explicit lyric content" (in Gore, 1987, p. 13); and two, to distribute master lyric sheets to retail outlets. Some consider these proposals to be nothing more than truth-in-packaging. However, some people still raised the cry of censorship against these women who were trying to "balance the precious right of free speech with the right of parents to protect their children from explicit messages that they are not mature enough to understand or deal with" (Gore, 1987, p. 11).

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With all the commotion going over this issue, the United States Congress had begun to take an interest. In September 1985, Senator John Danforth, the chairman of the Senate Commerce committee (this committee has jurisdiction over communications issues), set up an information only hearing (no legislation was to be considered) to investigate the violence and pornography prevalent in rock music. This hearing would prove to be interesting considering Senator Albert Gore, Jr., husband to Tipper Gore, was a freshman member of the committee. Some people wrongly assumed that this "family tie" was what brought about the hearing. However, both Senator and Mrs. Gore did not want the hearing to occur; they felt this would give the censorship criers more ammunition in that they could claim government intervention was just more censorship. To the surprise of the PMRC, their secret industry ally thought the Senate hearing was a good idea because congressional attention might be the only way to get the record industry to budge.

September 19, 1985 turned out to be "the most widely publicized media event in congressional history" (Gore, 1987, p. 15). On the side of the PMRC stood Tipper Gore, Susan Baker, Jeff Ling, and the National PTA. On the other side, Frank Zappa, John Denver, and Dee Snider of Twisted Sister spoke for "musicians' rights." The goal of this meeting was not to reach any sort of agreement, but instead to get facts put on the table.

After much negotiating and compromise, an agreement was finally reached between the PMRC and the RIAA. The PMRC decided to "accept the formation of an RIAA policy statement on explicit lyrics, and drop [their, PMRC's] request for a uniform standard of what is or is not explicit. [The PMRC] would also drop [their] request for an "R" rating on albums or tapes to designate explicit products, in

exchange for the warning 'Explicit Lyrics -- Parental Advisory' (Gore, 1987, p. 16). The PMRC decided to give the compromise a trial run for a year. During that year, the PMRC and RIAA would jointly monitor the situation, the PMRC would cease their media campaign, and when that year was up, the effectiveness of the compromise would be assessed. "On November 1, 1985, the RIAA, the National PTA, and the PMRC jointly announced the agreement at the National Press Club in Washington" (Gore, 1987, p. 16).

Tipper Gore's book

With the PMRC's recession from the limelight, they have become more a resource and a monitor than a group of activists. However, Tipper Gore still felt a need to get the PMRC's message out to the public. She wrote a book entitled Raising PG Kids in an X Rated Society. This book chronicles the work of the PMRC; gives Mrs. Gore's personal insights, feelings, and role in the fight; and the book gives illustrations of the excesses the PMRC fought against.

Tipper Gore began her book with a history of the PMRC and her involvement with the group. She then looked at the society she lived in; a society where many parents were divorced and working, leaving children to come home to an empty house (the so-called "latch-key kids") and maybe one parent. A society in which the impressionable youth did not use their parents as role-models merely because parents did not have or take the time to teach and influence their children. A society where children turned to friends, television, and music for role models. The music spoken of earlier in this paper was the same music listened to by these

latch-key kids. They were looking at these rock stars as role-models. This direction that society was going disturbed Mrs. Gore very much.

In the book, Mrs. Gore addressed many themes: violence, explicit sex, suicide, Satanism, alcohol and drug abuse, and rock concerts. These themes were found in two places, the lyrics of rock music and the lives of teenagers. In the nineteen-eighties, there was a steep rise in the numbers of teen suicides, alcohol and drug abuse, violent acts, etc. In each chapter of the book, Mrs. Gore would present facts she had found on a particular theme. She would give examples of rock lyrics containing the theme, magazine and newspaper excerpts on the theme, and research or testimony by experts on the theme. She would also give statistics about the theme. Finally, many of the chapters gave advice to parents on the theme. This advice shunned the technique of saying "I'm the parent, that's why not," in favor of more open-minded discussion between parents and their children. As an example, chapter five of the book deals with teen suicide. The chapter begins with a slew of saddening statistics on teen suicide. It then transitions into discussing rock lyrics with a suicide theme. Excerpts from songs like this one about Ozzy Osbourne's song "Suicide Solution" are then presented:

"In late 1984, nineteen-year-old John McCollum shot himself in the head at his home in Indio, California. He had been listening to Ozzy Osbourne's albums before he killed himself, and was still wearing stereo headphones when his body was discovered. As the United Press International reported, 'The lyrics in 'Suicide Solution' are part of what McCollum's parents claim spurred the teenager's suicide:'

'Breaking laws, knocking doors
But there's no one at home
Made your bed, rest your head
But you lie there and moan
Where to hide, Suicide is the only way out
Don't you know what it's really about'

The father of the boy sued British rocker Osbourne and CBS Records for contributing to his son's death. Osbourne denied that his song [promotes] suicide. . . . He said 'Suicide Solution' is really an antisuicide piece about a musician friend, Bon Scott, who died of acute alcohol poisoning in 1980. The word 'solution,' according to Osbourne's interpretation, means the liquid alcohol that caused Scott's death. (Yet Osbourne has appeared in a fan magazine photograph holding a gun to his head.) A trial judge dismissed the lawsuit. . . . Is there no place for artistic and corporate responsibility and self-restraint? Is it the responsible to promote teen suicide when we [society] are in the midst of a national epidemic?" (Gore, 1987, pp. 78-79).

Mrs. Gore closes the chapter on suicide with a section on preventing suicide entitled "Prevention begins at home." She goes on to discuss how parents and all adults need to be understanding to teenagers, the pressures they have and the changes they go through. The nature of being a teenager can lead one to suicide, and parents need to know how to identify and cope with the situation. Tipper Gore

takes an attitude heavy on caring, understanding, and helping; she knows an authoritative approach will not work to solve this or any of these other problems.

Mrs. Gore concludes her book with some helpful advice for parenting. She also gives some ideas for ways parents can work together to make an impact in their community. Additionally, the book contained two cases of cities taking action against rock excesses, and an exhaustive list of groups and addresses parents can write to for information and support. After going through such great lengths for a cause, one would wonder if this book, this rhetoric, this vision was successful.

(one in which both parents work, the parents might be divorced, thereby leaving the

A fantasy theme analysis (these) supposed to protect their children from harm?

Enter Tipper Gore with her crash course in the excesses of rock music. Through

her work There was a situation in the 1980's--there was a rise in teen problems, such as suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and a fascination with the occult. There was another situation in the 1980's--there was a rise in explicit lyrics in rock music. These situations caused distress for some people, so to make sense out of this confusing situation, people fantasized. These people interpreted these events in such a manner as to fulfill a psychological need. These people were the four concerned mothers that joined together in a group, calling themselves the PMRC. As most mothers do, these women had a need to protect their children from harm. They identified possible sources of harm (suicide, drugs, alcohol, etc.), and then they identified what they believed to be the root of the problem, rock music.

To begin analyzing Tipper Gore's rhetoric, the context of her fantasy must be examined. The fantasy theme is comprised of dramatic characters, scenarios, and setting. The characterization in Mrs. Gore's fantasy is one of a classic struggle:

she is a heroine on a crusade to expose and defeat the evil of rock musicians and their music. Rock music and musicians were portrayed as villains out to poison children with sick thoughts, words, and deeds. Mrs. Gore was portrayed as a bringer of information, an educator, a wise advisor, a savior to parents in distress. With the main characters chosen, it is necessary to place them in some kind of dramatic conflict. The scene was the United States, in every home where there are children present. Television and radio brought the rock music into the home, and this presence was a potential danger to children. How was a family of the 1980's (one in which both parents work, the parents might be divorced, thereby leaving the children without parental guidance) supposed to protect their children from harm? Enter Tipper Gore with her crash course in the excesses of rock music. Through her work, parents can gain information, the children can be protected, and Tipper Gore has saved the day.

Mrs. Gore's work (and her work with the PMRC) was called on by many people during 1985. She and her cohorts in the PMRC frequently found themselves the center of the media's attention. Much of the time, this media coverage was positive, helping to spread her message. If the press was negative, Mrs. Gore's basic message would still get out, but it was likely to be obscured by "the forces of evil." Many rock musicians called Mrs. Gore's work "censorship," and to her dismay, this was the message that some people were getting about her work. Considering the media blitz that occurred on Mrs. Gore's work (individual and group), her name (Tipper) and the name of her group (the PMRC) became dramatic triggers for much of the nation. What details, meanings, and emotions were drawn up by that trigger, however, differed according to what side one was

on. When the name "Tipper Gore" was mentioned to those on the side of the rock musicians, there were feelings of disdain towards Mrs. Gore and her message. She was seen as all things anti-American because she was trying to endanger the first amendment rights that Americans hold so dear. To those on the other side, Tipper Gore stood as a fighter, a savior. She cared about the direction society was taking for the interest of her and all children. This fantasy type encompasses two large groups, but these two groups are similar in that they both wanted to protect something that was dear to them. In that regard, this fantasy type encompasses one very large group that spreads across the United States.

How and why did this fantasy become a shared reality for such a large number of people? Four women felt a need to protect something precious to them (their children) from a danger that was so easily accessible (explicit rock music). These women put their heads together and decided to create a "machine" that would enlighten uninformed parents about this danger so that they too could protect things precious to them. Through extensive media coverage, this message or fantasy was carried across the United States into every home. This appeal to something so basic and instinctual to almost every human being (the so-called "maternal instinct") explains the mass acceptance of Tipper Gore's fantasy.

With the rhetorical vision defined (a quest for publicizing information so that people can protect things they hold dear), a results standard of evaluation can now be implemented. However, it is necessary to first look at how this rhetorical vision was made public. In the first step of the process of going public with a fantasy, consciousness-creating communication, the Washington Wives gathered, discussed their feelings about explicit rock music and its ease of accessibility to

children, and decided to do something about it. They formed the PMRC to be an information gathering machine so that parents could learn how to preserve something as precious as their children in the face of something as perverse as some contemporary rock music. Using meetings, seminars, talk-shows, newspapers, magazines, books, radio, and various other forms of mass media, Tipper Gore et al. began consciousness-raising communication. For many months, their message was constantly in the national news. Being exposed to this message so much, concerned parents began listening to and identifying with this rhetorical vision. The group was quickly gaining many new members. The final step of going public with a fantasy is consciousness-sustaining communication. The rhetorical vision was put under fire every day by rock musicians and the media. Over the months of attacks, the vision held up. The vision was changed slightly by the creators while trying to compromise with the RIAA, but overall, the vision remained at the end what it began as.

From a results perspective, Tipper Gore's rhetorical vision was a successful one, but it could have had a higher degree of success. First, Tipper Gore's and the PMRC's goal for increased knowledge of album content was achieved with the RIAA's agreement to place warning stickers on potentially offensive albums. Second, Mrs. Gore did publicize information by using the PMRC and by writing her book. However, the information she presented was not always presented in the most effective manner.

When discussing suicide, for instance, she used the example of John McCollum and Ozzy Osbourne. In that section of her book (quoted earlier in this paper), she mentioned how Osbourne denied his song "Suicide Solution" advocated

suicide. Mrs. Gore then stated, "Yet Osbourne has appeared in a fan magazine photograph holding a gun to his head" (Gore, 1987, p 78). She never stated that Osbourne advocated suicide and she never stated that Osbourne and/or his song caused McCollum to commit suicide; in fact, throughout the entire book, Tipper never stated that rock music caused any of these teen problems. What Tipper did do was present information in such a way that a reader might have made a causal attribution. One cannot forget that Mrs. Gore's audience was parents who were uninformed about rock music, yet it would seem that she either forgot about this bit of information so vital to her cause and the PMRC's existence, (if parents knew "everything" about rock music, the PMRC would not have needed to exist), or she used this parental lack of knowledge to her persuasive advantage. Since the parents knew little or nothing about rock music, Mrs. Gore could manipulate the information that she was so proud to give.

Mrs. Gore also raised doubts about whether Osbourne's "Suicide Solution" song was in fact an antisuicide song. She gave a quote from the song's lyrics that, out of context, could possibly reinforce her message:

"Breaking laws, knocking doors
But there's no one at home
Made your bed, rest your head
But you lie there and moan
Where to hide, Suicide is the only way out
Don't you know what it's really about" (Osbourne, 1981).

Mrs. Gore conveniently omitted the first lines of the song:

"Wine is fine but whiskey's quicker

Additional lyrics include "Suicide is slow with liquor
Take a bottle; drown your sorrows
Then it floods away tomorrow" (Osbourne, 1981).

Clearly, Osbourne was singing about the dangers of alcohol and alcoholism (the solution, or liquid, in "Suicide Solution," "Suicide Liquid" even), and how alcohol is a slow way to kill yourself. It is amazing how information can be manipulated by taking a quote out of context, thereby drastically changing the quotes meaning. Parents and other readers did not know that the information being given to them was so skewed.

Additionally, Tipper Gore's strategic placement of information within the text was leading for the readers (again, the audience was parents with a lack of knowledge on the topic). Mrs. Gore would give many detailed statistics about tragedies that occurred in relation to her topic (she gave numbers of teens that used alcohol and drugs, etc.). Then, she would present graphic lyrical excerpts to illustrate the epidemic proportions of rock lyrics concerned with these anti-social themes. Mrs. Gore would then say something that would link the statistics and the lyrics (usually a comment like "How can rock performers sing about such and such when it is such a problem with teenagers"). She never gave rock music and teen problems a causal link, although she implied it frequently in her book. This was one problem, and it was a major problem, that Tipper Gore had in her rhetorical vision.

Another problem Tipper Gore had was in the delivery of proofs and supports for her vision. Mrs. Gore presented a mostly one-sided argument. Now and then, she would briefly mention something good about rock and roll.

Additionally, Mrs. Gore would occasionally mention something else that could have been another possible reason for these teen problems (like the kids were mentally and/or emotionally troubled already? the children came from broken homes?) This lack of discussing other possible reasons for the teen problems could have mislead readers to think that rock music was the sole cause for these problems. This in itself was a problem. To the parents reading the book and receiving Mrs. Gore's message, none of this was a problem because they did not know any better; her information was all that they, as parents, had to go on in forming their own fantasies about rock music. It is plain to see why so many parents accepted Tipper Gore's rhetorical vision and so many musicians did not.

Nonetheless, Tipper Gore's vision was overall a successful one. She did inform people about the excesses present in some rock music, but she did it in a biased manner. Probably the best thing that Tipper Gore did was to give parents information on possible ways to take a caring and concerned part in their children's lives. Mrs. Gore advocated being open and discussing the merit a song or artist had rather than discussing the music itself, which could lead to conflict over taste and lead to a failed discussion. She also gave a lengthy list of groups that parents could contact to gain support and information about questions and concerns that might arise. She wanted parents to take an active role in their children's lives because they, as parents, have the potential to play the single most influential role in their child's' lives.

Perhaps Tipper Gore's rhetorical vision could have encompassed a larger rhetorical community--it could have had a higher degree of success. If Mrs. Gore had later desired to try to enlarge the rhetorical community, she would have had to

change her style of rhetoric: present more "objective" data, give a two-sided argument instead of a one-sided argument. But considering the number of parents that took her message to heart, I feel that Tipper Gore was successful in creating a new reality for our nation in regards to rock music. She pushed a powerful and gigantic industry to reform its practices. She gave power to the people by furnishing them with more knowledge. And even if it was just one family that was able to gain a higher level of understanding, concern, and caring for and about each other through the work that Mrs. Gore did, that one success is very significant. Tipper Gore showed that women can have a powerful influence in the world of politics.

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