A SOCIAL AND COMMUNAL VIEW OF LEADERSHIP

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in the

Faculty of Education

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Spring 2006

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Abstract

This paper outlines an alternate view of leadership to 'leader-centric' views that focus on the personalities and actions of leaders. Leader-centric views are based on prevalent assumptions about the nature of the self and its relationship to others and the phenomenal world. Influenced by Buddhist and Taoist philosophy and social constructionism, an interdependent understanding of the 'self world' relationship is advanced as a basis for this alternate view of leadership. Leadership can be more precisely understood as arising from and distributed throughout the social and communal world rather than imposed on it by leaders. This broader and more interconnected view also incorporates a spiritual sensibility and has some constructive implications for ethics in organizations. Based on this view a leadership practice referred to as 'creating environments of administrative sanity' is described. This practice includes narrative and dialogical elements, a specific focus on ethical stewardship, a renewed appreciation of the value of the 'other' and a reformulation of organizational strategy. Implications of this practice for the education of leaders and for the education of organizations about leadership are identified.

Keywords: Buddhism and leadership; Qigong and leadership; Taoism and leadership; social constuctionism and leadership; phenomenology and leadership; distributed leadership; social architecture; leadership and communities of practice; education of leaders.

To Mary Kean,

my loving wife, best friend, spiritual and intellectual companion,

editor par excellence and poet beyond compare.

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my thanks to Peter Grimmett and Heesoon Bai without whose patience and forbearance this project would never have been completed. A special thanks to Dave Jackson who has been with me all the way, to my colleagues at City University who never doubted that I could accomplish this, to Kalu Rinpoche who was truly a spiritual friend and to Maurice Merleau-Ponty whose writing continues to inspire me until this day. Immeasurable gratitude to Chief Academician and Technical Advisor Dr.Yan Xin for his guidance, inspiration and instruction and for bringing the precious treasure of traditional Chinese high level Qigong to the west.

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Preface

I have so often entered into, passed through and departed from life stages, occupations and social forms unreflectively and, as a consequence, learned less from my travels than otherwise may have been possible. Pressed by the contingencies of the moment, I have hesitated to take the time to look within or around and to make the best use of the many and various methods of reflection and inquiry available to me. Doctoral studies at a mature point in life and, in particular, the occasion of writing this dissertation, have afforded me a rare and precious reflective opportunity; an opportunity nevertheless mixed in with the demands of everyday life, in my case, as an educational administrator, husband, father, practitioner, friend and community member.

At this point, in my late 50s, well on the lip of 60, I am in the position of an academic administrator, the director of Canadian programs for an American University. Prior to my work as a university administrator and teacher I lived the life of a therapist and practitioner. Most of my work entailed, what might be described as, community psychology and family therapy. Until the outset of the 1990s I worked in the context of non-profit, service providing societies, often combining direct service with leadership positions. Between 1990 and 1999 I headed up a private organization development and family therapy institute with my wife, Mary Kean. In 1996 I was invited by a friend to give a lecture to his graduate class at City University where I discovered a love for

teaching. By the year 2000, I was directing the City University Masters of Counselling Psychology program, eventually becoming the director of all City University programs in Canada.

> *My office reflects some of the many paths by which I arrived at this place. Shelves hold a mixture of books, mostly about psychotherapy, reflecting my not too distant past; books about organization development, interwoven throughout my professional career; books about education, my current studies; piles of papers and reports and the ever present computer, the 'prima materia' of administrative life. A Kandinsky print is on one wall; a Calder like mobile of colourful origami birds hangs by the window overlooking a downtown street; a couple of plants, one of which is a tree stand in a corner; there are also on other walls a poster on which is written my statement of conscious purpose, a certificate of appreciation from Doctors without Borders, and a framed print of Kings College, Cambridge.*

As I moved further into the worlds of administration and educational leadership I began to describe myself as a 'pot maker' rather than a 'soup maker'. The 'pot' in this analogy is the administrative infrastructure in which the rich 'soup making' activities of teaching and research take place. A clean and serviceable pot, I feel, is essential in order to make nurturing and sustaining soup. If the pot leaks, the soup falls to the ground. If the pot is dirty, the soup is contaminated and its nutritional value diminished. In addition, a beautiful, but simple pot inspires the cook. The serviceable pot, I began to see, is the structure that certain aspects of the social and communal world take as they are shaped into forms that support the primary activities of teaching and research. When these forms fail to deliver in terms of their intended purpose in supporting learning and reflection the pot leaks A dirty pot refers to conditions in which basic ethical principles are overlooked or violated. The interesting point is that, as my work as an administrator unfolded and my

observations and reflections continued, I saw that the pot was, in fact, in conception, manifestation and maintenance the creation of many hands and was, in some ways, therefore, a pot without a pot maker. These ideas I develop much further in what follows. Along the way I include some personal narratives that illustrate, amplify and, in some instances, show the reader something of the origins in experience of the points that I am making. These selections I have placed in italics as I did above.

CHAPTER 1.

Purpose, Significance and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to think of leadership differently than in terms of the qualities, characteristics and traits of leaders or of the various strategies that leaders have employed to good effect or otherwise. That we are not well served by our leadership across a range of educational, social service, corporate and political contexts is a widely shared perception. Arguably our ideas about leadership no longer serve us well. My intention includes a desire to formulate leadership in a way that invites a higher degree of ethical sensitivity, compassion for others and spiritual conviction while also conceiving of leadership in a way that evokes higher degrees of collaboration and participation.

For those who are so inclined, and I count myself in this number, the question of leadership harbours some profound philosophical questions. Specifically, this project occasions some speculation about the construction of personhood or the self, its relation to the socio-cultural and spiritual worlds, and the nature of the social forms that we use to civilize our many and varied relationships with one another. What is the self and who is the other? What makes possible the kind of collaboration that we hope to achieve by organizing ourselves in formal institutions? How does a common direction and concerted action emerge? How do social forms materialize? What is the role of leadership in the emergence of direction and the coordination of collective action? How do views of

leadership shape the performance of leadership? Ultimately, how do we provide ourselves with the best of leadership and how do we go about educating leaders in a way that prepares persons for the performance of leadership? Our assumptions in relation to such questions profoundly shape our performance of leadership.

In the heat of praxis, we are tempted to see such questions as an unnecessary detour, in some way superfluous to the central project of getting certain things done. If only someone would give us the right tools we would do the job. I argue otherwise. I propose that it is contemplation, reflection and dialogue that revivify our common ways and encourage a sense of responsibility based on compassion and a feeling of value that is sustaining. I argue that the transformation in our understanding of the social world required, in general and of leadership, in particular includes an engagement of this order. In the absence of reflection and dialogue, we substitute habits of thought for understanding and rely on reiterations of the same perspective rather than on the multiple perspectives available to us. We appear clever but remain ignorant.

The personal significance of this study relates to my own struggles as a leader, those of my friends and colleagues and efforts in the broader society to find our way anew. As the forces of change accumulate and crash ashore we seem bewildered, hesitant and prone to rely on ideas and practices tied to an era that is slipping away before our eyes. In its simplest form I see it in the exhaustion of my colleagues after spending hours in meetings starting at breakfast and ending in the late hours of the day. In its most

dramatic form I see it in the unethical behaviour of executives in the public and private sectors.

I hope this study will provide some fresh inspiration to leaders in education and offer some practical ideas for the education and training of communities of practice. In fact, I want to undertake a specific responsibility for identifying implications of this sort. This would be to honour the privilege of my good fortune; the silent and loving labour of teachers, mentors and guides too numerous to name; and the best of intentions of my patralineal and matrilineal lineages, both of which include educators. I also hope that this study will contribute to the widening bridge that is presently under construction between eastern and western practitioners and scholars. The objective, in short, is to enter wholeheartedly into a dialogue about the phenomenon of leadership.

Within this dialogue, the central objective is to tease out and press into service conceptions of leadership that accommodate a more collaborative and ethical view, a view that is evocative of more inclusive and spirited engagement with the 'direction giving' of educational institutions. The intent is to develop an account of leadership that incorporates more fully the socio-cultural and spiritual worlds in which the phenomenon of leadership is at play. The final objective is to spell out some specific implications for the education and training of leaders and of communities of practice.

Catalytic Moment

A catalytic moment in the course of my reflections occurred during a reading of Jerome Bruner's book, The Culture of Education (Bruner, 1996, p. 154). In the context of considering our understanding of 'intelligence', Bruner advocates a 'distributed view'. Through this lens 'intelligence', initially conceived of as a highly individualized phenomenon, becomes a social, interactive and dialogical phenomenon. The person known as or assessed to be intelligent is at the hub of a sub-culture of dialogue, information and encouragement. Intelligence is neither expressed nor authentically assessed in isolation. It is a quality that is cultivated by parents and teachers by pointing out, questioning and explaining the phenomena of the world and by their support and encouragement of children's responses. In the absence of these social and interactive patterns what is possible remains dormant and, past a certain point, dimmed. Bruner cites the research of John Seeley Brown on 'situated cognition' in support of this notion (Brown, Collin, & Duguid, 1988). Research in 'situated cognition' suggests that conceptual frameworks, even those of basic mathematics, begin to lose their sensibility when they are divorced from their performance in the socio-cultural world (Lea & Nicoll, 2002). When addition or subtraction, for example, is connected to sharing toys and purchasing things at the store, on the other hand, they are much easier to learn. This is consistent with Paulo Freiere's emphasis on the importance of relevance to lived experience in teaching literacy (Freiere, 1993, p. 97). In this view cognition is acquired and performed in a social world and, in fact, by virtue of its construction in language its fabric is social and dialogical. Bruner also refers to the culture of laboratories that

produce successive Nobel Laureates, as an example (p. 132). Could leadership be seen like this, a social Gestalt, with a person nominally and symbolically at the centre, negotiating and enacting a common purpose, I felt? This conception fits more closely with what I experience as a leader. The phenomenal world, in general, and colleagues, in particular, inform me when and how to enact leadership on a moment-to-moment basis. This is not to deny that I bring generativity of my own to the situation. I have ideas, vision, impetus and patterns of behaviour of my own, but they are in turn shaped by the context in which they emerge and from which they are ultimately indivisible in a process that requires receptivity as well as generativity on my part.

Recognizing that "as members of society we construct our social world together" (Ospina & Schall, 2002, p. 2), leadership, from this perspective, is "a social process in which everyone in the community participates" (p. 3). It is a process of meaning making – a process of "creating names, interpretations and commitments" in the context of a community of practice (p. 3). Engaged in a common practice, meanings evolve about participants' roles and 'job descriptions' and the phenomenon of leadership takes shape as one of those attributions and requirements. At one end of a continuum, at any given point of time, one person assumes a disproportionate amount of influence in how the group understands and expresses itself, and as a consequence the directions in which it moves. At times, this role is subsumed by a group of individuals, but rarely is it absent altogether. To understand leadership is to understand this embedded process, rather than focusing exclusively or primarily on "the traits, strategies and relationships of an individual" (p. 3). When we concentrate on individual actions we fail to capture the

significance of interactions (Spillane, 2006, p. 5). The framework of 'social and communal, leadership' then provides a means of opening the lens of theory and dialogue to incorporate a more inclusive perspective. Beyond recognizing the distributed or dispersed characteristics of leadership, it invites consideration of the everyday interactions and discourse through which leadership emerges. Leadership in this sense is how a community provides itself with impetus and direction rather than what is done to it by an individual or individuals and all members of the community participate in it. The terms of reference are provided by the language, habitual patterns of behaviour and conceptual frameworks of the culture. What is unique about each situation is the collective sense groups make of what is emergent rather than what is manufactured by individuals on their own terms.

Three Influences in Thinking of Leadership Differently

This discussion in this document incorporates several traditions which have influenced my reflections and which I experience as having some natural affinity with one another, namely Buddhism[1] and Qigong,[2] phenomenology and social constructionism. Buddhism and Qigong provide an ontology upon which a more interconnected view can firmly rest. Though there is some degree of overlap between

[1] My familiarity with Buddhism is based largely on 20 years of study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism under the direction of the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche.

[2] The Qigong with which I am familiar is the advanced, internal Qigong originating in China and taught in the west by the widely respected Dr. Yan Xin and known as Yan Xin Qigong or, based on the extensive scientific research associated with it Yan Xin Life Science and Technology™ (Lin, Cohen, Cohen, & Crampton, 1997).

Buddhism and Qigong they are distinct and different traditions. Qigong, with origins 5,000 to 7,000 years ago substantially predates Buddhism. Phenomenology and constructionism offer means of penetrating and making sense of the rich and contentious texture of the everyday world. Incorporated is my early exposure to phenomenology, in particular, the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1963, 1964a, 1964b, 1968); training in eastern philosophy and related practices; engagement in post-modern and constructionist influenced practices of psychotherapy (White & Epston, 1989); and a fascination with writing, poetry and philosophical reflection as forms of knowledge making. These traditions provide frameworks and points of reference in my efforts to understand and communicate my experience of leadership. In offering alternatives to the dominant discourses of the day they have assisted me in looking around and through taken-for-granted practices of leadership and organization life. What follows in this dissertation is in part a meeting ground of these traditions in an effort to develop a richer description of leadership and an alternative framework for the performance of leadership and its further study. This falls within a broader effort to extend our understanding of social phenomena, and perhaps, of the meaning of our lives together.

As it began to flourish in the North American environment, it became clear that Buddhism represented a significant intellectual achievement, though one of a different order (Fields, 1992). Based on the practice of meditation, Buddhism provides a practical means of training attention (McCleod, 2001, p. xi). Buddhism views the discursiveness of mind that we take to be its natural state as a sub-text of a much more extensive capacity. The experience of this more comprehensive view is accessible through meditative and

contemplative practices, though not directly through intellectual analysis. Propositions, that we take as westerners trained in a different way to be a result of either intuition or wishful thinking, turn out to have experiential and pragmatic foundations. One such position is the profoundness of our connection to others and to the world. Another is the practicality and naturalness of kindness and compassion. This has some far reaching implications for our conceptions of the self, the relationship of self and other and ultimately, for our thinking about leadership which this project explicates. I suggest in this text that these implications are consistent with a more de-centralized, social and communal view because of the interconnectedness that they reveal.

Buddhism and Qigong integrate intellectual studies, an ethical focus and the practice of various forms of meditation. In the context of spiritual inquiry these interrelated phenomena have profoundly influenced the ways in which I conceive of human relationships, in general and leadership, in particular. I can no longer envisage relating with people in personal or organizational contexts without seeing such encounters as enriched by reflection and characterized by ethical commitment. In my experience, a helpful way of integrating deep intellectual thought with moral and ethical implications is to recognize the broader context of spirituality. This recognition of the significance of spirituality led me to appreciate the benefits of meditation and the insights that derive from its practice. It is worth noting in this context that the spirituality to which I am referring, consistent with Buddhism and Qigong, is immanent and non-theistic rather than transcendental and theistic. It is a sense of spirituality that arises spontaneously in relation to our connection with the beauty and vastness of the

phenomenal world and in the context of the poignancy of our feelings for one another. It is not associated with a particular theology or set of practices, though it can sometimes be knowingly evoked to some degree.

My studies of Phenomenology took place in the 1970s at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. The Department of Psychology at that time was in search of an alternative foundation for the study of Psychology to the Behaviourism of the day (Giorgi, 1985). Phenomenology, I found, leads to a 'thirst for the phenomenal world', to an interest in developing accounts that do justice to its colour and complexity and to a suspicion of pre-digested categorical frameworks. What is consistent with eastern teachings and with meditation is the importance that Phenomenology accords to perception. Merleau-Ponty's seminal work focused on the phenomenon of perception (1962). Located in the body or the 'flesh' as Merleau-Ponty was later to refer to it, perception describes the process through which we have access to a world (1968). From a Buddhist point of view, the world, as we experience it through perception, has an immanent and sacred quality. When we 'declutter' our states of mind, the sacredness of the world and of human experience is self-evident. By self-evident I mean that we do not need to manufacture it. We need to know how to 'see' this sacredness and keep it in sight, but we do not need to construct it. Notions of social phenomena, such as leadership, constructed in representational terms and expressed as instrumental formula, appear abstract and manipulative from this perspective because they seem disconnected from the specifics of the phenomenal world and devoid of the sorrow and delight that we feel in response to it. This motivated the search for a richer description described below.

In my work as a family therapist and organization development consultant, I was increasingly drawn to a social constructionist and more specifically, narrative approach that adopted the 'text' as a metaphor (White & Epston, 1989; Epston & White, 1992; White, 2000). I have subsequently found this approach useful in understanding some aspects of leadership and organization life (Anderson, 1997; Campbell, 2000). The constructionist view points to the significance of language and culture in the construction of the social worlds that we experience. In addition, it suggests that our ability to guide change resides in our conscious use of conversation. In Chapter III, I will trace the relationship of the evolution of these ideas, as I experienced them as a therapist and consultant, and outline their relevance to leadership. All of these understandings have contributed to the ultimate recognition that we need to conceive of leadership differently.

Searching for a Richer Description

The search for a 'richer description' of leadership, and with it alternative imperatives for action described in this text, reflects a deeply personal odyssey and a dialogical, narrative and, in the broadest sense, poetic endeavour overlapping the auto-ethnographic tradition (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) and situated in a lineage that views writing itself as a method of inquiry (Richardson, 1997, 2000). A "blurred genre", as Shotter refers to this method of inquiry (1993a, p. 188) borrowing from Geertz (1983), is "part autobiography, part biography" and, in the end, reflexively illuminated by, in this instance, the several traditions noted above. Kindred to the 'sociological poetics' of Bakhtin (1981, 1985), by means of a "refraction through multiple narrators" (p. xvi), it

attempts to evoke an appreciation of context and language without falling into the grip of 'contextual determinism' and the abstractions of 'formalism' (1985, p. 91). Context here includes the broader spiritual world. Embedded in language itself are the metaphors and guiding assumptions of a culture and in its particular use the rich traffic of experience, feeling and thoughts of a life. Time and contemplation distil from this wider menu what is worth passing along to others. Writing is a way of engaging in this reflection and a way of assuring that it is demarcated for further examination and use. Otherwise these reflections face the same fate as footprints in the sand before the incoming tide.

I saw in the dissertation the opportunity to give fuller expression to ideas that had percolated over several decades and to clarify for myself how to more fully comprehend the tasks of leadership with which I am confronted. In addition, for some time, I have been engaged in a systematic process of self-reflection required in my practice of Qigong. This is referred to as 'summarizing' in this tradition. Summarizing resembles, in some ways, the western practice of journaling. Summaries focus on the benefits experienced from the study and practice of Qigong, their relationship to the emerging body of scientific evidence in relation to Qigong and an emerging comprehension of theory and practice.[3] Part of the latter aspect is directed towards understanding the multiple relationships of study and practice to oneself, others and the phenomenal field. Summaries are presented at community events and thus are considered essentially shareable documents.

[3] This is entirely unique to Yan Xin Qigong® of Yan Xin Life ScienceTechnology™ as this aspect is referred to.

In my dissertation writing, for the most part a pre-dawn activity, I found myself increasingly moving between dissertation writing and summarizing. I experienced an emerging clarity as I moved along and equally important, felt sustained by a continual process of learning. Simultaneously, I continued to read and a couple of shelves in my home library became the repositories of the key texts with which I continued to maintain a dialogue. I am given to dialogue with others, so I developed a number of the ideas that appear in the text in the context of such dialogues. The overall experience was very much 'writing in' to the topic, drafting and re-drafting, sharing with others in writing and in conversation and evolving the 'finished' text in a layering kind of process.

> *I remember witnessing a similar kind of process among student painters in a large shared studio, many of whom worked on large canvasses. Starting 'somewhere' on the white expanse of the canvases they applied colour and images successively; adding more images, in some cases on top of other images, while elaborating yet others; scraping off, defining, blurring and redefining until they stopped. They never seemed to feel that the painting was 'finished', but they stopped.*

Over the years I have written and published a number of articles. Two of them are relevant in this context. The first, published in 1979 in a west coast poetry journal called Raven, was entitled *The Shaman's Return*. It called for the restoration of the kind of connection and caring that I equated with 'tribal' life, at that time, and, with it, a different, less 'split off' and more embodied kind of knowing. By 'split off' I was trying to address the issues of lack of relevance, immediacy and compassion, and by 'embodied' point to ways of knowing that have more heart. I made a discovery in the writing of this piece that has been a sustaining influence. I found that poetic writing is informative; that,

in the writing, more is revealed. This is because, I am convinced, language itself has a tremendous depth of information, especially when it is consciously exercised to give expression to current circumstances in the fullest sense. I believe this is consistent with the dialogical view Bakhtin and others have expressed, in fact, it represents a common ground forged by both Bakhtin and Merleau-Ponty (Gardiner, 1998). Writing in this way is similar to the practice of philosophy though it relies more on metaphor than logic.

> Rites of passage. Changes. Transits. Birth, death, becoming....equinox, solstice...meals. Rituals for changes in body rhythm: attuning to the scheme of things. Knowing from within the scheme of things.
>
> *The Shaman's Return*

By the second article, entitled *Arriving Simultaneously with Coincidence,* my writing addressed my experience as a therapist. I was attempting to describe and account for an alternative epistemology for therapeutic work. I brought together for the first time the three lines of influence referred to above. Their confluence in my own life invited me to consider their affinity self-evident which is, of course, not quite the case. What they have in common though is this: a different sensibility about lived experience. To expand this point further, they represent alternatives to modernist and materialist views and the Cartesian epistemology upon which these views are based. Phenomenology and constructionism share common roots in French philosophy and its efforts to understand human existence differently than in the dominant 'scientistic' ways of the mid-20th Century, though they are not, in principle, opposed to science. As a particular instance of this kind of development, this is especially true of Merleau-Ponty who, for example,

wrote quite enthusiastically about Gestalt psychology in *The Structure of Behaviour* (Merleau-Ponty, 1963).

Conceiving of Leadership Differently: A Social and Communal View

How do people move in coordinated, concerted and purposive ways to accomplish agreed upon ends such as constructing buildings, delivering medical care and providing education and what is the role of leadership in this communal activity? Theories that focus on leaders' personalities and strategies, referred to in this text as 'leader-centric', suggest that leaders play a primary, and, to a certain extent, exclusive role in which essentially collective actions and accomplishments are identified with individuals. We refer to the Chrétien government of Canada and the Iacocca era at Chrysler. Distributive leadership, on the other hand, suggests that leadership is better understood as *stretched across* a number of individuals and interactions rather than situated in the hands of one individual (Spillane, 2006, p. 23). The social and communal view articulated in this text suggests that in addition to being stretched across the social world, as suggested in distributive leadership, that leadership arises from and is sustained by the social world through the activities of dialogue and interaction. This social and communal view further suggests that the broader context of this interaction and dialogue is spiritual. Spirituality in this context refers to an immanent sense of inspiration rather than the more formal and otherworldly sense in which it used in religion or theology. This view is 'communal' in the sense suggested by the terms *communitas* or communion in which spirituality is

embedded. 'Communitas' implies that in human communities we see the ways in which the spirit moves as we 'touch' and interact with one another. We move together, in this sense, like the sudden shifts in direction of schools of fish or flocks of birds. As with fish and birds in relation to water and air, so it is with human beings and the spirit. The medium that is taken for granted is ever present and essential.

By viewing leadership as a social and communal form of expression taking place in terms of patterns of dialogue and interaction between people in an immanently spiritual world, we see more of the phenomena and achieve a fuller sense of our place in it. This view of leadership suggests that the individual, social and spiritual aspects of leadership are integral and inseparable. It reflects an 'interdependent view' in which self, other and world are inexorably connected. This philosophy, essentially Buddhist and Taoist informed, implies that the unifying element of the social and cultural worlds is *spirit* or *mind*. In this view, mind is an individually experienced and mediated, but collectively shared phenomenon that is continuous with the material world rather than separate from it. What we experience as intelligence and energy contained within a self is distributed among us. A much higher degree of connection between consciousness and the material world is also assumed,[4] though training and education, in most cases, is required to realize it. This is a significant point and one to which I will return in Chapters

[4] From a more strictly Buddhist point of view this would be understood as having been observed through meditation rather than assumed.

II and III. In the absence of this realization of interconnection the inimical connection of self and world is obscured and a separation, in the end illusory, is plausible.

One of the ways in which the western tradition has encountered and expressed this more interconnected view is through the discoveries of quantum physics. The closer we look at the phenomenal world, the more interconnected that we find it to be, quantum physics has revealed. This higher degree of interconnection is clearly relevant in the contexts of leadership and organization life (Wheatley, 1999; Murray, 1997) because patterns of the mutual influence between people based on interconnection, and accentuated when they are aligned, run more deeply than we had previously imagined. A more interconnected perspective invites leaders to be aware of, express and amplify or modulate these patterns of influence. In this 'background' of interconnection, a theme to which I will return frequently, reside sources of energy, inspiration and information overlooked in conventional forms of analysis. Alive and dynamic, reflected in the patterns of language and culture upon which we rely, often without our awareness, this is the world of 'mind in action'. Training and education that gives more conscious access to the ebb and flow of these patterns has important implications for the phenomenon of leadership and is further examined in Chapter IV.

The discovery of profound degrees of 'interconnection' is not however limited to physics. As the microscope enabled a closer look at the physical properties of the phenomenal world, video technology has made possible a closer look at the communicative elements of the social world. Microanalysis of video recordings of

'getting acquainted' conversations between strangers, for example, reveals a mutual capacity to fit in and respond to one another's gestures and commentary that takes place instantaneously (Bavelas & Coates, 1992; Bavelas, McGee, Phillips, & Routledge, 2000). One stranger immediately fills in the gaps in the other's presentation in a virtual simultaneity that occurs faster than neurological reaction times. Microanalysis reveals the mutual patterns of influence referred to above in real time and in such a way that cognitive models of communication, assuming step-by-step construction of meaning on one side and then the other, are impossible given the rate at which responses are taking place. In this instance, the behaviour of individuals that appears separate in origin, then, can be more precisely understood as arising from a common ground.

> *During the summer of 1980 I attended a meditation retreat on Saltspring Island directed by an elderly, highly educated Tibetan Lama, Kalu Rinpoche. One of the areas of instruction during this retreat was a form of meditation that trains the mind to consolidate attention using visualization. Visualizations provide the mind with a focal object as an alternative to the ongoing traffic of discursive thought*[5] *that we all experience. The instruction was to return the process of attending to the prescribed visualization when distracted by discursive thought. Several days after my return from this retreat I facilitated a workshop with the Neighbourhood House Special Services for Children team of which I was then the coordinator. One of the objectives of the workshop was to develop a plan for the further development of programs for children and youth at the Neighbourhood House. I used the visualization practice that I had learned as a preparation for a brainstorming and strategic planning exercise. The visualization practice appeared to invoke a deep silence amongst members of the team. The planning that followed the practice resulted in a very clear agreement that 'at risk' youth in the neighbourhood were in need of a day program and the evolution of some*

[5] The content of discursive thought ranges from shopping lists to philosophical insights. One thought rapidly follows another in associational patterns; the more compelling the thought the more attention that it draws from perception of the phenomenal world. In contrast to purposive thinking discursive thought has a life of its own.

> *very specific ideas about what such a program might look like. Many young people who fit the 'at risk' descriptor at that time were neither working nor attending school and were at loose ends during the day. Most were 'in the care of' the Ministry of Child and Family Development (then the Ministry of Human Resources). Coincidentally, several days after the workshop I received an invitation from the Ministry to submit a proposal for a program that would benefit 'at risk youth' Using the notes from the planning exercise, it was not difficult to develop a proposal that was soon accepted and resulted in an innovative day program for youth called 'Southtown' that has flourished and exists to this day 25 years later.*

My view of this account is that there is a connection between the collective and consolidated state of mind of the team in the workshop and the subsequent materialization and sustainability of Southtown.[6] My contention is that highly focused collective intentions aligned with requirements of time and place are likely to materialize. Coherence or consolidation in this instance was achieved through the shared social ritual of the planning session and the quieting of discursive thought through the visualization practice. Both facilitate genuine agreement and the latter, in particular, contributes to a capacity to attune to the requirements of time and place. In the simplest of terms the quieting of discursive thought makes space in the mind for the phenomenal world. As our preoccupations subside, we are better able to see what is in front of us and reflect upon what has gone before. A further word about 'attunement': in addition to enhancing a 'grasp' of the situation, an ethical sensibility arises spontaneously providing a 'feeling for' the wellbeing of those who are served, in this case, youth and families. Attunement facilitates empathy by deepening our awareness of our connection to others and making it

[6] My intention is not to argue that meditation is the only way to achieve the consolidation of states of mind that I observed, but that, in my experience, it is effective in doing so.

easier to 'walk in their moccasins.' In a subsequent section in Chapter III, taking up Richard Rorty's use of the term 'sentimentality' I will follow-up on this phenomenon further (Rorty, 1998, p. 167). Both coherence and attunement are desirable, in this view. Wilfully imposed intentions, on the other hand, are less likely to materialize and endure, as are highly attuned responses without focus. By wilful in this context I mean intentions that are cultivated in the absence of a feeling for their relevance and impact on others. I believe that it is because of our awareness of the power of achieving coherence that organizations are so taken by the idea of creating visions and mission statements. We 'know' their capacity to mobilize and to guide action. However, the temptation is for leaders, managers and, in the worst case, megalomaniacs to impose their own agendas in the form of vision and mission statements, imposing the projections of one or a few rather than reflecting the aspirations of many. We are well aware of the importance of the alignment of intentions and frequently attempt to affect this in organization life. The establishment of normative guidelines such as policies and procedures accomplishes an alignment in a general sense, but what is emphasized in this example is the alignment of collective consciousness as a precursor to shared meaning making. What is also proposed is the alignment of intentions in relation to local conditions rather than an imposition of structures in a more general sense. This alignment generates the commitment or 'buy in' that sustains the impetus agreed upon. The emergence of social forms such as innovative programs takes place in the context of this alignment.

This alternative view, in which the self and the social and material worlds are co-emergent,[7] also has important implications for the materialization of social forms or 'social architecture', as I refer to it in the text, and for the nature of ethics in the context of organizational life. Later I argue that a shift in 'ontology' of this type results in a richer description of leadership and is of value to organizations and to leaders in withstanding the vicissitudes of self-interest and conflict in the everyday world. Further into the text, I defend the assumption that a fuller understanding of leadership on this basis is useful for the enactment of leadership and the education of both organizations and leaders.

Limitations of 'Leader-centric Views'

To return to the question of current theories of leadership, there are a number of limitations to leader-centric views which are particularly important at this time. In the simplest terms we are in a period of rapid transition facilitated by accelerating developments in communication and transportation technologies and marked by an implosion of multiple perspectives (Gergen, 1991). Through the internet ideas and images quickly travel around the globe. Ahead of schedule scientists have completely mapped the human genome and genetic research promises unprecedented control of our physiological future. Advances in computer technology accelerate in ever shortening product cycles. Hurricanes in Louisiana immediately affect gas prices in Halifax. A great

[7] Co-emergence is a Buddhist concept suggesting that phenomena arise from a ground common to the experienced and the one experiencing. The unique capacity of sentient beings to give expression to experience can lead to the illusion that all the ground is on their side of the phenomenon.

deal of our present philosophy of leadership derives from a previous era when the rate of change was slower and distribution of critical information more limited and is no longer a fit with the times.

The limited integration of the social, dialogical and spiritual 'background' of leadership in leadership theory results in impoverished descriptions and constructs of leadership and organization life in which we have difficulty recognizing ourselves and, therefore, for which we have difficulty taking responsibility. They engender a 'remoteness' or alienation from the everyday world until suddenly we find ourselves in the midst of events that appear to us to have not been of our choosing. They do not seem to apply to the tasks that we face nor the dilemmas with which we are confronted. As Christopher Alexander points out in relation to architecture, it is 'as if' the building is a result of the architect's vision and determination (1979, p. 217). No doubt this is a contributing factor, but the coordinated consciousness, work, dialogue and relationships of countless others, engineers, suppliers, trades people, labourers is involved. Prior to the architect's involvement the social world gave birth to the desire for this building and custodians of this desire contracted with the architect to translate this desire into plans. After its construction, cooperation on a grand scale is required to keep it 'alive'. Factors such as the availability of materials and the extent to which the building's conception fits with the natural and cultural worlds in which it is constructed are also critical. At a more subtle level the vision itself finds expression within a tradition, a set of conventions and within both everyday and specialized professional languages. Applying this to leadership or infrastructure making as 'pot making', the 'as if' noted above obscures the background

and invites leaders to engage in a kind of 'managerial micromanagement' in an effort in enacting the centrality it bequeaths them. Ironically, this effort to control disempowers, and those who are subject to it resist by becoming less competent because they no longer have a 'place' in it. The building that 'belongs' to the people whose desire gave rise to it, who inhabit it and whose efforts are required to maintain it, falls into other hands. The social and communal background disappears.

By focusing on leaders, leader-centric views invite us to accord too much power to leaders and place too much of a burden on individuals who hold positions of leadership. The recent spate of arrests of corporate executives in the United States and the revelations of corruption in high levels of government at the Gomery inquiry illustrate this distortion. I was reminded in this respect of the tearstained face of former WorldCom Inc. CEO Bernard Ebbers having been sentenced to 25-years for fraud. On the front page of the business section of the *Globe and Mail* (Thursday, July 14, 2005), his face reflected, what I took to be a mixture of shock, fear, shame and regret. In this instance, as well as many others with which are familiar, a leader-centric construction of leadership amplified character weaknesses eventually resulting in harm on a large scale. When this occurs we are understandably disappointed and resentful and the leader is devastated.

Incorporating the Background

To conclude this introduction, it is not my intention to provide a comprehensive survey of conceptions of leadership, but differ in the main, as a point of departure, based on my affinity with the several communities of discourse referred to above The

difference, consistent with Ospina and Schall (2002), is to view leadership as a socially constructed, communal and 'distributed' phenomenon, to take the 'background' to the foreground, so to speak, rather than to see it as a phenomenon centred in the site or personage of the leader. What is so valuable about this form of discourse, in my experience, is its capacity to 'disrupt the normative' and in so doing, see anew and constitute anew our interactions and ultimately, our institutions. Following Berger and Luckman (1966) and others in this respect, the foundational awareness is that what we take as 'given' in the social world is the outcome of ongoing negotiations. In countless and subtle ways, the taken-for-granted of our social worlds is co-created on a moment-to-moment basis. Language, and through language 'meaning making' are profoundly at play.

Subsequent scholars and practitioners have worked their way further into this terrain and within it, the epistemological challenges it poses (Campbell, 2000; Gergen, 1991, 1999; Shotter, 1993a, 1993b, 1998; White & Epston, 1989; Epston & White, 1992). As Shotter and others have pointed out, this is not a world or worlds that it is possible to step outside of in the ways traditionally required by the social and natural sciences. Human realities

> ...are only sustained in existence by being continually remade in people's everyday social activities. In such processes, however, people mutually judge and correct each other as to the 'fittingness' of their actions to what they take reality to be. And conversation is the ultimate sphere in which all such judging and evaluating takes place, and in which final assessments and shared agreements are reached. This is what gives it its priority – and, incidentally, its power to change otherwise unconsciously reproduced realities. (1993a, p. 162)

A different sort of knowing is intimated, referred to by Shotter as 'knowing of a third kind' (1993a, p. 6) because of its emergence and validation within the interactional and rhetorical context of our social and cultural worlds; again to adopt some terminology from Shotter, the world of 'joint action' (1993a, p. 47). A similar form is identified by Hoffman, in her introduction to Anderson's *Conversation, Language and Possibilities* (Anderson, 1997, p. xv), and referred to as 'collaborative knowing'. Some features of this 'knowing' include its social, interactive and dialogical nature and its strong connection to specific contexts. As likely to take place in the hall as in the conference room, we recognize it with pleasure. Akin to what Bruner has referred to as 'folk psychology' (Bruner, 1996, p. 162), it has a familiar ring. In conversation and in texts it reflects an open ended and unfinished quality that invites interlocutors to fill in with their own thoughts and experiences. In the chapters that follow I develop this view further and suggest that in the end leadership practice must reach for a different way of knowing.

The search then is for, what Shotter refers to as, 'ontologically responsible formulations', formulations that 'allow us to see ourselves at work in their production' and that ethically respect what is involved in communicating with others as 'linguistically situated beings' (1993a, p. 160). What we refer to as 'realities' are, from this perspective, works in progress, structures under negotiation through conversational and expressive means, emerging forms in the context of which we must take a position in relation to one another. Such formulations are their inherently ethical nature because of their attentiveness to communicating with and respecting others. They reflect an understanding that morality infuses the everyday, rather than constituting a set of abstractions from

beyond and elsewhere. Because what we do not recognize ourselves 'in' we do not internalize or make our own, I maintain that this is a critical point in the context of leadership. Abstract and codified formulations frequently remain distant and hazy. All of this invites us to 'read the background' of everyday transactions as John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid express it in their recent book The Social Life of Information (Brown & Duguid, 2000). What more can we learn about leadership by including the 'background' of social interaction and discourse more fully in our view?

To this point I have suggested that leadership theories that focus attention on the personalities and the actions of leaders result in impoverished descriptions of leadership. Too much of the social, communal and spiritual world in which leadership arises is neglected or 'retired to the 'background.' This is important because limited descriptions of leadership of this order favour practices of leadership that are leader-centric. In offering too narrow an access to the phenomenon of leadership such limited descriptions fail to provide sufficient basis for the evolution of theory and practitioners with a feeling for leadership practice as it is encountered in everyday life. In addition, they place more of a burden on leaders than leaders can reasonably be expected to bear, especially in the context of the rapidly changing and complex times in which we now find ourselves. Viewing leadership in leader-centric ways, however, is deeply rooted in certain conceptions of self, other and world, I maintain. In the following chapter, I examine the edifice of the self more closely and liken leader-centricity to egocentricity.

CHAPTER 2.

The Edifice of the Self and the Construction of Personhood: What is the Self and Who is the Other?

> not so much looking for the shape
> as being available
> to any shape that may be
> summoning itself
> through me
> from the self not mine but ours.
> (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 88)

An examination of assumptions about the nature of the self and the myriad ways in which we come to know ourselves and the world around us should take the centre of any effort at re-conceiving phenomena such as leadership. Such assumptions provide a framework or receiving context for the evolution of our conceptions and their performance. We operate within such frameworks, whether they are implicit and in the 'background' or explicit and in the 'foreground', because we have to make assumptions about the nature of our relationships with others in order to enact leadership, in either its generative or receptive senses, that is, either as 'leaders' or 'followers'. When we decline efforts to understand our 'selves', in this reflective sense, the result is formulations in which we do not recognize ourselves and to which we are unlikely to subscribe in any kind of meaningful and consistent way. The result is action that fails to incorporate the best of our wisdom and intelligence.

The taken-for-granted assumptions with which we are more than familiar, at this point, are based on a conception of personhood or self that is abstract and quasi-permanent, attributed to Descartes, but at this point embedded in the common ways of western culture. There have been many critiques of this version of personhood, including its propensity to lend itself to self-interest and obscure the issue of personal responsibility. The latter critiques will be developed further in a later section of this chapter relating to ethics. What is also interesting though, as we become more familiar with eastern philosophy and practices, is the extent to which some features of the construction of the self that have been identified as problematic in such critiques are also seen as a source of blindness or 'ignorance' by eastern approaches.

In this chapter I intend to outline the Buddhist conception of the self, the relationship of self and others and briefly point to some of its implications for a different theory of leadership. I suggest that there is some resonance between the Buddhist view and some of the conclusions reached by social constructionism, especially in understanding the self as relational and contextual, rather than integral and unitary. I also refer to some of the findings of contemporary science that further substantiate an understanding of the interconnected nature of reality and the continuity of mind and material world. Using metaphors relating to making things, in this instance, sculptures and arches, I extend these ideas to the domain of constructing social forms under the rubric of 'social architecture'. As indicated above this shift in view of the self also has ethical implications. Finally, returning to the issue of leadership specifically, I present the

concept of 'charisma' as an example of a concept around which leadership is over-centralized.

> *My wife, Mary, and I took a walk with an old friend and mentor and his wife. We walked around the Stanley Park seawall and came across a man who was making sculptures from rocks. He was creating exquisite structures based on an amazing capacity to balance one rock upon another in the most unlikely ways. In the background, the mist rolled in and the wistful sound of foghorns tolled. My old friend said, "When I first saw these structures I assumed that there was an iron rod going up the middle of them."*

The 'iron rod' was the invisible line of balance by which these delightful structures were 'held together', in the same way that the self, from Buddhist and constructionist perspectives, is the result of or associated with coherence rather than the source of it. We take descriptive metaphors for causative structures. In a subsequent conversation about this phenomenon a colleague proposed that the 'iron rod' represents a physical force arising in the context of the balance affected through particular arrangements. Again, the force is occasioned by the conjunction of rocks and therefore, in the strictest sense, cannot be said to have brought about or caused it. Or as William Hanks indicates in his introduction to Lave & Wenger's *Situated Learning* "...structure is more the variable outcome of action than its invariant pre-condition" (1991, p. 17). What is illustrated in this scenario is our 'structure making capacity', though, in this particular instance, the structure is an illusion in both causative and material senses. The 'iron rod' is not 'present'. It does not cause the rocks to cohere; rather it reflects an account of their coherence and gives us the impression that an 'external force' is required to explain their coherence.

In the Buddhist view, the self is similarly understood to be void or empty (Trungpa, 1973, 1976, 1981). The autonomous and self-consistent 'identity' that we experience as inherent is, in an ontological sense, an illusion and a result of a kind of epistemological assumption, paired with the psychological activity of projection; an instance of 'structure making', analogous to the example above. From the Buddhist point of view, this 'self constructing activity' takes place in response to a kind of 'ontological panic' and reflects an inclination that is basic to human nature or, more precisely, the 'project' of being human. Buddhists refer to this inclination as 'grasping' and 'fixation'. Human birth, in this view, is a temporary act of differentiation from the broader context of the universe. It takes a high degree of mental stability to effect this differentiation in the relative terms required for the practical purposes of evolving personhood without forming a degree of attachment that makes the project frightening; frightening because of its temporary, contingent and therefore, vulnerable nature. The higher the degree of attachment, the greater is the fear of the uncertainty and inevitability of death. It is simply quite difficult for us to stay with this degree of contingency and impermanence. This primordial fear or 'ontological panic' motivates a solution that makes the problem worse when the solution is the construction and maintenance of a 'permanent', rather than interdependent and temporal self. We try to assure the ground that we have gained through differentiation by making it a 'cause celebre', a construction of identity based on Andy Warhol's maxim of 15-seconds of fame for everyone, so to speak. We attempt to turn the relative into the absolute and make a modest accomplishment far too important.

This is an unworkable 'strategy' in a number of ways, principally because it creates an unnecessarily fixed point of reference that we then feel compelled to promote and defend. Based on a motivation that could be described as 'self preservation', a form of uneasiness takes hold in which the fear of death is associated with the loss of self or, as this process solidifies over time, changes in the self. This 'self centred' approach is then elaborated in the direction of assuring relationships with others and the world that maximize pleasure and avoid pain in whatever situational and cultural terms the person defines them. Something akin to an internal bureaucracy evolves to monitor the results of these efforts and refine the 'strategies' entailed. Nothing is wrong with this, at this point, from the Buddhist perspective. It is more the case that it is existentially impractical. We can never quite pull off what it requires of us. The undercurrent of this ensuing second order mental activity separates us from the immediate situation leaving us in a perpetually imbalanced state. We are always slightly 'behind' or 'out of' events as they are unfolding and somewhat 'at odds' with others. Our efforts to cope with this imbalance, to the extent that they fail to uproot it, actually aggravate it. To the extent, on the other hand, that this process is 'thinned out', taken less seriously or 'deconstructed', a profound and pre-existing connection to others and the world becomes evident; a form of relaxation in which the boundary of the differentiated becomes permeable. This 'thinning out' is the goal and the outcome of many meditation practices, but we experience it also when events conspire to collapse our preoccupations. A moment at the symphony is so exquisite we forget to keep the project up; alternatively, the loss of a loved one is so acutely painful that the egocentricity maintaining our preoccupations is shattered. In these

moments what we are left with, along with an unaccustomed intensity of feeling, is a sense of connection to others and to the world that we often experience as spirituality—spirituality that is not a product. We did not manufacture it through ritual, prayer or meditation, rather we find it to be 'always already there'.

The Buddhist view is not, in any sense, against the intellect or opposed to analysis and strategy. It is more a question of motivation and timing. Tied to a 'self-preservation project' the exercise of the intellect is counter-productive because it amplifies an unworkable premise, that of permanence, in this instance, the permanence of the self. Assuming the pre-eminence of thinking, it reverses the order of experience and reflection by placing reflection first. This then results in a sense of being 'out of synch.' Issues within the mental bureaucracy take priority over an awareness of events as they are unfolding.

In the constructionist view, in contrast to Buddhist ideas, the construction of the self is a more explicitly collaborative, social and language based endeavour or, as in Bakhtin, a 'dialogic process' (Holquist, 2002, p. 27), based on an 'internal dialogue' and, simultaneously, a public dialogue between ourselves and others. As we engage in the interplay of gestures and dialogue into which we are immersed from the outset as a child an account emerges, a self-referential narrative that is about us and our situations and purports to describe or explain certain features or characteristics of something that we take to constitute an enduring and self consistent entity. Because there is a story about this 'something' we are invited to assume that it exists. It is like assuming that the

characters in a novel are real and hoping to meet them at the next party. What is alternatively intriguing and problematic is that what is assumed to be enduring, on the one hand, is experienced as quite situational, on the other. We find ourselves quite different across different circumstances and apparently subject to a range of influences of which we have some difficulty making sense. The psychoanalytic concept of the 'unconscious' represents a way of explaining the mystery of these influences and their effects on us. Alternatively, the constructionist view suggests that the account that we take to be centralized is no more centralized than the weather. What we assume is an enduring self reflects the current state of a set of social and cultural relations construed in language, albeit experienced and expressed from the unique perspective of the individual person. How others respond to us and, in particular, what they have to say about us is the context in which our identity emerges and is sustained. Paradoxically, what we experience as an individual concoction is co-authored between ourselves and others in the environment of our relationships and within parameters supplied by the cultures that we share. The material that we use in this project is itself not of our invention. As Bakhtin's use of the term "heterglossia" suggests (Holquist, 1981, p. xix), recognizing language as the medium at play in the construction of the self, a tension between language as the "mode of translation for a more or less fixed system" and the expression of the "the power of a particular context" is embodied on an ongoing basis.

Both Buddhist and social constructionist perspectives suggest that the self as an ontological entity is derivative, without an inherent or enduring nature or essence and contingent upon the relationships in which we are engaged with those who are literally

present and those who are present through their absence. It is a centralizing or self-referential account expressed in a language that we are born into, but did not invent.

Though Buddhism and social constructionism arrive at similar conclusions about the 'relational' nature of the self there are significant differences. From the Buddhist perspective, as I understand it, the existence of a quasi-permanent and constant self does not stand-up to the careful examination made possible by analytic meditation.[8] When one goes looking for what is assumed, it is not 'there' and the alternative of connection is then experienced. From the point of view of deconstruction, systematic questioning of the experience and conception of self points to a self-referential narrative or story that is extremely sensitive to context, has arisen and continues to arise in the context of relationships and by virtue of being 'in language'[9] is entirely connected to others and to a culture. The conclusion in one case is the outcome of meditative practice and, in the other, of intellectual analysis. In the case of Buddhism, stories constitute a partial reflection of a 'knowable whole' and, in the case, of constructionism an integral and

[8] Introductory practices in Buddhism, referred to in the Tibetan tradition by the Sanskrit terms *shamata* and *vipassanna*, establish a stability of consciousness that make an acute examination or analysis of the activity of the mind possible. The nature of thought is systematically questioned. From the perspective of the untrained mind the conclusions arrived at by analytic meditation can appear spurious, at the least or grandiose, at worst. Zen *koan* practices 'drive' the mind to similar conclusions intuitively.

[9] In an earlier paper I developed this theme in the following way (Henley, 1995): "We are, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, 'born into language' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). We participate in it as a whole, rather than receiving it in chunks, piecemeal as if it were itself a completed entity which could be cut-up or pre-digested for us. It is prefigured *in utero* in the foetus' early micro muscular responsiveness to the mother's voice pattern. As we grow, we solve the mystery of it by internalizing it, lending our voice to it, while at the same time, inheriting themes, stubborn precepts, sad tales, delighted musings unknowingly, as if invented solely within the field of our own experience. In articulating it, we find ourselves within certain relational premises, akin to presuppositions, and these premises inform the narratives through which our experience is told. This telling is not reportage, impartial description after the fact, it is embodied, thoroughly mixed in with and creative of the tumultuous world of gesture and affect, a linkage through which consciousness and action conjoin. It influences what we notice and what we overlook; what we remember and what we forget; the paths we follow and those from which we turn away. As much as we are the authors of such narratives, we are, at the same time, shaped by them (White & Epston, 1990)."

generative element of an 'unknowable whole.' Both agree that the 'whole' is unknowable via the intellect and that connection or relationship is a critical element.

The non-existence of the self, in this ontological sense, is humbling, but potentially relaxing. The *prima materia* of this particular creation is not, after all, of our invention. We step into an ongoing saga told in a language that is initially foreign to us, but eventually as familiar as the back of our hand. From the outset '*in utero*', we journey with others and our relationships with others provide the framework in which we construct something that we call our own. What is original is how we craft what is given, not that what is given is ours to make-up. We live in this paradox, never escaping from it. And, it makes it possible to imagine a profound continuity between self and the world and an interconnection of one to another that can only be experienced as sacred.

What have we with this relational self and what is its relevance to leadership? What we have in the "I", from this perspective, is in some way an administrative convenience, rather than an ontological absolute. Holquist, in describing Bakhtin's view, notes that the "...the self for Bakhtin is a cognitive necessity, not a mystified privilege." (Holquist, 2002, p. 23) or alternatively, " 'I' is the needle that stitches the abstraction of language to the particularity of lived experience." (p. 28). This "I" is indeterminate and in flux, as ever changing as the field of experience in which it situated and from which it is indivisible. Unlike all other signs the pronoun 'I' has an incompleteness, a lack of final definition that enables it to fulfil a transformative role in the 'becoming' of personhood,

while, at the same time, making it unknowable in a final and absolute sense. This is why the question "Who am I" is so difficult to answer.

What we have is a 'not-so-special self', an open-ended self that is contingent and interdependent, both a potential and an expression, a momentary nexus in a web of meaning and action that is, in fact, the making of many, rather than the exclusive dominion of one; a centre for which we have responsibility as good stewards. We do not have to bear the weight of pride that arises through the illusion of seeing our selves as our original creations. Our stewardship is based on our capacity to work with what is given, to choose within the frameworks in which we find ourselves and, over time and with familiarity, to modify these frameworks. In this sense of self, the personal agency, upon which our capacity to choose and thereby to be held responsible, is preserved, but not exaggerated.[10]

The relevance to leadership is twofold. In the first part, it invites a gentler and more decentralized view of leadership and, for our purposes, it points to a 'background sensitive' or social and communal view of the self because of the inclusiveness of its construction. For the second part, it evokes an analogy that is instructive. Is it possible to think of the leader's relationship to the organization as analogous to the self's relationship to personhood? In the terms of this analogy, the leader is as much a creature of the organization as she or he is her or his own creation, though, at the same time, agency and

[10] These qualities, in my estimation, are at the heart of philosophy and the idea of democracy. Gergen makes a similar point in *An Invitation to Social Construction* (1999, p. 118).

the responsibility for 'good stewardship' remain. Consistent with the distributed theory articulated by Spillane and others (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, p. 23) the social context is "an integral component, not just a container for intelligent activity."

Science and the Social and Communal View: Interconnection in Contemporary Physics

In her seminal work, Leadership and the New Sciences, Margaret Wheatley (1999) recognizes the relevance of the paradigm shift that has been taking place in science for our understanding of organizations and in particular, leadership. Originating in quantum physics and reflected more recently in the 'new biology', science describes the interdependent and epistemologically 'selfless' world anticipated in eastern philosophy and religion and pointed to in contemporary constructionist influenced thinking. In this respect a brief consideration can assist in developing our own thinking further.

Far before his time, Jung described the phenomenon of synchronicity and invoked the 'collective unconscious' to account for our experience of inhabiting a consciousness broader than the boundaries of our personal experience (Peat, 2002; Combs & Holland, 1996). Synchronicity, I take to be events or experiences that reflect connections formed in this broader and collective field of consciousness, but invisible to us until their materialization. In more straightforward terms we are unaware of them until they show up. We commonly attribute these occurrences to coincidence, but from the perspective of

synchronicity they are "manifestations, in mind and matter, of the unknown ground that underlies them both (Peat, 2002, p. 115).

> *Some of my recent work with a prominent politician required frequent interactions with his administrative assistant who, unbeknownst to me, turned out to be the son-in-law of my first year university roommate. This former roommate in his current role as Chief Librarian for a College in Alberta is also the broker of a library agreement between the University by which I am employed and the library system in Alberta.*

Though they resonate with certain dimensions of our experience, these ideas were widely discredited at the time for two reasons. First, science, by then the dominant intellectual paradigm in the west, had yet to develop a theory that could accommodate these experiences and lead to the discovery of mechanisms that could account for such connections. Second, Jung had encountered Eastern philosophy and it had begun to influence his work. He authored, for example, a foreword to one of the early translations of the *I Ching* (Wilhelm, 1950). The tenets of the *I Ching*, though compatible with a number of the observations Jung was putting forward, were relatively unfamiliar to western intellectuals at the time.[11] Among these tenets was the indivisibility of mind or consciousness and the material world. This concept appeared to the enlightenment conscious intellectuals of the west to be based on the superstition and magical thinking of a bygone era and to violate the Cartesian dualism upon which science was understood to

[11] Jung also recognized the connection between the change in paradigm that was on its way and the findings of physics at the time. He notes in foreword to the *I Ching*, "But a great change in our standpoint is setting in. What Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* failed to do, is being accomplished by modern physics" (p. xxii). Also, the Austrian Swiss physicist Wolfgang Pauli was a patient of Jung's and noted the correspondence between the findings of quantum physics and the idea of synchronicity.

rest. Artists and intellectuals at the margins of culture, on the other hand, welcomed this development and despite these early reservations Eastern philosophy and religion infiltrated western culture to the extent that the Dalai Lama's smiling face radiates from storefront posters today.

Much more than the fanciful new age conjecture with which we are now inundated, the inimical connection of mind and material world is also one of the implications of quantum physics (Capra, 1975). As physicists penetrated the sub-atomic world, this indivisibility showed-up in their laboratories and, as an appreciation of the responses of Jung's work would predict, it was entirely vexatious and disturbing to its progenitors at the time, but inescapable nonetheless. In the sub-atomic world, Bohr et al. encountered a realm in which their own perspectives and associated instrumentation or prosthesis, as John Shotter has referred to them, affected the results (1993a, p. 21). One of the most famous and well-reported instances of this is the wave/particle paradox in the study of light (Nadeau & Kafatos, 1999, p. 13). In the context of these alternative accounts of light, it proves possible to study light from either point of view, but not both. They are mutually exclusive and irresolvable and the phenomenal world 'knows' which point of view the scientist is adopting. Elaborate experiments in which scientists switch their perspectives and associated instrumentation in milliseconds have only shown that the 'behaviour' of light switches instantaneously in concert (p. 46). In other words, there is no way to leave the observer's mind and intentions out of the equation and no way to sustain the ontological dualism that Descartes had promoted and upon which ideas of objectivity were felt to rely. Physicists began to imagine that the observer and the 'object'

and, by extension, the 'other' inhabit a sub-stratum in common that constitutes a natural unity, as well as a source of information.[12] In the context of this 'uncertainty' physicists also began to propose that what we experiences as objects, with the quasi-permanent or at least stable status implied, are abstractions, conceptual impositions, albeit administratively convenient, on a network of probabilities or contingent interconnections. This borders on, what would later appear in the social sciences as, a non-essentialist and constructionist view and converges with the non-self of Buddhism and Taoism.

A further revision of the traditional view of objectivity and with it the conception of a one-to-one correspondence of theory and physical reality was called for by the disproving of Bell's theorem. The assumption disproved was "that a measurement at one point in space cannot influence what occurs at another point if the distance between the points is large enough so that no signal can travel between them at light speed in the time allowed for measurement" (Nadeau & Kafatos, p. 2). In the energetic network that we refer to as an atom, photons form patterned relationships with one another a bit like dance partners. In the more classical view we would predict that a separation of the dance partners would terminate this interdependence. But it is not the case. Separated by 11km, tantamount in the sub-atomic world to the other side of the universe, this dance continues on the same simultaneous basis. The relationship between the photons continues. The unity implied then is a 'non-local' phenomenon.

[12] In the context of Qigong, as I understand it to this point, this sub-stratum is referred to as *qi* or the *qi field.* In the *Tao of Physics* Capra notes the similarity between the sub-atomic 'field' described in quantum physics and qi (p. 213).

Admittedly we generalize this to the world of human interactions at our peril, but these discoveries in contemporary physics do provide us with some tantalizing metaphors of the unity we long for and, in the case of ideas such as synchronicity and the collective unconscious, retrieve them from mere conjecture and begin to offer some initial ideas about the processes through which they operate. Because of the focus on material phenomena this research eliminates the power of suggestion, the 'halo effect' and related psychological dynamics as possible sources of explanation, or it casts them in an entirely different light. And this research has restored a sense of wonder by revealing a world of unparalleled indeterminacy, complexity and impermanence.

Social Architecture:
The Materialization of Social Forms

Having established a 'relational' or 'interconnected' view, I want to provisionally extend this to the social world and, in particular, the part of the social world that sees us setting out to accomplish things together. I want to consider the materialization of social forms: the transformation of the formless into form. This seems to be a cultural, conversational and endlessly changing phenomenon fraught with complexity and contradiction; and within it, leadership a contextual and interactive form itself. I am curious about the rules of materialization in such a world. How do things make an appearance? What sustains them, when they do exist, for however long or short? Specifically, in social and organizational contexts, how do various forms come and go and what does the phenomenon called 'leadership' have to do with these comings and

goings? In considering these issues I return to a structural metaphor, another assemblage of rocks, this one, a structure in which the 'iron rod' has a well established history and reputation and, in which, despite its consolidation, its paradoxical nature is inescapable. In the following dialogue between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, imagined by Italo Calvino in *Invisible Cities* (p. 66), the paradox of 'emptiness' in relation to the structure of *the arch* is illustrated.

> Marco Polo describes a bridge, stone by stone.
>
> 'But which is the stone that supports the bridge?' Kublai Khan asks. 'The bridge is not supported by one stone or another,' Marco answers, 'but by the line of the arch that they form'. Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: 'Why do you speak of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me.' Polo answers: 'Without the stones there is no arch.'

Now, in the form of the arch, 'the iron rod' from the previous example has indeed acquired a different rank, a socio-cultural, expressive and eventually, mathematical status whose importance momentarily obscures from Kublai Khan's view the importance of the rocks that make its material form possible. Through a further philosophical sleight of the hand the arch can become a pre-existing *sui generis* characteristic of the world, a world without rocks or people, rather than a handy means of communication between architects, builders and art historians about the subject of a particular way of assembling rocks. Our facility in passing ideas and images from one to another invites us to forget the relational nature of this transmission and in forgetting assume that the origin of the ideas and images lies 'outside' the world that we experience. By outside I mean other than in the context of our relationships with the things and people of our world. Recalling the 'iron

rod', the arch 'comes from' the arrangement of a configuration of rocks. Likening it to a genetic code, Alexander describes the sort of human interaction and dialogue that enables the materialization of structure as a "pattern language" (Alexander, 1979, p. 199). A further point, and one that relates symbolically with leadership, refers to the role of the 'keystone' in the arch. By all appearances it plays a central role. However, it bears no more weight than any other stone.[13]

I have, at times, pressed this point about the language based and interactive nature of our constructions by proposing that 'buildings are conversations'. By this proposition, I intend to convey the temporal and dialogical nature of the structures that we take to be permanent and given. The buildings that we inhabit are 'permanent' in themselves only by overlooking the conversations that maintain them. If these conversations ceased so too would the buildings, surprisingly rapidly.

> *I realized this one-day in Northern Manitoba walking around a 'ghost town'. A thriving centre, 40 years before, formidable structures were dissipating before my eyes. The town's general store had become a floor, a partial wall and, still holding out for better days, a lonely freezer. Eager shrubs entwined the ruins and animal spore dotted the floor. One of the first towns to have paved sidewalks, they were by then invisible to the uninitiated.*

If one asks what makes a building possible in the first place, it goes back to a conversation. At some point someone expressed the idea of a particular building or structure persuasively enough to some others and tools were taken-up. Land titles,

[13] April 21, 2005, mounted by a British engineering firm provides a fascinating analysis of arches, http://www.btantacan.co.uk/arch.htm.

contracts, bills of sale, architectural drawings led to excavation, construction, assembly, paint, decoration and so forth. Through it all, dialogue was interwoven and shaped the manifestation of the form that it took. This type of conversation continues to be embedded in the maintenance and life history of buildings.[14] This is not to say that everything is conversation, but it is to expose the formative role that conversation and interaction play in the world that we create together. No construction takes place in its absence. In the case of buildings all of this is often attributed to architects, as it is in organizations to leaders, though countless others are involved in the buildings manifestation and maintenance (Alexander, p. 217).

The only designs that are recognized are those that are materialized; materialized by virtue of the exercise of a language in 'the common guiding', in this case, in the context of the human interaction that we call 'building'.

> We imagine, because of the distorted view of architecture we have learned, that some great architect created these buildings, with a few marks of the pencil, worked out laboriously at the drawing board. The fact is that Chartres, no less than the simple farmhouse, was built by a group of men, acting within a common pattern language, deeply steeped in it of course. It was not made by 'design' at the drawing board.
>
> (Alexander, p. 217)

From a communal or social and institutional point of view, the 'medium' in which all this takes place is culture (Schein, 1997). The predilections, assumptions, stories and accounts that a given group negotiates and holds over time in common congeal in the

[14] Stuart Brand makes a similar point in *How Buildings Learn* (Brand, 1994).

form of customs, rituals and patterns of relationships and more formally, in the shape of laws and governance. These forms then take on a life of their own, convincing us of their ontological status or 'reality' (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 60). We forget that we created them and persuade one another to give them our allegiance, as if they originated in a source outside ourselves, rather than deriving from our interactions and deliberations. When we experience our social institutions in this reified way, they appear to have a life of their own. We start feeling as if we are bound to serve them, rather than the other way around. And we mystify our leaders by implication, rather than hold them accountable as the situational stewards of our communal wellbeing.

We expect of ourselves and others that we will engage in certain activities, accomplish certain ends, and even make certain sacrifices on behalf of organizations. But who or what is it that we have in mind as our beneficiaries when we think of organizations in this way. Though we refer to organizations as if they were given or found, upon closer examination it is evident that we create them through our participation. Our actions are guided more specifically in turn by the conversations and conceptions that take place and the stories that are circulated and responded to. In this sense organizations do not exist except as expressions of our agreements and negotiations, in the same way as in our earlier discussion, buildings fall rapidly into disrepair in the absence of the discourse upon which their everyday recreation depends. Habitually referring to the organization as an entity in and of itself in turn obscures the patterns of interaction and discourse upon which it is based and by which it is sustained. In addition, as thinkers since Marx have pointed out and Foucault in particular (1972),

power, influence, status and rewards are not necessarily equitably distributed in these social negotiations, but these issues become obscure as the transactions upon which they are based conglomerate and solidify in the bricks and mortar of the 'taken-for-granted'.

Recognizable Ethical Formulations

In the language of more centralized views of leadership, views in which some combination of the leader's analytical skills, strategies, charisma and power are seen to account for the directions in which groups move; ethical dialogue is often experienced as extraneous to the lived world of the organization. By ethical dialogue I mean careful consideration of the implications of various institutional choices for relationships and the institution's collective well being. Through such dialogue the 'rightness' of the various alternatives is evaluated. In the absence of ethical dialogue woven into the fabric of everyday discourse in the institution, leaders are left to decide or, in more abstract terms, ethics are drawn 'from above.' Members of the organization experience such impositions as 'outside' the transactions and negotiations of everyday life in the organization. Provided that ordained principles or standards are not violated, or seen to be violated, the way is clear to pursue the practical strategies and outcomes identified by leaders.

More precisely ethical preoccupations are limited to local environments of working groups and communities of practice and the ethos of the organization as a whole is left to chance. On the other hand, working from a social and communal perspective, the quality of relationships across the organization and the organization's relationship to the larger community is experienced as integral because the connection of self and other is

felt deeply and is widely recognized. Ethics, understood as the practices and principles by which the quality of relationships are assured, becomes more prominent and as Shotter has pointed out in referring to Aristotle's classification of knowledge, *phronesis*, the practical and the moral are re-conjoined (Shotter, 1993a, p. 8).

Recent revisions of a more structural view have attempted to elevate the importance of ethics. Charles Taylor, for example, suggests that the problem of 'living a good life' is first, foremost and inescapably a matter of ethical orientation (Taylor, 1989, p. 14). 'Where we will stand' in relation to the moral coordinates inherent in the language and culture into which we are born, as we face the specific situations of our daily lives, is the question that must inevitably and continually be addressed. It is not only a question of what to do, but also of how to be a person in relation to other persons and the world. A 'reflective reclamation' of sorts is intimated by Taylor in which the sustaining and revered truths of a culture and, ultimately, organized religion are brought forward (Taylor, 2002).

In more relational or horizontal terms, however, the ground of ethics is viewed as less ideological and more interpersonal, and its key term is empathy or *sentimentality*, as Rorty indicates, rather than reason itself (Rorty, 1999, p. 82). We treat others well most assuredly when we have the capacity to feel or, in more unfamiliar circumstances, imagine how our actions will affect them. "Ethics is how we behave when we decide that we belong together" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 62).

In the absence of this sense of 'belonging together' the other becomes a non-person and mistreatment much more easily rationalized (Rorty, 1998, p. 167).[15] To follow Rorty further, ethical negotiation constitutes a search for "acceptable justification and eventual agreement" (1999, p. 72) about the codes of conduct by which we are to be governed. This, then, is an ethics of connection and rather than the source of decency, reason is its servant.

A positivist ontology, from this perspective, 'creates' a separate and distant self with forms of judgment, evaluation and control lacking the very quality of empathy most essential to our feeling for one another and the world that we co-inhabit. Arguably, some forms of functionalism that sprang from this positivist view, while they bestowed benefits such as the containment of infectious diseases, have also been implicated in some of the profound difficulties of the modern era, such as the development of weapons whose destructive capacities were unimaginable in previous times.

From a more relational perspective, ethical criteria originate in the ways that relationships are affected by actions, rather than by reference to the extent to which they correspond with eternal or universal verities, as proposed by Plato and taken-up by Kant. In this vein, Rorty proposes that we talk about our responsibility to our fellow human beings rather than talk about responsibility to truth, or to reason (Rorty, 1999, p. 148).

[15] Similar ideas have been advanced by psychiatrists and psychologists studying the phenomenon of attachment (Bowlby, 1988). Though violent and anti-social behaviour has been rightfully associated with abuse and, to a lesser extent, inconsistent parenting, extremes of such behaviour are most frequently evidenced by children who lack attachment and with it a capacity to feel for others and regard them as persons.

How is this responsibility to fellow human beings enacted in this view? In the context of the sense of connection to which we have been referring, customs and norms provide some of the guidance required and through reflection, deliberation and agreement attain the standing of workable ethical principles. In the face of complexity and controversy, dialogue is evoked and results in the kind of agreements that we refer to as ethical principles (1999, p. 73). But the force of such customs and norms, and, in their more abstract form, principles, becomes oppressive, rather than helpful when it is unhooked from the human invention and responsiveness to circumstance in which they originated and referred to absolute sources about which dialogue is generally one sided. These are the dangers of ideological and religious fundamentalism. And we are tempted, it appears from the historical situations available for our examination, such as the horrors of Nazi Germany, the Cultural Revolution in China and the current invasion of Iraq, to use unspeakable violence to assert the rightness of 'fundamentals' under such circumstances.

From the perspective of the 'relational self' as Gergen refers to it, there is another interesting and helpful implication. Given the incorporation of others in the self or the realization that the self arises interactively or dialogically, as Bakhtin proposed, to offend against others is to offend against the self (Gergen, 1999, p. 132) The disquiet we feel when we hurt, harm or offend others is a reflection of this principle. By extension, a

wrong in the community, and, in its broadest interpretation, the world of sentient beings altogether, directly impinges upon the wellbeing of the self.[16]

This relational ontology of the self facilitates a quality that Rorty describes as the moral imagination, the capacity to imagine the effects of our actions on others and on the world (1999, p. 72). "Moral progress," in this view, "is a matter of wider and wider sympathy. It is not a matter of rising above the sentimental to the rational" (p. 82). In a similar vein, the American philosopher and classicist, Martha Nussbaum, in an appealing volume entitled *Poetic Justice*, highlights the efficacy of literature and the arts in bringing about such sensitivity. The novel, in particular, has a unique capacity to imaginatively take us into the personhood or interiority of the other.

> ... an ethics of impartial respect for human dignity will fail to engage real human beings unless they are made capable of entering imaginatively into the lives of distant others and to have emotions related to that participation. (Nussbaum, p. xvi)

Spirituality and Charisma

As a counterpoint to the interconnected or horizontal view that I am presenting I want to conclude this chapter with a brief analysis of charisma. The traditional understanding of charisma as illustrative of transcendentally inspired leadership and an

[16] By extension, to offend against others is to offend against the community. An offence represents a tear in the fabric of the community. This perspective is expressed in various First Nations approaches to social justice and, in particular, in the emerging tradition of restorative justice (Ross, 1996).

emphasis on leader centricity highlights some differences between this understanding and a social and communal perspective. It also demonstrates an incorporation of spirituality different from the one that I am advocating.

In this mythical and heroic version of leadership (Yukl, 1994, p. 317), the leader is seen and sometimes described as connected to something transcendental, an unspecified above and beyond from which she or he derives energy and authority. It is consistent with a kind of preoccupation with spirituality that abounds in the present day leadership literature (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002). In practice, this heroic tradition of leadership often has a dark and dangerous side. Perhaps this is an inescapable outcome; or perhaps it is created, or, at least accentuated, by a very leader centric view of leadership. More is projected on the leader than the personhood of most individuals can contain. More is expected of the leader than any one person can deliver. More power accrues than temptation can forgive. It can help us understand the sudden distortions in conduct sometimes evidenced by leaders referred to previously in relation to corporate executives; the theft of an expensive diamond ring by prominent Vancouver politician, Svend Robinson, representing a recent local example; the behaviour of recent American President, Bill Clinton to name another; and possibly the practices of senior members of the Chretien administration as revealed by the Gomery inquiry, at the present.

> *In his 1986 collection of essays,* Demon Box, *I still recall a provocative comment that the late Ken Kesey made in the course of his reflections about his time as a leader and cultural icon* (1986, p. 304). *It was the chilling realization that the source of the public spotlight, otherwise so*

seductive, appears upon closer examination to be equipped with crosshairs.

A 'social and communal' view, in contrast, locates ethics, as well as spirituality, 'in between' rather than 'above', and represents an immanent rather than transcendental sensibility. Wherever we labour together, cohabit together and create groups and organizations together we invoke the invisible of our collective intentions. And we express this invisible by giving voice to the 'spirit of the endeavour', its mission in more contemporary terms, or its 'conscious purpose', to borrow an expression from Michael White. This more immanent version of spirituality "can be read in the shape of people's identity projects" (Hoyt, 1996, p. 36). It is therefore a "transformative spirituality" that has to do with the collective human capacity to go beyond received or determined identities. It has very much to do with our "personal ethics", the situated ethics of everyday life.

The group comes to know itself through such expressions and this knowing supports and enriches its activities. Where it is going or is to go becomes known and this knowing fires the matrix of its motivation. This goes to the heart of the group's capacity to materialize by calling its collective attention to common aims.[17] It is this proclivity in conjunction with the 'relational sensitivity' referred to above, in my estimation, which enables us to extend our commitments beyond our self-interest. It enjoins a sweet

[17] Practices such as Appreciate Inquiry explicitly recognize and attempt to work in terms of this principle (Hammond, 1996).

harmony, the aroma of which is the sure sign of accomplishments that benefit us collectively.

What leaders sometimes express is this aspiration, held in common and lived daily between people, the more so for being recognized, articulated and known. These conjointly held and, at times latent sentiments, something akin to the 'spirit of the people' or the 'spirit of the organization' break through on occasion at the site of leadership and by more centralized theories of leadership are misattributed disproportionately to the leader.

An article by Nancy Roberts (1986) illustrates this point. Initially engaged in a study of School-Based Management (SBM) in a Midwestern US school district, Roberts was captivated by the recently appointed superintendent's response to an unexpected financial crisis. Due to revenue shortfalls at the state level the district's budget was cut by close to 10%. Rather than rely on additional levies, centrally imposed cutbacks or go into debt the superintendent initiated a program to revitalize the school district. "Her goal was to not only to survive the budgetary crisis, but to prepare people for the educational challenges of the future" (p. 1027).

The superintendent in question initiated a transparent and widely consultative process that galvanized the district over a two-year period, in the course of which she began to be viewed as a 'charismatic leader' with almost mystical characteristics, though she had been viewed as 'ruthless' and 'authoritarian' in previous positions. Roberts concluded that the attribution of charisma arose in the context of the crisis in conjunction

with a sustaining vision in the district. As she reflected on the developments that she had witnessed, Roberts increasingly situated the transformation that took place in the context of 'collective action.' The superintendent's contribution was to act as a catalyst under tenuous circumstances. Yukl's text on leadership cites a follow-up study of this particular educational leader as she moved on to become a senior bureaucrat in the state government (Yukl, 1994, p. 339). Her colleagues did not view her as at all charismatic in this context. This is perhaps an instance of a principle Watts anticipates in the context of network theory, a recently emerging hybrid incorporating mathematics and sociology. He noted that focusing solely on "...the centrality of individuals, or any centrality for that matter, would tell us little or nothing about the outcome, because the center emerges only as a consequence of the event itself" (Watts, 2003, p. 52). Perhaps more precisely, the centre emerges in the context of a dialogue with the event.

Spirituality in Action: A Practical Framework

Buddhism and Taoism provide a framework that enables the realization of a spiritual sensibility that is applicable to the everyday world. Buddhism viewed as "a collection of methods for waking up from confusion" (McCleod, 2002, p. xi) is very much based in what becomes possible when attention is stabilized through the practice of meditation (Trungpa, 1973, 1976, 1981; McCleod, 2002). Most introductory Buddhist practices make use of the breath to accomplish this. In an alert posture, the breath becomes an alternate locus of attention to the endless stream of internal dialogue by which we are all busy constructing our expectations, our hopes and fears, our story lines

and in so doing, by implication, affirming the presence of a self (the who of the story). Through meditation it then becomes possible to experience what phenomenology suspected and constructionism surmised, that these accounts are contingent and situational, rather than enduring and absolute, and more importantly, that the separation of the one experiencing and the experienced is an afterthought, an option from an ontological perspective. Experience does not collapse, as we tend to fear, in the absence of the assumption of a self.

There are some other significant by-products of the path of meditation. It turns out that the assumption of a separate self also separates us from others. This assumption forms the basis of self-interest and makes compassion beyond our convenience difficult to sustain. When our attachment to the self dissolves the interconnected and contingent world that arises is one in which our interests and those of others are more closely aligned. Compassion arises spontaneously under such circumstances and feelings of sincerity and trust are much more easily cultivated.

In all of this there are no other reference points, other than the human community and its long time journey in this world and this universe. This is a non-theist view. There is no 'rescuer' and no 'big payoff' during the work of leadership or after. It lends itself to a subtle, contemplative and not-too-important view of leadership, one in which discipline and realization play significant roles. Discipline is required to sustain the contemplative practices that dissolve self-importance and train awareness. Realization is entailed because the more awareness is trained the more of the phenomenal world is revealed

including the workings of the phenomenon of leadership itself as it is enacted in any given situation. This view invokes an immanent and shared spirituality and a sense that, whatever salvation we find, we will find together and within our shared world. There is nowhere else to turn other than to one another. This realization is made possible by the training of our attention and the thoughtful negotiation of our collective actions through a set of methods passed on faithfully from one human being to another, modified intelligently to suit local conditions, and in the context of a widely varied human community of practitioners who support one another in this effort.[18]

The purpose of this chapter has been to articulate the more relational ontology that I associate with Buddhist and Taoist views and to suggest that the realization of this ontology offers an important foundation for efforts to think of leadership differently.

The more interconnected or interdependent sensibility that flows from these views is consistent with, I have suggested, certain developments in social constructionism. These developments focus our attention on the concrete particularities of dialogue and interaction in the everyday world. The findings of quantum physics provide further support, albeit indirectly, for an interconnected view. Under the rubric of 'social architecture' I have extended this thinking to the materialization of forms in the social world and initiated some speculation about the role leadership plays in this activity. The

[18] My wife Mary described an art show that she attended in which Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is had been faithfully reproduced with the exception that all the religious iconography had been removed. It portrayed an incredibly touching scene of human beings reaching out to one another, touching and holding on to one another in joy and in sorrow. A virtual look at the Sistine Chapel is available online at http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/CSN/CSN_Volta_StCentr.html.

interconnected view that I have outlined also has critical implications for the ethics of leadership and organization life. I have suggested that these implications contribute to a more sensitive, humane and equitable approach. Returning to the issue of spirituality the chapter concludes by suggesting that the social and communal view that is emerging conjoins practicality and spirituality. In the following chapter this analysis, particularly in relation to leadership and the materialization of social forms, is deepened further.

CHAPTER 3.

The Role of Leadership in the Materialization of Social Forms

> Apparently, Samoans engage in what is called a maaloo exchange. For example, if I have done something well and you commend me for it, the maaloo exchange requires that I respond by recognizing your essential assistance in my successful performance. In other words the other-as-supporter is central to Samoan understanding. For instance...after a group of travelers return and are greeted with a welcome home, the exchange might be: "Well done the trip", to which the returning travelers respond: "Well done the staying back." (Sampson, as cited in Campbell, 2000, p. 1)

I have attempted to invoke a relational or social and communal view, to extend this view to the materialization of social forms and to begin to situate the role of leadership anew. My intention, at this point, is to press on and further recast leadership in the light of this view and to outline a practice of leadership that is consistent with it. This practice I have entitled 'creating environments of administrative sanity.'

In the previous chapter, I briefly described the Buddhist understanding of egocentricity and indicated that, while it is a natural development in the sense that virtually all human beings experience it by degrees, in its extreme form, it disavows or violates the connection to the phenomenal world and to others that is otherwise available to us. In the absence of this connection to the phenomenal field our feeling for others and the world around us is dulled and our perception clouded. This intimacy with the

phenomenal world not only sustains, but also informs. It sustains lives and relationships by making possible an authentic ethical sensibility based on kindness and compassion toward others. It informs by revealing the shape that the phenomenal field that we share is taking; quite simply, we 'see' more precisely what is going on. This is not an unfamiliar human experience. There are always those moments when we 'get the picture', when we feel that it is all making sense.

In the context of groups and organizations I propose that it is helpful and illuminating to view leadership as analogous to the ego in personhood; the ego is, in some sense a 'natural' and inevitable development, but one who's excessive centralization in theory or practice is counterproductive. Excessive centralization in organizational terms is similar to the 'grasping' and 'fixation' that I earlier described in relation to egocentricity and it has analogous results. In relation to leadership, it invites the organization to focus on individual leaders and disproportionately elevate their importance and institutional power. Associated with this leader-centricity the organization evolves a bureaucracy that promotes and monitors achievement of its own ends rather than its efficacy in responding to its environment, in more commercial terms, to the needs and aspirations of students, clients or customers. Leader-centricity puts the leader and organization increasingly 'out of touch' with the organization's operational environment (Weik & Sutcliffe, 2001; Wheatley, 1999). This centralization is compelling because of the apparent sense of certainty and permanence that it confers. Certainty, in this context, derives from the capacity to manipulate abstractions and the permanence from the continuity that remembering and reiterating self-referential accounts confers.

We have the feeling that we are getting a grip on substantive issues and therefore able to control what will transpire. An attachment to certainty of this nature is ultimately disappointing because what we have a grip on are abstractions rather than the performance of relationships critical to survival and value. On the other hand, relating more directly to the ever-changing phenomenal field is considerably messier and uncertain, though inestimably more delightful and energizing to those whose attachment to certainty has relaxed.

What the Buddhists refer to as ego, then, represents a centralizing tendency within the formation of personhood that provides a sense of continuity and lends itself to an illusion of permanence. In moderation it is a useful administrative convenience and in excess, a significant obstacle. By analogy, leadership constitutes a focal point for the organization and an apparent repository of final decision-making and answerability. Leadership is, from this perspective, the convenient site of critical images and compelling accounts useful in the way the keystone is to the arch, but no more essential than all the other stones that make-up the arch. It is a function of leadership to suppose, cultivate, remember and articulate the organization's vision or purpose, when required. These activities provide a source of coherence for the organization. This coherence, as I have indicated earlier, facilitates the flow of materialization, though the materialization and transformation of forms is an entirely natural process. By natural I mean that it appears in nature in the absence of a singular source of direction or leadership. The creativity and interdependence involved arises spontaneously in natural systems, the aesthetics and

complexity of which have been increasingly expressed in the findings of quantum physics and described in the new biology as *autopoesis.*

Autopoesis refers to the self-creating and self-organizing capacity of natural systems beginning with the conjunction of carbon atoms to form organic molecules (Maturana & Varela, 1987, p. 47) and extending to social systems (Wheatley, 1999, p. 20). This characteristic of social systems has been observed even in extremes of chaos. For example, in a recent article in *Harpers* (2005, p. 31), Rebecca Solnit documents the immediate and spontaneous restoration of social order following natural disasters such as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in the Bay area and Hurricance Juan in Halifax in 2003. Before the re-constitution of civil society in the formal and hierarchical sense the citizens of San Francisco and Halifax set about supplying one another with necessities and reconstructing their homes. Leadership was contingent, temporary and specific to particular situations and people were 'surprisingly kind' to one another. Solnit cites a 1961 study by sociologist Charles Fritz entitled "Disasters and Mental Health: Therapeutic Principles drawn from Disaster Studies" in which the author observes a shift in awareness that 'speeds the process of decision-making' and 'facilitates the acceptance of change' (p. 33).

The 'factory recovery projects' and *asambleas* in Argentina brought to our attention by Naomi Klein (2002, p. 55) provide another interesting illustration of this point. In the context of the collapse of Argentina's economy a large number of factories were abandoned by owners, investors and mangers throwing countless workers out of a

job and further devastating local economies. At a loss, clusters of workers began to 'guard' their factories from pillaging by trustees appointed by the court on behalf of owners and creditors and put the factories back into operation, in many instances, with the blessing of various levels of government. Recognizing a common interest they formed a broader organization to assist other cooperative ventures along the same lines. Leadership re-emerged, but arguably of a different order.

In studies of teams working in extreme situations such as search and rescue and emergency rooms in hospitals, formal hierarchy often collapses and decision-making moves to those who have the highest degree of competence in relation to particular situations and access to the highest quality of information (Weik & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 73). Since responsiveness to a rapidly changing operational environment is so critical for such teams they have evolved leadership practices that emphasize connection to the phenomenal world or, as Weik and Sutcliffe refer to it, *mindfulness* (2001, p. 10).[19] The point of these examples is that leadership need not resemble the view exemplified by organization charts and, in fact, performance of leadership in terms of this more static and discrete image may be a distinct disadvantage. There are, in fact, reports of organizations such as New York's Orpheus Chamber Orchestra that have dispensed with traditional forms of leadership altogether, in this case, a conductor (Seifer & Economy, 2001).

[19] Though the authors use a concept that is central in Buddhism, they do not refer to its origins in Buddhism. Their use is also narrower than in Buddhism, in which it is typically paired with awareness. The qualities of mindfulness and awareness together provide a simultaneous sense of 'operational details' and the broader context or background in which they are emerging.

By structure and through what might be described as an engineering bias, we locate leadership in one or, at the most, few persons per organization, though the supposing, cultivating, remembering and articulating referred to above happens across many individuals. Many individuals act as a focal point depending on the circumstances, and it takes many individuals to enact leadership in each instance. Impetus bubbles-up at many points in a healthy system. Ideas race through and shape in turn the medium of the organization's culture, finally pausing when attended to and nurtured to take form, informally as patterns of behaviour and customs and formally as policies and procedures. *Leadership is the attending to and nurturing.* Its activity includes the disciplines of selective attention and the practice of dialogue.

In identifying the discipline of selective attention, I am drawing on Buddhist and Qigong influences. Meditation is a means that these traditions have evolved to train the mind, enabling practitioners to direct the focus of attention according to choice rather than association. The general principle is that attention is a critical dimension of materialization. That which is attended to is more likely to materialize (Wheatley, 2005, p. 91). Attention is shaped in turn by dialogue and interaction. In this respect, narrative and social constructionist ideas are helpful. Certain ideas and stories achieve pre-eminence among groups of people, and in achieving pre-eminence lead to manifestation. I will return to the narrative dimension of leadership at a later point in this chapter.

From a more social and communal view, leadership is the way that groups of people with common intentions, ranging from earning a living to achieving peace on the

planet, give voice to, identify with and shape their common impetus. By impetus I mean their desire for action and materialization. Leadership is a facilitative function in this sense. When it is accorded to one or few individuals, as it is in many instances, it bestows a privilege and an opportunity. The privilege is to act as a representative of the group's heartfelt best intentions and the opportunity is to further shape those intentions. Combined this privilege and opportunity result in, what I would describe as, 'enhanced agency.' It becomes possible to contribute disproportionately to the materialization of the group's best intentions. From the point of view of the group or organization, the leader's privilege is a short cut because the identification and nurturing of common impetus speeds-up its materialization. *This is the administrative convenience of the ego translated into organizational terms and located at the site of leadership.* To reiterate in a different way an earlier point, if we lose sight of the usefulness of leadership as a short-cut to materialization and project on leadership special status or mystified powers, then we have effectively 'over centralized' leadership.

It turns out, also, that the impetus that we have tended to locate in individuals can also be understood as dispersed, spread throughout an extensive tangle of intentions, dialogue and actions among a group nominally defined by the boundaries of a given organization.[20] Leadership is dispersed in at least two senses. First, its enactment actually requires the interlinked and coordinated activities of many people and second, it appears

[20] In their study of elementary school leadership in particular, Spillane and his colleagues at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy suggest that leadership can be best understood "as a distributed practice, *stretched over* the school's social and situational contexts" (2001, p. 23).

in many different sites across the organization. There is an invisible dimension to this collective impetus, invisible especially when we are hypnotized by a focus on individual leaders and their proclivities, but rather more in evidence when we attend to the discourse and actions of the day throughout the organization, what Shotter refers to as, the "empirical details of everyday transactions" (1993b, p. 23) and Taylor, in his recent reflections on Merleau-Ponty, the background terrain of "ordinary coping" (2005, p. 36). Focusing on the personalities and activities of leaders often makes leadership 'mysterious' to leaders themselves and, as a result, it is often difficult for them to render coherent accounts of their conduct (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003).

> In a conversation with the former provincial Youth and Family Advocate, Joyce Preston I happened to ask how it was that she found herself in this role. Her initial and laudably modest response was that it was 'luck.' It was 'luck', she went on to reiterate, because she did not set out to attain such a position. It was not her intention, nor was it a part of her 'career plan.' We had been talking earlier about understanding leadership from the point of view of the 'background.' I asked if she could fill in the 'background' of this appointment for me. She became quite animated as she recalled the early days of her application, interviews and subsequent appointment. It was a 'fit' she concluded after describing how the qualities that had developed over a 30 year career 'corresponded' to the expectations of the person that had emerged in the interviewing team. Based on this congruence, a consensus developed between Joyce and the interviewing team. (Preston, 2003)

From my perspective, Joyce was responding from within a more linear, individualistic and leader centric paradigm and it did not supply her with useful information, so she concluded that her appointment took place by chance, what Geertz might describe as a 'thin description' (1973). Beginning to fill in the background of the empirical details of the phenomenal world began to result in a 'thicker description', a

description that offered more to both the teller and the listener. We had also shifted the unit of analysis from the individual to the 'social individual' (Shotter, 1993, p. 175) and in so doing, were able to call forth 'new sensitivities' (Skolimowski, 1994, p. 15) about her performance of leadership, in this case, its inception. Asking questions about the 'background' or social and cultural context brings into focus the lived world that is "peripherally present" in all our thoughts and feelings but easily forgotten in our cognitive productions (Abrams, 1997, p. 40).

> A similar shift occurred in a recent conversation with one of the senior officials at the university at which I work. In a dialogue about the history of leadership in this institution, his initial responses to my questions assumed that leadership was entirely located within leaders. When I asked more contextual questions such as 'how have leaders been initiated or socialized in this organization' he acknowledged that are 'institutional issues' associated with leadership and subsequently developed a description of 'an organization without a history' that consumed a series of leaders and, in fact, made it very difficult to lead and, for present purposes, significantly revealed the background in this particular organization. He coined the phrase 'institutional incompetence' to describe this phenomenon.[21]

This more generative description opened a range of possible interventions and made possible the identification of benchmarks for the leaders of the future.[22] In addition to useful information for the performance of leadership, it raised some very interesting questions about how organizations supply themselves with a history and how they go about developing competencies that enable them to sustain leadership. I will return to

[21] W. Addis (personal communication, fall 2004).

[22] It is also worth noting that this trend has subsequently continued with the abrupt departure of an acting President.

these questions in the next chapter in section that introduces the concept of educating organizations about leadership.

Creating Environments of Administrative Sanity[23]

This section addresses what an alternative view of leadership might look like in practice. It begins with the suggestion that both leaders and followers adopt a different understanding of leadership and concludes with a revision of 'strategy' based on a social and communal view of leadership. It is a relational view and woven throughout it is the differing ethical sensibility articulated in the previous chapter. The use of the word 'sanity' highlights the significance of establishing a foundation of harmony and unity; in Buddhist terms, disavowing aggression, deception and indifference, and, in particular, aggression. From the Buddhist perspective, aggression is the most common source of insanity (Trungpa, 2005, p. 144).

Reaching for a Different Way of Knowing

What I am suggesting is that 'socially and communally conscious' leadership requires attention to the social and communal world as it is enacted and spoken of on a daily basis. To know this 'other world' requires of those who would care to know a different disposition, an appetite for the phenomenal world; and the kind of 'care and

[23] I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to an article by Chogyam Trungpa in developing the title and content of this section. The article is entitled "Creating an Environment of Sanity" (2005, p. 143).

concern', alluded to in the later Heidegger, and described as an inclination to "relate to things and people primarily by letting them matter to us in engaged involvement and only secondarily by forming propositional beliefs about them" (Polt, 2001, p. 11).

There is a gentle quality to this knowing and an openness to all those in the immediate environment; a preparedness to the see the 'goodness' of persons and situations and in colloquial terms, to be 'non-judgemental.'

> *Years later after he had moved on from his position as the director of a small neighbourhood house to the executive director of a large social service agency, he would talk to me about the waning health and personal difficulties of the houses' senior programs' bus driver. He was clearly still in touch with him. When the time came for my own dark night of the soul he stood along aside me more than anyone else; a social worker and administrator, his capacity for care and concern touches me to this day.*

There are two additional features of this 'knowing'. First, it tends to result in 'local knowledge', specific to a particular situation at a particular time. It does not lend itself readily to circulation in the form of formulas or abstractions. It is, as Bruner has referred to it, a 'folk psychology' (1996, p. 46) and, when it is circulated, it takes the form of stories whose ambiguous structure enables the listener to fill in the 'concrete particularities' of her or his own circumstances. It incorporates feelings, in addition to images and thoughts (Shotter, 1993b, p. 155). This knowledge of the 'social and communal background' does not fit our usual conceptions of knowledge, as has noted (Shotter, 1993a, p. 7). Rather than 'espoused theories of practice' or 'canonical practice', it addresses 'non-canonical practice' or 'theories in use' (Spillane et al., 2001, p. 24).

Forty five minutes prior to the meeting, my Administrative Assistant reminded me of it; 10-minutes before, while I was still scrambling to formulate an agenda, a key member of the team phoned to say that he would be unable to attend; as the meeting approached, it became clear that a second department head's return from Edmonton that day did not include making it into the office in time. I might have cancelled the meeting altogether, but the voice outside my office door of the newly appointed teaching faculty representative to the team convinced me otherwise. At the outset of the meeting, after acknowledging the circumstances, my question to the smaller group assembled was, "How can we use this precious time together productively?" One member of the team raised an issue that he specifically noted would not have otherwise appeared on the agenda. Though it had seemed plausible to introduce a hybrid Masters level program in Counselling Psychology province wide starting in Prince George, he indicated, response to our visits seemed sluggish. I suggested that we include the northern Okanagan as a possible community in which to make this program known. Though Counselling Psychology senior faculty had made the previous trips to Prince George we agreed to send me to Kamloops.

Ten years ago one of my major occupations was delivering workshops on a particular approach to family therapy. For reasons that remain unknown until this day I was in demand in Kamloops. Along the way and in the course of a number of presentations in Kamloops I formed some collegial relationships. One in particular stood out because the young woman at the time was separating from her husband under similar circumstances to my wife in the context of her previous marriage. This enabled me, I think, to lend a particularly helpful ear.

No sooner had our team agreed to the idea of sending me to Kamloops, a group from nearby Salmon Arm, recalling a workshop that I had to cancel 10 years ago in order to attend my stepson's graduation, invited me to spend a day with them. We subsequently joined the two days together. The format in Kamloops was a 'free to the public' afternoon workshop followed by an evening information session. The women referred to above showed-up at the workshop with a couple of colleagues, at least one of whom now attends the program. In all four students from Kamloops and vicinity signed up and they made the difference in terms of the viability of the program.

The 'Kamloops story' is a part of the knowledge that enabled our Inclusive Delivery (hybrid) program to get off the ground, but it is knowledge entirely peculiar to

our team. In the larger context of the university as whole this story may or may not be told in accounting for the program's success and, most certainly, several years from now, as the program evolves over time, it will be forgotten. Despite its limited relevance in conventional terms, the actions recounted were essential to the program's materialization and its idiosyncrasy notwithstanding; it might be worth remembering for another day.

More communal and phenomenological than abstract and instrumental, initially inchoate and often enlivening, this knowing is the location at which the 'unconscious' becomes 'conscious'; first through telling and retelling, then dialogue and reflection; in the most promising instances, evolving in the direction of an enlightened 'common sense'. What is taken-up initially as the mundane is accorded the dignity it deserves through careful attention and gentle interrogation by forms of inquiry focused on respecting the integrity and richness of the taken-for-granted. In this effort the domestic is 'exoticized' (Epston & White, 1992, p. 121); extraordinary attention is paid to the ordinary.

As Shotter notes:

> The future cannot be made to occur by sheer force of one's conviction as to its possibility; one must relate one's actions to what at any one moment is a real possibility within it. Thus, if we are able to act in such a way, we must not act solely 'out of' our own 'inner scripts', 'plans' or 'ideas', but must be sensitive in some way to the opportunities and barriers, the enablements and constraints, 'afforded' to us by our circumstances in order to act 'into' them. This grasp, this sensitivity of what is 'afforded' us by our circumstances is what I mean by 'knowing of a third kind.' (1993b, p. 6)

Through careful attention to and conversation about familiar phenomenon we are afforded the opportunity to "push our intuitions" and "to deepen and expand them, to examine and rethink them" (Wenger, p. 7). From this perspective what has been referred to as 'the unconscious' is the 'unperceived and under-spoken.' Information available directly from the phenomenal field remains 'unconscious' or in the 'taken for granted' in the absence of this 'knowledge through engagement'. In contrast, through this form of knowing leadership tunes in to and activates a collective or 'distributed intelligence' and 'feels out' a workable consensus through dialogue and interaction rather than imposes a pre-digested agenda.

Narrative Dimensions of Leadership

> *I recall a challenge from a contemporary poet. "Describe your daily activities in terms that a 6-year-old would understand." Well, I thought, I talk on the phone, write on the computer and attend meetings at which I talk some more. Occasionally I draw pictures on big sheets of paper.*

In this sense, "dialogue is the basic unit of work in an organization" (Charan, 2006, p. 110). The coherence required for materialization is achieved in part, through dialogue. From a narrative point of view the stories that we generate and rehearse in the form of our inner dialogue and share with one another in the incessant stream of discourse in which we are all engaged predisposes and gives shape to the realities that we experience. Conversation is, in this sense, the 'inner lining' of praxis and, at the same time, our access to agency. It is possible through reflection and dialogue to adjust our attitudes, conceptual frameworks and, at the edge of action, our choices and, thereby, to

make meaning making meaningful, because it matters.[24] Leadership, from this perspective, serves as a focal point or 'nominal centre' for a set of transactions or conversations on behalf of the manifestation and maintenance of social forms. Strands of on-going dialogue are woven together, shaped and added to, beginning as dispositions and predilections, becoming thoughts that are prized and actions that signify and showing-up eventually as initiatives, policies and procedures. They invite 'followership' based on their familiarity and value rather than through inducement or compunction. "To be justified in their authoring, the good manager must give sharable linguistic formulation to already shared feelings, arising out of shared circumstances" (Shotter, 1993b, p. 150). Certain themes reflecting the collective best intentions of the group are attended to and nurtured and in being nurtured and attended to take form. We create or 'articulate into form' the environments we subsequently experience.

Generative dialogue requires of leadership a special kind of openness through which influence is exercised by a willingness to be influenced (Hegelsen, 1996, p. 6). Entailed is a capacity to set aside well formed agendas and images in order to "get in touch with" and give voice to "vague feelings" to which changing circumstances give rise (Shotter, 1993b, p. 155). A poetic sensibility, more precisely sensitivity to language is an asset, though it is by no means required of leaders to be poets. To extend this point further, leadership must reflect a capacity to get lost, to stare 'into the distant blue' and

[24] The distinction that I am making here is between constructions of meaning that are procedural and *pro forma* versus constructions that are vital and generative.

face the unknown (Solnit, 2005, p. 5). In dialogical terms this is the silence that makes listening possible and invites others and the phenomenal world to speak (Hoffman, 2002, p. 174). This silence reflects the not-knowing that makes knowing possible and a disorientation that makes new possibilities believable (Dylan, 2004, p. 71).

Leadership nurtures themes by recognizing, reiterating and providing occasions for their re-telling in manifold ways. Asking questions is one means of nurturing themes and one that has been highly evolved in constructionist influenced therapies (White 1990, p. 17) and more recently applied in organization development work (Anderson, 1997; Campbell, 2000). Appreciative Inquiry is a question asking practice that reflects congruent assumptions (Hammond, 1996; Hammond & Royal, 1998). Appreciative Inquiry assumes, for example, that among the multiple realities possible at any given moment whatever we focus on become the increasingly the most prominent. There is evidence for many possible futures. The questions that are asked and how they are asked influences the tone of the dialogue and ultimately, what is manifest. Focus is achieved through question asking. Appreciative Inquiry further takes the position that in every situation something is working and that asking questions about what is working forms the most helpful basis for developing plans for the future. We have the most confidence in what we have experienced as viable and we find attention to our successes energizing (Hammond, 1996, p. 20-21). To summarize, the Appreciative Inquiry approach (Hammond, 1996; Hammond & Royal, 1998; Srivasta & Cooperrider, 1999) is based on appreciating and valuing 'what is' as a step in the direction toward 'what might be' and a way to promote dialogue about 'what should be'. Appreciative Inquiry assists in moving

participants into the future with confidence and optimism by focusing on 'what is working' as a means of recognizing the value of current work.

> *Dispirited by cutbacks and by the divisiveness that ensued between competing agencies the leadership of a professional community recently employed my wife and professional colleague, Mary, and me to assist them in 'getting back on track.' Over two days we hosted a conversation between over 40 service providers and administrators.*[25] *On the first day using an Appreciative Inquiry approach we elicited a set of 'stories' about collaboration between personnel of the various agencies and government bureaucracies. Manifold, rich and inspiring these stories, previously in the 'background', were 'told' in small groups and then recounted to the group as a whole. They then, became the basis for imagining further collaboration in the form of, what are referred to in Appreciative Inquiry as, 'provocative propositions.' Less definitive and more open ended than recommendations, 'provocative propositions' are designed to evoke further dialogue. On the second day, three months after the first and using a particular a conversational practice known as 'reflecting teams'* (Andersen, 1991) *we explored the numerous instances of collaboration that had been imagined and subsequently transpired.*
>
> *During the initial workshop a women representing a group wishing to establish community services for gay, lesbian and bi-sexual youth came forward and expressed her hopes for collaboration with community agencies. At the follow-up workshop three months later she told a remarkable story. She had in fact developed a flourishing support group for gay, lesbian and bi-sexual youth housed at one of the large agencies. So popular had this group become that it had attracted numbers of 'straight' youth as well. On Halloween evening three of the group members were suicidal. Fearing that this would end the group's credibility with staff of the larger organization, in desperation this community worker nevertheless reached out for their assistance. They offered it willingly, effectively and supportively. The youth were helped and the community worker was deeply touched.*[26]

[25] Over 100 people attended a recent follow-up.

[26] A further irony in the context of this hopeful outcome was that all of this took place in a community that has sometimes been known for its intolerance. While telling this story at the follow-up workshop the community worker disclosed that, based on this incident and many other similar and supportive developments, the community had become known among workers as a model of tolerance.

Part of what is powerful about these approaches is their capacity to catalogue the previously un-catalogued and enter it into the discourse of the day. In this respect it is worth taking note of the distinction between the spoken and written word. We accord the written word special status perhaps based on its relative permanence in relation to the spoken word (White, 1990, p. 33). I have found the appreciative communication of concrete particulars in writing particularly helpful. In the recent round of annual staff evaluations, for example, I wrote a personal letter to supplement the usual forms. The letter expressed appreciation for specific developments and accomplishments, as well as identifying my perception of the person's challenges in the future. Influenced by Appreciative Inquiry, the framework for dialogue was an appreciation on my part of what had been working in the person's performance of their work.

Ethical Stewardship

> *One day I asked my elderly friend, Professor Gao, what he felt was the most important quality of good leadership.*
> *He replied, "Honesty."*
> *I asked him what he felt was the second most important quality.*
> *He replied, "Honesty."*
> *I asked him what he felt was the third most important quality.*
> *He replied, "Honesty."*

In environments in which people feel strongly connected to one another, people are less inclined to harm one another and others. In fact, an implication of the view that I am articulating is that doing harm relies on getting out of touch with others and, in extreme forms, depersonalizing others (Rorty, 1998, p. 173). This does not, however, eliminate sticky moments, dark shadows and wrongdoing. It is a significant custodial

function of leadership to face these situations, speak about them honestly to all those involved and take action when required. Somebody has to be the back catcher on the baseball team, even though it is the most dangerous and least rewarding position. Somebody has to clean-up the pots after the party. This is an aspect of what I mean by ethical stewardship. From a social and communal perspective a major consideration in responding to ethical issues is restoring relationships and repairing the fabric of the community. Dialogue, negotiation, apology and dispute resolution are major activities in addition to the interpretation and application of codes of conduct and ethical standards (Ross, 1996).

Frequently it is the case that the social worlds that we inherit are not reflections of our best intentions. They fall short of our hopes and aspirations and, at times, violate our sense of justice and fair play. Manifestation and intentions are at odds. We recognize a preferred 'world' by its absence. It is this 'absent, but implicit' that informs us and within the 'implicit' awaits the seeds of purposive change (White, 2000, p. 35). The implicit, in this context, is our collective and 'in the background' storehouse of alternate experiences and accounts. These accounts provide us with specific, but often forgotten and sometimes overlooked evidence for our sensibilities, or more precisely, they are the scaffolding upon which our sensibilities are based.

> *I recall working with a family in which the father was distressed for some very good reasons about his fathering of his three children. In our conversations, his self-examination tended to be dominated by feelings of despair based on his own impoverished family history, and despite his disappointment, there was little evidence of change. I asked him about the ideas upon which his negative evaluation of himself was based. He spoke*

> *of some very obvious things such as his conviction that fathers should provide firm and loving guidance to their children in reliable and non-violent ways and that fathers should teach their children about the world; all of this in contrast to his past and current behaviour. I asked him, given his problematic history, where these ideas had come from. He took a long time in answering, and I almost gave-up and asked another question. Then he recalled a period of his childhood when he had a particular friend. He and his friend would go over to the friend's place most days after school. They would be greeted by the friend's father who was a physician with a practice in a separated off section of the family home. He would take an hour off his practice to be with the boys, often hosting them in his medical office, showing them the world through his microscope and exemplifying in word and actions the above qualities. My client's mood changed as he described these experiences, and a remarkable transformation began to take place based in his relationship with his children in the days that followed.*

In situations in which we are dissatisfied we often express a myriad of reasons, in many instances, valid reasons. But as valid as these expressions are and as important as it is that they are witnessed, while they are being expressed the door to the implicit remains closed by the 'de-contextualized ideal'. What I mean by the 'de-contextualized ideal' is 'shoulds and musts' that are disconnected from the context in which they originated and, especially, from the specifics of the situation above which they hover. A symptom of this pressure is the tendency of such conversations to slip into political and historical territories outside the span of control of the participants. The emotional coordinates of this slippage are frustration and boredom.

In a very helpful manual entitled, *The Art of Focused Conversation*, the author observes that problem-solving in group contexts often devolves into complaining about issues over which persons have no control (Stanfield, 2000, p. 14). We have all experienced such conversations. We are lead into such cul-de-sacs through habitual

patterns of discourse and also by the misleading constructions upon which they are based. When we say, "Why doesn't City University offer more generous benefits to its faculty?," we attribute agency to something that does not exist 'in itself' and, therefore, cannot have an attribute such as generosity. In such conversations an entity, in this case 'City University', is used as a descriptor of a complex set of relationships. When we construct a set of relationships as an entity, we reify a work in progress in which, to some extent or another, we have hands in creating. We take a dialogical short cut in order to express something like 'those with the most decision-making power in the academic world in which I am currently living accord less benefits than I would prefer.' If we forget that the short cut is just that and accord it implicitly an ontological status, we are bound to experience frustration and powerlessness. This is not to suggest that the injustices that we experience do not exist, but it is to unmask a source of injustice and to afford us an opportunity to examine operations of power more clearly in the relational contexts in which they are in evidence. Paul Hawken makes precisely this point in his analysis of the irresponsibility of many present day corporations. In late 19th Century, the "due process" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in the United States was reinterpreted by the judiciary to give corporations the same rights as individuals (Hawken, 1993, p. 107). Conglomerates with vast resources and institutional power were afforded the same legal protection as the poorest individual. The result has been an imbalance in power in relation to society as a whole and a litigious commercial culture. Prior to these development corporations were very closely regulated by state legislatures in terms of their social and environmental obligations to the people of the state.

Perhaps more importantly, 'the construction of an entity that does not exist' is equally obscured when we construct our position in relationships as representing an organization or representing the organization's best interests. We have to imagine that the organization has best interests in order to speak this way. In the end the organization is a shared story, a rumour, a myth, a set of relatively enduring reifications shaping and coordinating a set of activities. To think otherwise distracts us from the immediacy of our relationships with others and the everyday immanence of the benefit and harm that arises as a result of the way in which we treat one another. This is one of the factors contributing to the outsourcing of ethics in organizations.[27] Moral allegiance is constructed in relation to abstractions and in the dark of the night abstractions collapse. We lose sight of our own hands and find ourselves 'out of touch' with the empathy or 'sentimentality', to return to an earlier point, that brings care and concern alive in our relationships.

> *We rarely wake-up in the morning and say to ourselves, or others, "Today I would like to be a part of creating a truly boring and stultifying educational institution, one that features toxic interpersonal relationships and adds to the suffering of the world."*[28]

We would truly like to contribute to the illumination of our students; we would like to work in harmony and good health together; we would like to feel that we will leave situations the better for our having participated in them. Given the occasion to

[27] Though I had initially intended this comment about the outsourcing of ethics in a metaphorical way, it is now a trend in the corporate world to actually outsource ethics. A company specializing in ethics is retained by the organization and employees and customers are directed to report any transgressions that they witness to this company.

articulate on what experiential basis we would like the situation to be different, the door opens and often an astounding degree of agreement is revealed. Our hopes and aspirations are seldom solely ideological, but appear so in the absence of questions which evoke their origins in experience. When we ask in what contexts they arose, we encounter accounts of other situations and relationships in which they have been enacted; stories in which they have been embodied; groups and organizations in which the have been exemplified; and biographies of individuals whose lives have shown the way. And in many instances, in the context of further dialogue, we find evidence of them in our present shared situation.

For the most part, people want to do good work and maintain high standards of ethical conduct (Wheatley, 2005, p. 67). For example, people choose occupations like teaching because of clusters of values and aspirations in common. Gathered together in a school district or university they do not need to be infused with these qualities. They need to be offered an opportunity to give voice to them, negotiate differences, and come to know them further in their embodiment. Disseminating from the top or promoting from the centre risks inadvertently contradicting what is desired by all and pre-exists in as yet to be fully manifested forms. An egocentric or, in organizational terms a 'leader-centric' view blocks this acknowledgement and the realization of these implicitly negotiated and collectively held intentions. The alternative is to identify, give in to and cultivate what is already there.

[28] This is a variation of a point made by David Gregson in the Tao of Sobriety (2002, p. 13).

Recognizing the Genius of the Other

A social and communal view, in the terms in which we have been developing it, recognizes a 'distribution of value' across the network of persons of which an organization is composed. Leadership is more of a centre of dialogue than a site of the greatest concentration of value. Vision, competence and intelligence are understood to be widely distributed throughout the organization rather than concentrated at the centre. As leaders and followers, we are participants in a pattern in common, never quite being subsumed by it and knowing more of the whole only by our reflections of it to one another. In the other's eyes we see what lies behind us, from whence we came, but rely on nevertheless for our presence. Through the other's questions and responses the implicit becomes explicit. We come to know the taken-for-granted through others. We are preserved thereby from the dominance of a single transcendental consciousness and any particular person's claim to be a representative of it and can continue to be of vital and three-dimensional interest to one another and learn from our differences. To borrow a phrase from Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoevsky's novels, organizations contain a "plurality of unmerged consciousnesses that are not subordinated to unified authorial intentions" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 122). The door to the other's 'genius' opens through the connection afforded by a relational stance. Listening well, asking questions, respecting the dignity of others, and giving away power flush out the multiple gifts available in any group or organization. Through safe and appreciative patterns of discourse, a cauldron takes form into which flows generative ideas and enabling metaphors.

A pragmatic dimension of the distribution of value is beautifully illustrated by the early days of robotic research. Following then dominant models of both organizations and the CNS, researchers designed models specifying the transmission of input from the periphery (feet and hands, if you will) to a central decision-making unit that would interpret this information, make decisions and in turn transmit output commanding various actions at the periphery. The result was paralysis and incapacity, robots unable to carry out simple tasks even with some very sophisticated wiring.[29] Enter the development of servo-mechanisms, the major principle of which is the downloading of the greatest proportion of decision-making to the closest point of contact with the external environment. The result is semi-independent 'feet' etc. and a workable model capable of complex tasks. In this model the central processing unit serves an integrative and supportive function. 'Intelligence' is widely distributed throughout the system and the centre is playing a coordinating rather than directing role. What is supplied by the centre is less control than information. In the context of organizations this also reflects a different set of assumptions about motivation. The capacity to experience concern for the wellbeing of the system as a whole is also seen as distributed. To return to an earlier point, 'high reliability organizations' reflect a shifting configuration of decision-making or 'coordinate leadership' in which formal hierarchy collapses and situational 'expertise' is sought (Weik & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 75). What are required from leadership are

[29] This replicated a difficulty initially experienced in the development of computational systems. The use of a single central processing unit to which and from which all data flowed resulted in a traffic jam known as the "Von Neumann bottleneck" that severely limited available computational power. Networks of smaller semi-autonomous units such as PCs or adopting the networking principle within larger units were the ways that this limitation was overcome (Beairsto, 1997, p. 57).

recognition and responsiveness rather than direction and control. 'Giving way' on the identified leader's part involves allowing decision-making to follow seams of expertise, experience and inspiration in the organization. It contrast to traditional patterns of delegation, influence, credit and accountability follow decision-making rather than stick at the site of formal leadership.

Important innovations often originate at the periphery where current customs and prejudices are least enforced and institutional habits entrenched. "Small events percolate through obscure places by happenstance and random encounters, triggering a multitude of individual decisions, each made in the absence of any grand plan, yet aggregating somehow into a momentous event unanticipated by anyone, including the actors themselves" (Watts, 2003, p. 52). The periphery is where the organization encounters its environment most directly, where the transactions between inside and outside are most fervent (Hegelsen, 1996, p. 20).

> *Over a 4-year period, the Counselling Psychology program, of which I had been the director, expanded from 6 students in Canada to over 300; from one program in Vancouver to four programs across two provinces; from virtually unknown to pre-eminence. It is recognized by many practitioners and organizations for its capacity to educate competent, compassionate and ethical practitioners. A number of Canada's best-known practitioners, including psychiatrist, Robin Routeledge and Island therapist, Dr. Allan Wade, have participated in its development. Interns and graduates are in demand at many major service-providing agencies. This took place in the context of an organization that itself was undergoing a rapid transition and, at one point, was on the verge of collapse. Yet, this development took place at its periphery.*

Strategy

I have been exploring the role of leadership in the context of the ways in which an organization's future materializes. One of the most common ways in which organizations attempt to create the future is strategic planning and, as such, it is useful in aligning intentions and providing goals towards which to strive. It is typically orchestrated by the organization's leadership in an effort to supply coherence to use a concept that I introduced at earlier point. Frequently, however, strategic planning becomes an elaborate exercise in organizational 'self-consciousness', oriented to the organization's bureaucracy and leadership rather than to its operational environment (Weik & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 53). While the organization maps its future actions and marshals its resources, the world that it assumed it was 'acting into' changes and those changes only become apparent in the course of its interactions with them. The world does not pause awaiting our analysis, particularly in the present era in which the rate of change has accelerated. An attachment to 'in advance', formal strategy puts us 'in touch' with our expectations and 'out of touch' with the environment. The cost is a reduction in the *mindfulness* that is critical to 'reading' the environment around us (Weik & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 83). A measure of relevance is the extent to which the strategic plan plays a significant part in the discourse of the day in the organization 6 months after it has been formulated. Accordingly, strategy needs to be formulated as we move along and not before; or 'just in time' as Wheatley notes, citing Karl Weik (1999, p. 39). Strategy needs to be simple, flexible enough to respond to the ever-changing world and to be connected directly to decision-making (Mankins & Steele, 2006, p. 80). It is important in shaping its future for

the organization to clarify and align its intentions and to cultivate sensitivity and responsiveness to the operational environment on an ongoing basis. In this way the organization evolves a capacity to respond to its changing circumstances. Sensitivity and responsiveness are enhanced by viewing change as ongoing and inevitable, staying in touch with the operational activities of the organization and welcoming all forms of feedback, pleasant and unpleasant. In my experience, a 'textural sensitivity' to the environment obtained through activities such as 'walking around' complements the 'actuarial sensitivity' we cultivate through collecting critical operational data. In terms of data, timeliness and simplicity are important features.

Ideally, the role of leadership is to provide an inclusive frame of reference through which the group or organization's collective best intentions can be expressed and materialized in relation to the concrete particularities of its shared situation in the context of conversations such strategic planning, but, by no means exclusively in such conversations. We owe no special allegiance to leaders beyond their capacity to act as a site at which such intentions are articulated and expressed. At the same time this adjustment in our view of leadership protects leaders from the resentment that arises from unrealistic expectations. When the 'too much' that a more hierarchical view of leadership invites us to invest in leaders fails to pay dividends we are bitterly disappointed. Leaders are neither masters nor gurus. They are but a contrivance of motion and hinges that enable doors to flex, we discover, but are reluctant to acknowledge. Reluctant because we had perhaps hoped that someone or something would save us from our collective responsibility to create the world that we long for.

In the same way that each person must provide himself or herself with an operational sense of continuity or an 'identity' of sorts as a basis of giving meaning to his or her endeavours and performance, so it is the case with organizations. The problems of meaning, impetus and coordination must be solved and this is what we colloquially refer to as the role of leadership. The problem arises, as it does in our individual lives, when we construct this requirement in absolute rather than relative terms, endow this centrality with more than it can contain and de-contextualize it in a way that mystifies it in theory or in practice. What is 'diminished' in this analysis is not leadership, but the self-importance of leadership.

To review briefly the movement in this chapter, I have attempted to more fully describe the role of leadership from a social and communal point of view by way of more firmly establishing it as an alternative to leader-centric approaches. This led to imagining some of the features of leadership as it might be practiced with these ideas in mind. I entitled this practice 'creating environments of administrative sanity.' The practice, as I constructed it, incorporates a different way of knowing, a narrative or dialogical dimension, an alternative notion of ethics referred to as ethical stewardship, a renewed sense of the 'other' in the context of leadership and a reformulation of the role of strategy. In the following chapter I consider how persons and organizations might be educated on behalf of bringing forward this kind of leadership practice.

CHAPTER 4.

Leadership Education

> It is not enough for a painter like Cezanne, an artist, or a philosopher, to create and express an idea; they must also awaken the experiences that will make their idea take root in the consciousness of others.
> (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 19)

Having viewed leadership as less centralized and understanding it as more oriented to relationships and to the social and communal world in which it is embedded, this chapter offers some initial speculation about what the education and training of leaders might look like as a consequence. In agreement with the Canadian management scholar and theorist Henry Mintzberg, I argue that there is no way to educate leaders outside the performance of leadership (Mintzberg, 2004). At the same time, I suggest that experience of leading and following is widespread in our personal biographies and that an examination of our experiences of the phenomenon of leadership over our life histories should form the initial basis of educating leaders. Leadership development, from this perspective, "has more to do with surfacing one's emerging leadership tendencies than with introducing particular skills that constitute someone's list of leadership qualities" (Raelin, 2003, p. 40). In addition to this phenomenological foundation, the program that I propose affirms the reflective and 'mind training' requirements of leadership and its dialogical and poetic focus. I have also incorporated some thoughts about the spiritual,

emotional and physical health of leaders. Finally, consistent with a more social and communal view of leadership, I suggest that organizations should be educated about leadership and present some initial ideas about how this might be accomplished.

Learning about Leadership Based on the Experience of Leadership

The practice of leadership is complex, subtle and, as I have indicated earlier, specific to particular situations. The particular skills and knowledge required of leadership in one era are less relevant in another. What qualifies as leadership practice, in one situation, obstructs it in another. As is the case with many complex social practices it is difficult to encapsulate the learning required in abstract or categorical terms. A kind of 'social intelligence' is required that fits the style of leadership to the circumstances.

> Leadership and management are life itself, not some body of techniques abstracted from the doing and being. Education cannot pour life experience into a vessel of native intelligence, not even into a vessel of leadership potential. But it can help shape a vessel already brimming with leadership and life. (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 9)

The point is that a particular practice, in this case leadership, can only be enriched by study and reflection when it is underway. In citing Vygotsky, Shotter (1993a, p. 94) makes the point that "...consciousness and control appear only at a later stage in the development of a function, after it has been used and practiced unconsciously and spontaneously." But, from a social and communal point of view, leadership is underway on broader terms than we may have previously anticipated. At different moments and in

different situations, the spotlight of leadership casts its light on many, and in the sequential transactions through which it is enacted, many play a role, including functions traditionally encapsulated by the term 'followership.' In their efforts to contribute to shaping such vessels or the development of such functions educators have a wide range of pre-existing experience from which to draw. Moreover, consciously or otherwise, accounts of formative experiences constitute the 'receiving context' into which future experiences and intellectual frameworks will be read (White & Epston, 1990, p. 148).

> *I have made a similar point in relation to the education of counsellors. Seeing that the basic activity of counselling is conversation I have suggested that students have a wide range of experience from which to learn in refining skills, knowledge and competencies. The conversation in the next booth at the restaurant in which one friend solicits the assistance and advice of the other differs in refinement but not in kind from what takes place in the therapy room. We all have the experience of conversations that are to some degree helpful or otherwise.*

From this perspective, then, the first step in the educations of leaders entails accessing the rich experience of leadership that participants bring to programs about leadership. The second involves creating formats in which participants share their experiences of leadership with one another. We need to prize the experiences of leadership that participants bring with them by asking questions that invite them to describe their experiences of leadership from multiple perspectives, orally and in writing. We need to encourage and assist in the development of their capacity for rich description, and support the renewal of their abilities to tell stories. What have participants found most interesting, thought provoking, challenging or fulfilling about the path of leadership they have walked thus far? At what point did they recognize themselves as leaders, and

what was it that reflected this to them? Who do they feel has contributed most to their practice of leadership and what form do or did these contributions take? Who, among family and friends, would be least surprised to learn of the leadership role they have taken on? To whom or what do they turn to sustain their efforts? To what extent is assuming leadership positions a part of their developmental pathway?[30] The intended result is "...a generous construction of the seen" (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 39) or "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6) in preparation for dialogue and understanding based on the vicissitudes of everyday life rather than on abstractions hovering above it. In addition to providing an experiential referent for future study and reflection, the telling and retelling of these accounts facilitates the formation of a 'community of practice' among the participants. An initial literature providing specific formats for narrative analysis of stories in the context of leadership education has emerged (Danzig, 1999).

'Legitimate Peripheral Participation'

> *Though I was in a state of grief at the recent loss of my mother when our doctoral program in Education Leadership began I still remember the initial joy and satisfaction of meeting with colleagues in our cohort. There was an instant sense of mutual recognition and commonality and an eagerness to share experience and compare notes. The instructors imposed an academic template with some degree of sensitivity and provided ample opportunity for interaction. Though implicitly, for the most part, the celebration of this commonality continued to be very sustaining throughout the coursework.*

[30] The Coda at the end of this chapter incorporates my personal responses to the some of above questions.

Over the past 15 years, a literature about learning, particularly in relation to complex professional activities, has evolved that emphasizes learning as a social and cultural phenomenon in which the outcome is understood to represent a shift in the socio-cultural identities of participants and changes in their membership or degree of membership in communities of practitioners (Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 2002; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). A 'community of practice' is a group of people, inside or outside an organization, who find value in relating to one another on an ongoing basis about a specific topic(s), and in so doing, evolve knowledge together. They generally share concerns about particular sets of problems or a passion about a definable topic (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). Electrical engineers working with high voltage systems across a number of corporations might form a 'community of practice'; it is similar with addictions counsellors in a large agency and educators sympathetic to a particular view of education. Communities of practice generally form themselves reminiscent of the 'autopoetic' process referred to above. Ongoing communication, face-to-face and online, takes place and informal leadership emerges. Qualifying for membership often entails an introduction, and typically involves learning the language, lore and customs of the community. In addition to the mastery of conceptual frameworks and the demonstration of certain skills, it requires a familiarity with the taken-for-granted or 'tacit knowledge' (p. 9) of the community. Consistent with some earlier points in relation to the 'empirical details of everyday transactions', this tacit knowledge or 'knowledge of the background' has become 'subconscious' and is performed by members of communities 'instinctively' (Wenger, 1998, p. 47). This kind of knowledge does not lend itself to the dissemination

of abstract frameworks, but more to conversation, storytelling, coaching and 'learning by example.' It points to a journey over time that resembles apprenticeship and is referred to as 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1998). Successive intellectual, linguistic and social refinements take place as a person moves from neophyte or prospective practitioner to full membership in a community of practice. Alternatively, it may entail successive elevations in a status in a community of practice. This marks a shift in thinking in which the phenomenon of learning is considered as fundamentally a socio-cultural phenomenon. It cannot be separated from or placed outside participation in the social world of the practice and must provide means of participation in the community of practice appropriate to the status and capacity of the learner.

> *At a certain point I was eager to join the community of 'jazz listeners.' As a musician myself I sensed its energy and originality. But I was unable to listen to it. It seemed overly complex, disparate and intense. I missed the lyricism of folk and rock. Late one night, a musician friend dropped by and proposed that we go to a jazz club. It was packed, smoke-filled and alive. A blind white guy wailed on a horn backed by a black pianist and bassist. The predominantly black audience moved with the urgent rhythms of the trio, and when the horn player hit the high point of phrases they called out comments like 'yeh' or 'you got it' and I just started to 'understand'.*

Modified forms of participation in this view open the practice to learners. Such forms make peripheral participation in the community of practitioners possible at a very early stage of learning in somewhat the same way that apprenticeship did in the past. The learner's limited competence does not preclude conditional membership in the community. Dialogue between seasoned practitioners and new learners about specific situations exemplifies this approach. At later points, forms such as internships reflect

further movement along the continuum of participation. These forms of participation provide learners with access to current members, the ways in which they currently negotiate the enterprise and the repertoire of practice and knowledge in use (Wenger, 1998, p. 100). It enables learners to get a 'feeling' for how things are done.

> A colleague, who is a University President, described an enormously generative context during his tenure as a Vice-President of a university. Emphasizing that it was "the best time in my professional life", he referred to the daily 8 am to 9 am meetings of senior administrators facilitated by the President that, from his perspective, galvanized a highly effective team. The two key factors that evolved in the context of these meetings were trust and respect. In addition, it was a context that shaped many other careers as well. "All of us in the team went on to be quite successful in various institutions around the country." Three of the five key participants became Presidents of universities in their own right.[31]

The idea is to align the education of leaders with how we learn practices such as leadership; the objective, as Wenger has noted, is "epistemological correctness" (Wenger, 1998, p. 100). I have had some direct experience in relation to this issue from which I learned a great deal. With very humble beginnings as I noted above, I was part of a team that created and developed a highly successful Masters level program in Counselling Psychology, a program that is widely regarded as on the best of its kind in Canada.[32] Designed for current and prospective practitioners, it is exclusively taught by practitioners supported by administrative staff with overall academic oversight provided

[31] M. Easton (personal communication, spring 2005).

[32] Now in its 10th year, approximately 250 students participate in this program across sites in Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary and, in the near future, Toronto. Interns and graduates are in high demand at major service providing agencies, including the counselling clinics of major universities. Faculty include some of Canada's best known international practitioners and presenters such as Jeff Chang and Allan Wade.

by full time faculty.[33] The concern in developing such models is that successful practitioners are not necessarily good teachers, nor are they in many instances up-to-date in terms of current research findings in the field. Our experience confirms this point. However, we discovered, there is a class of practitioners who can be properly described as 'scholar practitioners' who are excellent instructors and are very up-to-date in their specialty areas. They often have extensive experience in giving workshops and presenting in public contexts such as conferences. We support their efforts, not by teaching them to be instructors, but by providing an enlivening collegial environment including arranging for visiting international presenters to offer workshops and participate in informal discussions at the university. While learning conceptual frameworks and mastering basic competencies students associate with pre-eminent practitioners, locally and internationally and are thereby afforded the 'legitimate peripheral participation' referred to above on an ongoing basis. Subsequently, students participate in internships in the community, but their participation in the professional community has been ongoing along with their studies. In fact, students in this program are highly sought after in both internship and employment contexts. The feedback is that students in this program 'already know how to do therapy.' From a broader perspective, this approach contributes to the professional community by 'feeding in' the concerns, insights and fresh perspectives of students, and by demanding that senior practitioners take a reflective stance in relation to their practice in order to be able to systematically communicate it to

[33] It is important to note that this program does not see itself as well equipped to prepare students who wish to pursue a career in research in academic contexts. This is explicitly stated.

others. The point of these observations is that, like Counselling Psychology, Education Leadership can be understood as a 'community of practice.'

In addition, it is worth highlighting the usefulness of the cohort model in this context. As the literature on situated cognition has anticipated, a critical component of the learning process becomes the learning between members of the cohort (Brown & Duguid, 1993), and this, in turn, is consistent with the principle of 'distributed value' articulated above. The cohort becomes in itself a community of practice within a larger community of practice as members are called upon to share instances of their present and emerging practice. In addition to its value in enhancing the available pool of accounts of relevant practice issues, this sharing contributes to the texture of connection that is evolving in the group.

The Uses of Philosophy

Should we move on with all due haste to an exploration of the tools of the trade, the existing technology of strategic planning, financial analysis, human resource management and so forth, having called forth descriptions, accounts and stories of the phenomenal world? After all for leaders and construction workers alike there are things that need doing. No doubt it is tempting and professional schools in a variety of fields exemplify this technocratic or instrumental approach (Mintzberg, 2004).

Why consider philosophy when there is so much to be done? In philosophy we find a history of discourse in which the assumptions upon which our performance of life

and vocation are exposed, considered and debated. In the absence of disciplined reflection this vast and influential infrastructure remains invisible, its coordinates leaving us convinced that our way of seeing is 'how the world is' rather the poetics of a social and cultural world. In so doing our 'subconscious' is encumbered with preconceptions and our attention is governed by the past rather than being free to move in the present. Though philosophy is a work in progress with no final conclusion, it is a conversation worth entertaining. At its best it inspires us to evolve integrative frameworks of our own while providing us by example with some of the means of doing so. The key is the establishment of a basis for deciding what to do under what circumstances more than it is the mastery of specific and discrete technologies (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 39). On a moment-to-moment basis, our decisions have consequences for our wellbeing, that of others, the world around us and our personhood or identity is shaped in the process. From Taylor's perspective, we find ourselves navigating our lives within pre-existing and culturally given moral frameworks that demand of us 'strong evaluations' from the outset, and on an ongoing basis. The strengthening of such evaluations contributes to the evolution of a robust identity and requires awareness and articulation. We find ourselves, to give it a more phenomenological cast, as 'having to make choices' or take a stand (Taylor, 1989, p. 27), even though we may not be aware of the picture of the 'good' upon which they are based. By implication, the role of education becomes providing leadership with the means of exercising such choices 'consciously', that is by reference to an explicit picture of the 'good' or nameable and describable sets of values. This is the one of the primary roles of education and one of the tasks of philosophy in particular; that is to enhance our

capacity to refine our evaluations and, perhaps over time, to contribute to the evolution of the frameworks upon which they are based. In macroscopic terms this represents the procreation, maintenance and reinvention of culture and arguably the promotion of the reflective and dialogical skills upon which democracy is based (Gutman & Thompson, 1996).

The multicultural cross currents of the post-modern era enable the meeting of systems of thought and practice that have developed in relative isolation from one another for centuries. Inasmuch as these encounters have complicated the project of identity formation and infused the social world with ambiguity, they have also made possible a profound examination of the human journey from widely varying perspectives (Gergen, 1991). What conclusions in common have been reached? What differences stand out? And in what ways can these systems enrich and invigorate one another? There is an unparalleled opportunity to learn from one another and, on behalf of peace in the world, an urgent necessity to do so.

As long as the ideas that form us remain invisible, we operate blindly, stumble along, rely on bumping into things to learn and find ourselves unwittingly subject to current trends in the taken-for-granted; 'blown by the winds of karma', to use a colloquial Buddhist expression. Philosophy represents an incomplete albeit extremely valuable attempt at clarification and a storehouse of formative ideas and conceptual frameworks. One of the concrete applications of philosophy is the development of 'statements of conscious purpose and commitment' (White, 2000, p. 155). White developed this in the

context of assisting therapists in keeping-up with the intentions that drew them to the work in the first place, but a variation of it applies equally, in my estimation, to the education of leaders. Leaders are nominated by others and appointed by events by virtue of their situational capacity to express and bring forth shared aspirations, but they surely find, as therapists do, that the demands and pressures of everyday life, as well as the deterministic frameworks we frequently favour, separate us from an awareness of our purpose. White included 'conscious' in the naming of this practice to underline our capacity to shape our futures as opposed to being driven into them. The statement of conscious purpose, as I have taken it up in my own life and work, identifies what I propose to accomplish and whom it will benefit. Transposing this to the education of leaders I visualize such a statement as an outcome of studies in philosophy. In this way it could reflect some consideration of the ideas of prominent thinkers in the history of our culture as well as a response to the requirements of our times.[34]

The Discourse of Leadership

One of the central tasks of leadership from a social and communal perspective is arriving at a sense of common purpose and agreeing on patterns of action in achieving collective goals. There is an agreed upon association of this 'purposing' activity and the effective performance of organizations.

[34] My current Statement of Conscious Purpose is to contribute to the health of communities through education in the terms envisaged by the constitution of the World Health Organization.

From this point of view leadership is very much a matter of 'divining' and refining what is already there in the intentions and aspirations of those who have elected a journey in common by their participation in various communities of practice and organizations. These intentions and aspirations, though, in some instances 'underperceived' and 'underspoken', are by no means hidden. They are present in the day-to-day traffic and conversation of organization life and are expressed, to some extent, in the range of actions that take place.

If we take at all seriously the idea that we talk ourselves into the future, how we talk to one another at meetings and in the corridors of the workplace is significant and by implication, the patterns of discourse that are prevalent in an organization are of critical importance in the context of leadership. Over the past two decades a number of specific discourse practices have emerged that are congruent with a social and communal approach and are designed to evoke a 'participatory' form of intelligence. These conversational forms alter the structure of discourse and access different kinds of information. Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrrider & Srivastra, 1987; Hammond, 1996), Focused Conversation (Stanfield, 2000; Nelson, 2001), Reflecting Teams (Andersen, 1991) and the Public Conversation Project (Roth, 1999; Herzig, 2001) are examples of these conversational forms. In contrast to many prevalent habits of discourse, Appreciative Inquiry addresses questions to 'what is working' rather than 'problems to be solved.' As I have noted above, it assumes that asking questions about what is working stimulates a more open-ended, energetic and optimistic approach to the future. Moving forward based on the best of what is familiar inspires confidence rather than trepidation.

Equally important, it disrupts habitual ways of thinking and styles of discourse and accesses the collective intelligence of the participants. In the end, Appreciative Inquiry generates a set of 'provocative propositions', akin to recommendations, but with a more hypothetical or contingent emphasis that serve as a basis for further dialogue and ultimately, action. The suggestion, then, is that the education of leaders should incorporate discourse practices that promote and enhance participatory dialogue.

Spiritual, Emotional and Physical Health of Leaders

> Dave Jackson, the President of Jackson Leadership Systems and an Organization Development consultant of 40 years is a lifelong friend colleague and mentor. I worked for him on two different occasions as a beginning professional and we have stayed in touch ever since. In the course of some conversations about a book that he is writing I asked him about the qualities that distinguish sustainable, effective and ethical leadership. He indicated that leaders who succeed in these ways maintain good physical health and evolve means of nurturing their emotional and spiritual health. (Jackson, 2003)

In some ways these issues are traditionally viewed as outside the scope of graduate education and very much a personal matter. It is unlikely, however, that leaders will contribute to the creation of administrative sanity if they are unhealthy in body, mind or spirit. Therefore, I wonder if it would be helpful as a part of the education of leaders to create a reflective space for these issues. I visualize a seminar in which a range of pre-eminent practitioners would share their experiences of working with these significant dimensions of survival and success. In addition, there is a growing literature on the subject that could provide a focus for reflection and discussion. The final objective of the

seminar would be the construction of a 'holistic health care plan' that would serve as a document of reference for participants.

I have avoided referring to the construction above as a 'self-care plan' for two reasons. The first is that, from Buddhist and Qigong points of view, as I have indicated earlier the enhancement of the self is not quite the idea[35]. The enhancement of one's capacity for service is closer to it. This is referred to as the Bodhisattva ideal in Buddhism. Service, by directing attention and giving value to the wellbeing of others, contributes to the practitioner's connection to others and through connection to the practitioner's own wellbeing. The relationship of connection with others and immunological health is well established (McClelland, 1989). The second point recognizes the social and communal nature of leadership. From this perspective the plan should incorporate ideas about the health of teams and working groups. It should also include the families of leaders. The distortion and ultimately loss of family relationships is the hidden and little addressed heartbreak of leadership. As a family therapist and administrator I have witnessed the toll leadership takes on couple and family relationships. We need to explicitly help leaders and their families respond to this issue.

[35] The use of the concept 'self' in this context is similar to the colloquial sense intended by the concept of egocentricity. That which contributes to the over centralization or aggrandizement of the human capacity for continuity and identity is, in the end, counterproductive in this view.

The health care plan evolved in the seminar that I am imagining should include a section on the maintenance of family relationships in the context of leadership.[36]

Educating Leaders

In summary, there are five dimensions from a social and communal perspective that are worth considering in further refining our approach to educating leaders:

1. The description, articulation and sharing of the participants' experiences of leadership.
2. The incorporation of legitimate peripheral participation.
3. The uses of philosophy particularly in reference to ethical issues.
4. The value of alternative discourse practices in learning and in practicing forms of leadership that evoke the participatory intelligence, wisdom and passion of members of the organization.
5. The development of holistic health plans.

More concretely, the initial and foundational courses are entitled Personal Narratives of Leadership and Discourse Practices for Leadership. In the Personal Narratives course participants construct and share with one another personal histories of leadership from childhood to the present. These narratives are descriptive and phenomenological and incorporate experiences of being led as well as experiences of leadership. In small groups participants assist one another in expanding and refining their accounts by addressing variations of the questions identified above, "What values, beliefs

[36] An initial search of the literature suggests that very little has been written about this issue. Again referring to personal conversations with Dave Jackson I want to acknowledge his guidance on this issue. For example, in developing career plans with leaders it is Dave's practice to include spouses and explicitly consider family issues.

or ideas have you found most sustaining as a leader?"; "In what ways have you found them sustaining?"; "Who have you found standing alongside you when you have worked in leadership capacities?"; "In what ways have you found them supportive of your efforts?"; "Who do you think is (or would be) least surprised to see you performing leadership tasks in education today?"; "What qualities have they seen in you all along that she or he would say suited you to leadership work?" Such questions are designed to further illuminate, 'thicken' and substantiate participants' leadership accounts. They are then shared in the public arena of the class as a whole. Each presentation is responded to in the form of a brief and 'on the spot' reflection paper by all members of the class addressing such questions as, "What did you find most interesting, thought provoking or helpful about this presentation?"; "What issues does it bring forward or call forth that you would have an interest in discussing further?"[37] In a subsequent and lengthier document, participants outline their learning from constructing their own leadership account and from hearing those of others. The concluding section of this paper identifies three to five key questions about leadership that will then provisionally guide research, reflection and study during the program. This section and its evolution become a document of reference for the entire course of study.

This, then, is beginning with evoking and re-evoking the participants' backgrounds and inserting and re-inserting individual voices and an emerging 'dialogical

[37] I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to narrative therapeutic practice in the formulation of these sorts of questions (White & Epston, 1989; Epston & White, 1992; White, 2000). As I indicated earlier, my own answers to a selection of these sorts of questions is provided in the form of a Coda at the end of this chapter.

voice', unique to the participants as a group, into the established 'in print' conversation. From a narrative point of view, it provides a personally relevant 'receiving context' for the various and multiple frameworks and practices embodied in the current genre of the field. Consistent with appreciating the 'genius of the other', each participant's voice is programmatically valued from the outset. Side by side with 'cognitive enrichment', the educational process supports the emergence of collegial community.

Each participant's leadership account and key questions are referred to in subsequent courses. Based on an examination of Charles Taylor in a Philosophy of Education course, for example, in what ways are participants' key questions addressed, illuminated or enriched. In relation to the initial narrative what additional experiences are evoked and future horizons glimpsed. Who and what that had 'disappeared', now 'reappears'? In what way are participants' present experience, narratives and practice affected by these studies.

In Discourse Practices for Leadership the four discourse practices referred to above are introduced and practiced. I have some previous experience with this proposal through incorporating Focused Conversation in a City University Masters of Counselling Psychology curriculum for a course entitled 'The Psychology of Work and Organizations'. In addition to designing the curriculum I taught the course on several occasions. The feedback from students, particularly those who were in leadership positions, was very positive.

In summary, this approach emphasizes 'bringing out' the experiential ground in which our perceptions, preference, ideas and habitual ways of responding are embedded and in the context of dialogue and reflection 'bringing forward' historical frameworks and multiple perspectives. In this way praxis is enriched and, in the end, knowledge itself is revitalized by praxis. And in this way also society benefits from the education of senior practitioners.

The Education of Communities about Leadership

As I reflected further on leadership from this more social and communal view it became clear that 'leadership education' should include the education of communities about leadership. An 'organization without a history' or an 'institutionally incompetent' organization, especially in relation to leadership issues, arguably becomes an organization that will experience difficulty in 'finding leadership'.

The temptation is to respond by delivering information about leadership often in the form of workshops or training programs reflecting distillations of the dominant leadership theories of the day. Inasmuch as such information can be helpful, it does not address the requirements and idiosyncrasies of specific situations, factors that directly influence the kind of leadership that would be most helpful. Recognizing that leadership capacity is likely to be present already within the organization, some organizations develop leadership-training programs for promising staff. Again, though such approaches may be helpful, they tend to perpetuate a leader-centric view and do not address the broader issue of educating the organization as a whole.

In the everyday life of groups and organizations people take initiatives, follow through and make things happen both within the framework of expectations provided by the organization and informally within the immediate environs of their working group or community of practice. This is an 'always present' version of leadership, exquisitely attuned to the concrete particularities of given situations and rich in the lore of the organization. Examples of this form of leadership provide a picture of leadership-as-it-is in the organization, leadership tested against the contingencies of the situation and shown 'true' by the materialization of social forms. From a social and communal view, this provides a foundation for further development and elaboration of leadership in the organization. In organizations with troubled or questionable histories of leadership, even at the working group or community of practice level, the 'absent, but implicit', in a sense a variant of the taken-for-granted, offers a source of relevant experience and information. Though instances of preferred leadership may be rare they are inevitably present.

In an educational project of this sort, one designed to educate the community or organization about leadership, the articulation and documentation of such accounts is a possible first step. Systematic dialogue and reflection in relation to these stories result in a rich description of leadership. The 'background' is brought to the foreground and the dispersed nature of leadership is revealed. The community can then ask itself in what ways it would prefer to further extend and evolve its leadership practices. Based on this firm foundation, it can ask itself what can be learned from theories and accounts from other places and other times. It can also develop informed expectations about its own formal and future leadership. Consistent with the notion of 'situated cognition' (Brown et

al., 1988; Lea & Nicoll, 2002), an articulation of the taken-for-granted or the expression of 'tacit knowledge' (Wenger, 1998, p. 47) rejuvenates our sense of wonder about "the fathomless things, events and powers that surround us on every hand" (Abrams, 1997, p. 47) and the organization moves in the direction of becoming a 'learning organization' (Senge, 1990). Appreciative Inquiry, along with its focus on developing 'provocative propositions', in my estimation, is a useful methodology for this kind of research.

Empirical investigation of leadership from a social and communal point of view can be facilitated by emergent science of networks (Watts, 2003, p. 43). Originally based on the mathematics of graph theory, network theory promises to provide a science of connection. Combined with sociology and social psychology, network theory has been used to account for phenomena such as trends and epidemics and more recently, in organizational contexts, for phenomena such as innovation, adaptation and recovery (p. 253). Based on a topography of who is connected to whom under what circumstances the activity of decision-making and movement of patterns of behaviour through groups and organizations can be traced. Through descriptors such as clustering, cascades and phase transitions the social architecture of organizations become visible and, to a certain, extent measurable.

In summary, the focus of this chapter has been on the education of leaders from a social and communal perspective. It emphasizes the integration of learners' experiences of leadership in programs to educate persons about leadership. From a social and communal perspective the reflective, discourse and ethical elements of leadership

practice are the focus. Consistent with a social and communal view the chapter advances the notion that organizations should be educated about leadership.

Coda

What have participants found most interesting, thought provoking, challenging or fulfilling about the path of leadership they have walked thus far?

> *As the scope of the leadership positions I have taken-up has broadened, the issues that are of interest have changed. Initially, the issues were much more self-focused. One of the early challenges was coping with the surprise and disappointment I experienced upon finding out that I was being resented by some persons because I was the leader. It was also disturbing to find out that others were seeing me as arrogant. It took me some time to realize that, in some ways, I was.*
>
> *My early leadership experiences often centred on accomplishing specific goals. For example, as President of the Student Council, the major focus was fulfilling a promise to the electorate to move the prom from the gymnasium to the lawn and cricket club. While Executive Director of a medium sized social service agency specializing in work with children and families, a dominant theme and one that cut across many other issues was to shift the philosophy and practices from an individual to systemic focus. At this point, as Director of Canadian programs for a University with headquarters in Seattle, I experience myself as pursuing multiple agendas. There are some thematic consistencies, such as the educational value of the scholar/ practitioner model and the pursuit of equity and fairness, but diverse and at times conflicting agendas relating to the interests of differing communities of practice within the broader community such as the Canadian faculty and the administration of the institution as a whole, students and faculty, enrolments and quality of education. Relating to this diversity is the challenge of sorting through vast amounts of information, e-mails, web sites, policy statements, budgets, incoming mail, etc.*
>
> *Increasingly the question of interest is what is of benefit to the health, harmony and material wellbeing of members of the community, the community as a whole and the present and future society? Many sub-texts flow from this larger question, such as to what extent and how should the Canadian region respond to the needs and desires of international*

students? Perhaps more importantly, what frame of reference can I use to help in deciding these issues?

A couple of realizations arising in the context of responding to this question: a great deal of my leadership efforts have been 'revolutionary', in the narrow sense of the word. They have been aimed at overthrowing an existing order or establishing an alternative vision. I would give myself good marks for creativity, but poor marks for appreciating and understanding what it takes to sustain an existing and benevolent order. Throughout I have paid a lot of attention to social ritual from the prom at high school to the annual dinner at City University.

At what point did they recognize themselves as leaders and what was it that reflected this to them?

As a graduate student intern at a Drug and Alcohol Drop In and Counselling Centre I noticed a phenomenon that has repeated itself on several occasions. Upon learning that the Director of the Centre was sexually involved with one of the clients I challenged him to give-up any involvement with therapeutic work including the supervision of clinical work. At the conclusion of my internship I was appointed Director of Clinical Services. It was a very early point in my career.

In some ways this pattern elevated my confidence and resulted in profound learning opportunities, in other ways, until very recently, it left me moving rapidly forward without earth beneath my feet.

Who do they feel has contributed most to their practice of leadership and what form do or did these contributions take?

There have been multiple contributions beginning with two powerful parents. My mother was a 'discourse expert', a conversationalist and correspondent par excellence, known far and wide for her 'salons'. My father, still very much in the game at 85, is simply indomitable. In retrospect I recognize that the high school administration must have debated long and hard before permitting the prom to be held outside the safe, but prosaic environment of the gymnasium.

As a graduate student I was awarded a second year fellowship, a one of a

kind that afforded me a close relationship to a professor who was a consummate professional in addition to an accomplished academic. From her I learned to be scrupulous in relation to ethical issues and thorough in relation to professional work. Another quality, I can only describe as professional demeanour was also a significant part of this apprenticeship. On two subsequent occasions, during graduate studies and after, I worked with a Toronto organization development consultant, Dave Jackson. Dave became a lifelong mentor and friend. Of mentors, it is said, they recognize qualities in us that we ourselves do not recognize. This was certainly the case with Dave. Very quickly, I found myself on a plane, off to facilitate a meeting of senior executives. I did not imagine that I had the skill to carry off such an assignment, but experience showed me otherwise. There are a couple of additional examples of the effects of this relationship in the body of this document. Overall, Dave's contribution is ongoing and immeasurable. I find often in challenging moments that an 'internal Dave Jackson' is readily available for consultation and support. In a subsequent position, a further mentoring relationship emerged of a different order. This relationship contributed knowledge about the emotional courage that it takes to be the person that we prefer to be.

There are other relationships that have made and continue to make a contribution to my experience and performance of leadership, not the least of which is my wife Mary. Mary is my 'integrity teacher', as well as an incredible emotional support. These reflections have underlined for me the extent to which leadership is a communal project and one that has vertical as well as horizontal dimensions. By vertical, in this instance, I mean inter-generational. We perform leadership with those who are around us and with those who went before.

Who, among family and friends, would be least surprised to learn of the leadership role they have taken on?

There is a matrilineal transmission from grandmother to mother to my wife. All have seen me as a leader or, in the case of my grandmother, potential leader. A staunch conservative all of her life, my grandmother trusted my vision to the extent that she voted for Pierre Trudeau. My mother saw me as an Anglican Priest, her version of which was always a combination of community leader and social worker. I do no think that either woman would have been surprised to see me as a leader in education. Throughout our now 12-year relationship my wife, Mary has always seen me as a leader and in many instances more of a leader than I

have seen myself. Certainly, Dave Jackson made it clear from the outset that he saw me as a leader of the future.

The interesting question is also: What do I think these people saw in me such that they would not be surprised that I am a leader at this point?

Beyond the indulgent perspective of a first grandchild, my speculation is that my grandmother experienced me as persuasive and articulate and believed those to be characteristics of leadership. My mother would have appreciated Charles Taylor and valued in me in relation to leadership compassion and moral clarity. Mary recognized a unique and creative kind of intelligence and my capacity to make things happen in the social world. I know that what Dave saw was creativity, concern for social justice and a commitment to spirituality in the broadest sense.

CHAPTER 5.

A New Paradigm for Leadership

> Education as the practice of freedom – as opposed to the practice of domination – denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relation with the world. In these relations consciousness and the world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it.
>
> (Freire, 1993, p. 62)

In the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* T.S. Kuhn (1973) popularized the idea of a paradigm shift. 'Paradigm shift' describes a cultural phenomenon in which negotiated intellectual agreements among people, and in this case scientists, alter substantively rather than incrementally. Kuhn noted that on occasion in science a change in basic assumptions takes place that results in 'reality' being seen or constructed differently. Extending this view, about 15-years ago, the modernist version of the social sciences experienced what seemed at the time like a hiccup in the form of feminism, constructionist and constructivist thinking. Initially a revision seemed to be what was called for, a broadening and incorporation of perspective, but instead an unravelling and a proliferation have taken place and continue to this day. In part because of innovations in the technologies of transportation and communication and arguably, because of an infusion of ideas that have 'relativized' our understanding of thinking itself, we are

saturated with a multiplicity of perspectives many with vastly different cultural origins (Gergen, 1991). There has been an unprecedented influx of ideas and practices from the East. This is the intellectual and spiritual backdrop of the call for a new paradigm of leadership and my efforts to conceive of leadership anew. In addition, there is a sense that a fresh understanding is needed to support new ways of leading for the next century and beyond.

For our discourse and reflections about leadership to assist us they need to be based on an appropriate epistemology, an epistemology that recognizes the co-emergence of consciousness and the world and our fundamental connection to one another. Our reflections must do justice to our lived experience, respond to what is important to us and consider our willingness to create a better world. An epistemology of this sort, one in which we recognize ourselves, leads to 'ontologically responsible formulations', enriching discourse and, to use a Buddhist term, 'right action.' Kindness and compassion arises naturally from this sort of knowing and with it a pervasive ethicality based on 'sentimentality', that is a 'feeling for the other'. We are concerned about the impact of our actions on others because we feel fundamentally connected to them and because, being inseparable from the consciousness of others, the equanimity of our own state of mind is at stake. Our actions are adjusted in the context of an intimate dialogue with others and with the world. "There is a match between knowing and learning, between the nature of competence and the process by which it is acquired, shared and extended" (Wenger, 1998, p. 101). This is not, in any way, to disavow reason, but to re-situate reason in service of negotiating preferred relationships with one another and the world.

Relationships are 'preferred' when they reflect our best intentions and highest aspirations. The criteria of preferred relationships are self-evident in our experience, evident in our feelings, in the broadest sense, and refined and catalogued by reason; reason is of service, in particular, in resolving competing claims and choosing alternative strategies, but not in creating a 'feeling for' others.

Leadership from this perspective serves as a focal point or 'nominal centre' for a set of transactions or conversations on behalf of the manifestation and maintenance of social forms. Ideally, the role of leadership is to provide an inclusive frame of reference through which the group or organization's collective best intentions can be expressed and materialized in relation to the concrete particularities of its shared situation. We owe no special allegiance to leaders beyond their capacity to act as a site at which such intentions are articulated and expressed. At the same time this adjustment in our view of leadership protects leaders from the resentment that arises from unrealistic expectations. When the 'too much' that a more hierarchical view of leadership invites us to invest in leaders fails to pay dividends we are bitterly disappointed. We are reluctant to acknowledge that leaders are neither masters nor gurus. Reluctant because we had perhaps hoped that someone or something would save us from our collective responsibility to create the world that we long for.

The Significance of the Background (of the Everyday Social and Communal World)

In the context of his study of magic and medicine in Indonesia entitled, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, David Abrams tells a beautiful story of the 'background' (p. 11). While staying at the compound of a Balinese healing practitioner and his family, Abrams noticed that early in the morning the practitioner's wife carried a tray with four small woven platters upon which were small mounds of rice as she delivered a second tray with fruit for his breakfast to his hut on the perimeter of the compound. Upon her return to pick-up his tray, the second tray was empty. Curious, and at respectful distance, the next day Abrams followed her around the perimeter as she dropped off the platters of rice, one for each direction. More curious, he questioned her about the nature of this morning ritual. Her response was that she was making offerings to the household spirits. Thinking that he had uncovered a subtle form of Balinese magic and along with it perhaps, an example of magical thinking, Abrams decided to investigate further. Looking more closely into the background, later in the day he examined the sites at which the practitioner's wife had left rice. At each site he discovered that some time after her departure the rice had gone. Next morning he investigated soon after the rice platters had been deposited and, much to his surprise, noticed that kernels of rice looked as if they were moving from the platter into the surrounding forest on their own accord. Bending down he saw the rice was being carried-off by ants. He, then, realized, that ants were being invited to take their share of the spoils from the perimeter of the compound rather than from its interior. They appeared to accept the invitation

Though the cross-cultural aspect of this example makes the point more dramatically, taken-for-granted abstractions such 'magic', in this case, frequently mislead us. In this particular account, Abrams' allegiance to phenomenology and in particular the work of Merleau-Ponty led him to research the background. His research took the form of setting aside his preconceptions, engaging in further dialogue and looking more closely at activities and interactions in the background. Would we then say that the phenomenon in question was prosaic, rather than spiritual, or might we say that it reflects a more immanent, holistic version of spirituality? Are our feelings about the meaning of our lives diminished or enhanced by such discoveries?

Wenger makes a similar point in his investigations of the seemingly mundane world of claims adjusters (1998, p. 10). It turns out that this world reflects the complexity and elegance of any social world imaginable; in the 'background' of an insurance company's template of structure, policies and procedures teems a world of customs, conversations, conflict, friendships and unique solutions to everyday problems, a world essential to understanding the daily practice of a claims adjuster, a 'community of practice.' In an investigation of a new claims processing form, every bit as patient as Abram's of Balinese 'magic', Wenger uncovers a social and dialogical territory essential to an understanding of how the form is actually employed (Wenger, 1998, p. 35). As the adjusters pointed out, the training in the use of the form offered by the company and the sections in the manual pertaining to it provide some of, but by no means sufficient guidance to engage in the practice of a claims adjuster.

We cannot understand how new programs move from conception to implementation in a university by reading the proposal to the Board of Governors. Studying previous proposals would be helpful, but insufficient for a new administrator to successfully advance a proposal herself/himself. Looking at official procedures and supporting documentation would fill in more, but not enough. Gone would be the phone calls, in the hall conversations, reliance on administrative assistants, late night adjustments and comprises that made it all happen. The new administrator will be able to accomplish complex objectives when she or he is initiated into the community of practice and achieves credible membership, and through membership participation in the everyday rituals of ordinary practice. Then, and only then, do the customs and lore of the background in which are the keys to materialization are embedded become apparent.

Accordingly, I have argued, that an inclusion of the 'background' of the social and communal is necessary in understanding the phenomenon of leadership, especially as it is enacted in any particular situation. As I have noted in reference to dialogue with leaders, the practice of leadership is mysterious to leaders themselves until 'background sensitive' questions about the phenomenon of leadership are asked.

Social Architecture Revisited

How do social forms materialize? What sustains their existence, and what leads to their dissolution or destruction? And what role does leadership play in the architecture of social forms to reiterate questions posed initially in Chapter II?

The materializing catalyst is attention and the medium is discourse. Individually and collectively, internally and externally, discourse shapes the flow of human consciousness impelling the actions that make things happen. The more unimpeded or coherent this flow of consciousness, and the more coordinated and aligned the discourse, the more materializing power that they have from both initiating and sustaining perspectives. What is so compelling about the social and institutional worlds is the 'multiplier effect' of collectively organized attention and discourse. So much can be accomplished when we coordinate our efforts and work in harmony together. From this perspective the current preoccupation in organizational lore with vision, mission and core values is a reflection of this principle. They are rhetorical devices that organize the operation of consciousness and action. This is also consistent with solution and appreciation focused discourse technologies.[38]

In organizational contexts a significant question in relation to materialization (making things happen) is the extent to which a particular organization is an expression of the best intentions of its members. Vision and mission statements and expressions of core values are ways that organizations attempt to address this issue. Frequently, however, the ways in which such statements are arrived at are top/down and 'consultative after the fact' in which case their effectiveness is diminished. This is a limited form of

[38] Appreciative Inquiry was referred to earlier in this text. In therapeutic and organizational development worlds solution focused ideas emanating from the ground-breaking work of Insoo Kim Berg and the late Steve de Shazer circulate widely (1992). In the context of the present conversation one of the major principles is that discourse that evokes a focus on solutions is more generative than discourse that focuses on problems. Greater energy, optimism and flexibility are associated with the former in contrast to the latter.

coherence. Persons have difficulty lending themselves to that which they had no hand in creating. The result is a loss of energy and enthusiasm and, in some instances, interference and resistance. From the perspective of a social and communal view there are two possible successful adjustments. The first and most reliable is to enjoin a genuinely consultative process. Wheatley describes broadly consultative practices in which large numbers of persons from an organization are simultaneously involved (1999, p. 143). The second is to tune into and open-up the community discourse that is 'always already' taking place before and after meetings, in the corridor and on the street, the conversational 'blogs' of community and organization life and to enter questions into this rhetorical matrix on an ongoing basis. Philosophically, this would be to knowingly differ from the assumption that the source of social order is at the top or in personage of the leader. From this perspective, leadership becomes an 'archive of best intentions'. Much less reliable is for persons in leadership positions to evolve their personal best estimate of what they feel the collective best intentions in the situation might be.

There is an assumption in this view that is worth making explicit at this point: Given the opportunity to express, articulate and embody best intentions, such intentions will inevitably consider the welfare of all including the needs of clients and customers. This is a different assumption than the 'original sin' of some versions of Christianity or, in more organizational terms, MacGregor's Theory X. The 'emptiness' or lack of centrality of the experience of interdependence facilitates a 'relational sensitivity' through which persons spontaneously enjoin wishing well to others and towards the whole. Promoting inclusion and belonging makes harm or disadvantage to others less

'thinkable.' This distinction helps to differentiate a Buddhist influenced constructionist view from nihilism and to recognize and affirm that "most people have a desire to love their organizations. They love the purpose of their school, their community agency, their business. They fall in love with the identity that is trying to be expressed" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 57).

One of the key terms in this equation is impediments or the lack thereof. Whatever diverts the members of the organization's attention from the realizations of its collective best intentions constitutes an impediment in this view. On the other hand, whatever focuses attention on such realization promotes the 'flow of materialization'.

Appreciative inquiry and related practices enhance the collective realization of agreed upon ends by asking questions about what is working or inviting persons to articulate experiences in which they felt satisfied, encouraged or proud of their team or organization's accomplishments.

This is different from 'naïve positivism'[39] (Weik & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 55). The criterion is not the 'positive' in terms of a 'new age' ideology, but workability in terms of stated intentions. The role of leadership in this view is facilitating the 'flow of materialization' by hosting conversations that clarify statements of collective aims, plans for their performance and the recognition and acknowledgement of forms that are in

[39] I am using positivism here differently than the general meaning of the term in the context of philosophy. I am referring to the New Age kind of 'let's all focus on the positive' kind of approach.

accord with collective best intentions. Structure or form, then, arises from value, and value is given, first and foremost by attention, a quality that is modulated by gesture, discourse and interaction. Whatever calls this forth will flourish, take shape, fall into place and reflect, albeit temporarily, order and harmony. Though leaders may well participate in making the soup, ultimately their responsibility is the good order of the pots, in this case the attentional and dialogical activities of the organization. This is leadership by hosting conversations and as the group or organization matures it becomes less formative and more custodial.

Social and communal leadership practice results in higher degrees of harmony and coherence. In the presence of such coherence in schools, for example "...instead of worrying constantly about setting the direction and then engaging teachers and others in a successful march (often known as planning, organizing, leading, motivating and controlling), the leader can focus more on removing obstacles, providing material and emotional support, taking care of management details that make any journey easier, sharing in the comradeship of the march and in the celebration when the journey is completed" (Sergiovanni, 1993, p. 43). Keeping the pot clean and celebrating the delicious meal, we might say.

When people gather a pattern, enjoining their best intentions forms and awaits recognition and expression. Sometimes this manifestation of collective 'best intentions' is system wide and sometimes it is dispersed at various sites throughout the organization. A

colleague referred to it in our conversation as a "pleasant little mystery" and described 'it' in these terms:

> There is a kind of...process when it gets started and broadened and it must be broad, it must be genuine and it must be felt as an aspect of community. And then it rumbles on....It grows and nurtures and people come and go and yet you don't lose it....there was a sense of moral necessity to this from the beginning. It wasn't just technique, it wasn't somebody's project, no body owned it, there wasn't anybody seeking grandeur or fame, it wasn't from an expert that blew in and blew out. It came from us and it had a moral quality to it and there was an inevitability that this was the right thing.[40]

Contemporary Leader-centric Views in Education

In the context of Education, preferred theories of leadership have changed frequently (Beck & Murray, 1993). Of particular relevance to this study is the emergence of transformational, facilitative and distributed metaphors of leadership. All of these metaphors depart from the traditional hierarchical view, though none, I will suggest, accomplish the 'ontological shift' that I have advocated.

Based initially on the ground-breaking work of Burns (1978), transformational leadership, as it has been developed in educational settings, emphasizes participative decision-making and 'consensual' or 'facilitative' power (Leithwood, 1992). Vision and goals are collaboratively arrived at in a way that empowers participants and energizes and focuses the learning community (Sagor, 1992). Transformational leaders pursue the three

[40] B. Beairsto (personal communication, spring 2005).

fundamental goals of helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative professional culture; fostering personal and professional development; and helping teachers or instructors solve problems more effectively (Leithwood, 1992). Acting as 'cultural managers', the overriding focus of leaders is on cultivating a specific ethos. In this view, leaders, based on their apprehension of shared values, have a fundamental responsibility in shaping the institution's ethos or culture (Deal & Peterson, 1994). Leaders foster the acceptance of collectively defined goals, communicate performance expectations and model shared values through their own behaviour (Leithwood, 1993). The objective is to provide a unifying sense of purpose and meaning.

Initially, transformational leadership was viewed as very much a quality or capacity of leaders to inspire participation and shape professional cultures (Burns, 1978). In this respect it was a highly leader-centric and heroic view. Over time it was reconceived as a strategy of leadership rather than a quality of the leader, and described as 'facilitative'. David Conley and Paul Goodman (1994) define facilitative leadership as "behaviours that enhance the collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems and improve performance" (p. 379). Similar to transformational leadership, there is an effort on the part of leaders to invite participation and enjoin commitment to agreed-upon ends. Whereas transformational leaders often operate in hierarchical ways, facilitative strategy aims at distributing leadership and embodying democratic ideals (Blasé et al, 1995). Leaders work in the background rather than at centre stage. The emphasis is on building teamwork and creating communication networks. In contrast to the domination through formal authority associated with hierarchical views and, to a certain extent remaining

embedded in transformational approaches, facilitative power is based on mutuality and synergy and flows in multiple directions (Dunlap & Goodman, 1990). The assumption in the facilitative view is that power will be expressed through others, rather than over others. There is a premium on trust in this approach (Conley & Goldman, 1994) and a susceptibility to 'contrived collegiality', as Hargraves warns (1991). Facilitative leaders spend much of their time negotiating decisions that the formal structure would enable them to make unilaterally. Competing views are encouraged and many decisions are made informally rather than formally. Collective decision-making is woven around and through existing formal structures of authority. A shifting landscape of relationships and responsibilities results and accountability is, in some sense, distributed and, in another sense, blurred (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992).

Both transformational and facilitative views demonstrate similarities to the social and communal view. There is a focus on the culture of the institution and its ethos and an emphasis, particularly in the facilitative view, on collective engagement in making decisions and co-authoring a shared professional culture. There is not, however, a shift away from a leader-centric bias and, whether in the form of the leader's personality or the enactment of leadership strategy, a revision of the ontological basis of leadership. The result is that these approaches have become strategies among strategies rather than the thorough-going revision of leadership that the times require.

Others are thinking along the lines of a more complete revision of leadership theory in Education.[41] Further evolving the framework of situated cognition (Brown et al., 1988) and applying activity theory James Spillane and his colleagues (2001) concur that leadership is "best understood as a distributed practice, stretched over the school's social situational contexts" and have reported some preliminary results from a longitudinal study based on these ideas (Spillane & Sherer, 2004). Noting a similarity with Dewey's focus on events and referring to Vygotsky "practice or activity" - rather than the individual - becomes the basic unit of analysis (2004, p. 4). They view the social situation as constitutive and understand cognition as socially distributed through the enactment of a range of tasks that give organizations direction and shape. Language and interpretive schema are understood to provide a "mediational means" of transforming "intelligent social activity (Spillane et al., 2001, p. 23).

What I have presented, however, differs in several significant ways. Based on Buddhist and Taoist, and to a certain extent, constructionist ideas and with some reference to the findings of quantum physics, I have reached for an alternative epistemology that is itself consistent with a social and communal view and incorporates an immanent spirituality. By consistency I mean that it makes available an understanding and appreciation of this broader context. As I have indicated, appreciation, in this instance, includes an awareness of spirituality. This provides, in my estimation, a firmer

[41] I am thankful to Peter Grimmett for making me aware of James Spillane and his colleagues and the Distributed Leadership Study.

foundation for a different form of leadership practice. My experience has been that in the absence of a thorough-going paradigm shift of this sort, otherwise generous impulses encounter a 'threshold of contradiction' and collapse. Unless an alternative view is clearly established in the context of pressure, the 'default position' of command and control reasserts.[42] If, for example, the basic paradigm continues to be the negotiation of self-interest, generosity is implicitly assumed to be contingent and measured. Competing claims rapidly polarize and resistance or conflict is the result evoking frustration and disappointment. The emphasis on inclusion and consensus of the 90's in organizations became a tangled web of policies and procedures and a site of bitter interpersonal struggle in conference rooms, not because the ideas are mistaken or the impulse misguided, in my estimation, but because an adjustment in epistemology had not taken place.[43] In the absence of such a shift it is difficult to experience the degree of connection and ethical awareness necessary for sustained practice and old habits predominate in new attire.

The social and communal view I have presented also differs in the authorial, as opposed to mediational, role accorded to language and, in this way, reflects the influence of Bakhtin (1981, 1985) and the later Merleau-Ponty (1968). Though lending us its "use-value" language "never coalesces into a fixed univocal structure" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 133) and like the social world of which it is an integral part it is constitutive, rather than

[42] Peter Grimmett supplied the concept of the 'default position' in a recent conversation about these ideas.

[43] I am not sure that this kind of adjustment can take place on entirely intellectual basis, it may require, what is traditionally referred to as *spiritual practice*. It certainly requires a change of hearts, as well as minds.

mediational of leadership practice. The brush stroke and the branch are one and the world is to express, to articulate rather than to represent and by giving into it we become part of shaping it.

What Leadership Is and Should Be

In the context of rapidly changing times at the outset of a new century, it seems apropos to think of leadership anew. Though some of my intentions in writing this document were programmatic, that is I would like to understand leadership in a way that is helpful to me and to others in the performance of leadership; and I would like to develop ideas that could be shaping of the education of leaders in some positive ways; my first intention has been to conceive of leadership in ways that are more precise, generative and reflect a higher degree of allegiance to the phenomenon, as we experience it on any every day basis.[44] In this context I have viewed the task of reaching for an appropriate way of knowing as of fundamental importance. A social and communal, more 'background sensitive' or 'background inclusive' view is, in this context, an epistemological correction. It adjusts a more leader focused and individualistic view in the direction of a more collective, community and language sensitive view. Consistent with this shift it suggests a change in knowledge making practices and in the education of leaders. These ways of knowing are congruent with a greater emphasis on the socio-

[44] In an effort to be true to the phenomenon I have sometimes referred to leadership as primarily 'janitorial' because of the extent to which I see leaders, including myself, cleaning up a lot of messes, repairing windows and counting pennies for the basics. And some of it is night work.

cultural world and the fundamental importance of language. In its broadest view, the 'background', as I have viewed it, includes the spiritual dimensions of life; that is our need to make meaning of what we experience and to have a purpose in our living, our sense of being involved in a project beyond our own immediate interests and our enduring love for one another.

This project does go on to imply that practicing community life, leadership and education with this perspective in mind can contribute to evolving a better world, a world in which cooperation is more likely than enduring conflict, compassion than self-interest and enjoyment than frustration. I found support for this view in the traditions that I have cited, in conversations with colleagues and fellow students, and in my personal experience of the wisdom traditions of Buddhism and Qigong. Consistent with this view is the observation that we must create the evidence required to support it, if it is to prevail.

Leadership, then, is a social and communal phenomenon relating to the impetus that moves us, the same as and different from the way schools of fish move, more complex in our case and, in certain cases, more clumsy and disjointed. An individualized view misappropriates this impetus by locating in the personage of the leader and focusing predominantly on his or her activities. We are very familiar with thinking in terms of the Martin Liberals and the Campbell government, forgetting that there is a constituency office around the corner. As long as "such myths prevail, they reinforce a focus on short-term events and charismatic heroes, rather than on systemic forces and collective

learning" (Senge, 1990, p. 340). At this point getting beyond a "heroic plots" view of leadership is essential (Spillane, 2006, p. 88).

Leaders can tune into or activate a widely distributed 'social intelligence' and feel out a workable consensus by conversational means, through the co-authorship and evolution of 'sharable linguistic formulations'. The role of leadership is be to provide an inclusive frame of reference through which the organization's collective best intentions can be articulated and realized in relation to the concrete particularities of shared situations. Leadership, then, is an operational convenience and an archival and expressive device of our collective best intentions. Through this broader and more inclusive view of leadership we can co-create administrative sanity, coherence and agreement. In the context of the City University, School of Management in Canada, which we are rebuilding at the present, we say to one another, "One student at a time." No one knows who said it first. It was not the product of a planning session, nor was it the suggestion of our public relations team. It was a sentiment that broke out and found a phrase to represent itself. We 'know' that this means that we need to value our students highly and support their participation with care and concern; and we know that this also means that we are involved in an incremental process over time, one that requires patience and commitment from us. Part of my leadership practice is to carry this phrase around and as the feelings of certain situations call for it, to give voice to it. I am curious about it and want to know more about it. At some point it might appear on our marketing materials, but, the again, it might not.

The Downside of a 'Social and Communal' View

When Buddhism passed through the membrane of western culture at the mid-point of the 20th Century, it attracted numerous followers, many who were intoxicated by its expansive ideas. Few of those who signed on at the time realized that these ideas are an outcome of practice rather than a sustainable given, and few were aware that their realization would require a profound adjustment in lifestyle and behaviour. The ideas were divorced by the recipients from the epistemology that produced them. The danger here is comparable, though in a narrower sense, of course. Similarly, I doubt that those thinkers who embraced the early waves of existentialism and developed existentialist deconstruction imagined what quarrelsome relations they could generate in some contexts. The danger, then, is to take-up inclusive and collaborative ideas and turn them into a new ideology. After idealism comes cynicism and, soon thereafter, public relations and manipulation. 'Explore the social and communal with a Ford Taurus' is not far behind.

Without pretending that there is a sure antidote, there are two remedies I have found helpful. I have held on to the pressure imposed by phenomenology to describe the 'lived world' in the terms of everyday language. Idealized frameworks pale by comparison to accounts that evolve based on description and incorporate the 'empirical facts of everyday transactions'. In addition, I have found responsiveness to feedback of all sorts very helpful, though this is by no means any easy attainment. We have to find

ways to step-around our defensiveness and accept uncertainty. Idealism and cynicism thrive on closed systems.

A second risk of this kind of thinking is pseudo-democracy and 'rigid consensualism'. We are so concerned to take the measure of all points of view that an ineffectual web of meetings and reports substitute for decision-making and action. The antidote in this respect is the development of honesty and trust. The paradox is that the more open the leadership practice, the more 'background sensitive', the more trust that evolves because people feel included informally on a day to day basis. The more distributed the leadership practice, the more 'on the spot' and responsive decision-making can become (Weik, 2002, p. 61).

'Unlimited Growth Increases the Divide'

On Homer Street in downtown Vancouver there is building with the phrase above embossed across on the exterior on top of its first floor. The building is three stories altogether and I would place its construction in the 1930s. I have ridden past it many times on my way to work and pondered its significance.

Surely, I eventually concluded, this phrase represents one of the great challenges of our times, if not the greatest. With science and technology we have developed unprecedented capacity from space travel to mapping the human genome and generated, in some quarters, unimaginable wealth. But this capacity and wealth are unequally distributed. A few of us grow without limit pulling away from all the rest. Countless of

our fellow human beings suffer degrading poverty, insufficiency to the extent that children die of starvation and lack of medical treatment. It boggles the mind in terms of what we take for granted in Canada. In his 2005 Massey Lectures, Stephen Lewis, the United Nations Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa cries out about this inequity and describes its cost in human suffering (Lewis, 2005). He outlines in excruciating detail how western economic policies under the auspices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have paralyzed African economies already ravaged by colonialism and, as a consequence, have been ill equipped to respond to the AIDs pandemic now involving the lives of 40 million Africans. This is not the place for a detailed analysis of this situation, but suffice it to say that it reflects a lack of leadership on a worldwide scale and the outcome of steadfast national self-interest as the guiding principle. By self-interest, for example, I am referring to the reticence of major world economic powers such as Japan, Canada and the United States to meet the foreign aid targets agreed to at the United Nations and the insistence through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that African nations adopt western economic and governance models as evidenced by the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). SAPs make foreign aid contingent on supply side economic policies. The term 'foreign aid' itself suggests that we not yet reached the point at which we recognize our interdependence on a planetary scale.

I want to suggest that a parallel self-protectiveness and self-aggrandizement is at play in our enactment of leadership. As it is the case with egocentricity, unlimited appropriation of power and decision-making at the site of leadership or in the personage

of the leader creates and reflects divisiveness. The 'more' that resides with the 'few', in this respect, the more alienated persons feel from our collective endeavours and the less responsibility they are invited to take for their everyday materialization. 'Just enough' is enough to provide the shaping force for the group's impetus. I think that we are afraid that were we to do otherwise, nothing would get done and chaos would ensue. Nothing could be further from the truth, I have concluded.

The Said and Unsaid

We learn from one another through discourse and reflection for reasons that are practical and sublime, ancient and contemporary. Certain solutions, such as the geometry of suspension bridges and structures of democratic governance are worth passing along. However, there is the greater task, long ago taken-up, of finding ways to live together in harmony, good health and prosperity on this small and so far lonely and precious planet. In the end, it is on behalf of this greater task that having been silent and knowing that many other voices remain silent, we speak. To accomplish our wishes for a better world we speak and we work together, and in working together, coordinate our intentions, our thinking and our actions. We have found that this coordination benefits from a practice that we refer to as leadership. The soup needs the pot maker, and the arch, its keystone. As much as we gain from leadership, we are also vulnerable to it because of the influence we accord to it, not to speak of the power that some leaders have appropriated. We need to think carefully of it, I have maintained, and practice it well on behalf of our collective wellbeing. I hope that the view that I have developed in this text makes some contribution

to thinking of leadership in constructive ways and that this thinking, in turn, informs the practice of leadership in ways that make for the better world that we deserve.

Epilogue

The Master doesn't talk, he acts.
When his work is done,
The people say, "Amazing:
We did it, all by ourselves!"

(Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*)[45]

[45] This citation is taken from verse 17 in the Mitchell translation of the *Tao Te Ching* (Mitchell, 1988).

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