



2020 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
ARTS, HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, & EDUCATION JANUARY 6 - 8, 2020
HAWAII PRINCE HOTEL WAIKIKI, HONOLULU, HAWAII

LEADERSHIP AND THE ARTS: A CONVERSATION FOR HUMANITY AND EDUCATION



AMALADAS, STAN
CENTRE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES
BAKER COLLEGE
FLINT, MINNESOTA

GILLIS, RICHARD
DESAUTELS FACULTY OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
MANITOBA, CANADA

Dr. Stan Amaladas
Centre for Graduate Studies
Baker College
Flint, Minnesota
Dr. Richard Gillis
Desautels Faculty of Music
University of Manitoba
Manitoba, Canada

Leadership and the Arts: A Conversation for Humanity and Education

Synopsis:

In our volatile and complex world, which is no rarity in history (Arendt,1968/1995), there is a felt need for leadership. Within this context, this workshop invites participants to address Tolstoy's ever-present question: What Then Must We Do? How might the Arts, specifically poetry and music, respond to this question? How and what can aesthetic knowing in the Arts contribute to leadership learning and development.

Leadership and the Arts: A Conversation for Humanity and Education

Introduction

Mary Welch Brooks opens her poem titled *A Touch of a Master's Hand* with the chilling words: "It was battered and scarred." While the "it" in her poem refers to an old violin, it is as if she was speaking to our battered, scarred, and dark times. While technology allows us to be globally connected, we are, at the same time, becoming more disconnected and disenchanted with each other. These two 'Ds' come in the forms of people wanting to build walls instead of tearing them down; inciting hate through the use of social media; growing intolerance towards immigrants; separating parents from their children at the American borders and placing them in cages; killing others in their places of worship; growing tribalism that never really went away in the name of ultra-right nationalism; scars of racism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, deception and lying in politics. This human condition of our dark times, however, is not new. As Arendt (1968/1993) noted, "they are certainly no rarity in human history" (p. ix). It is precisely in this context that as leadership educators, we raise our Tolstoian research question: "*What Then Must We Do?*"

Within the discipline of leadership studies, part of the challenge is that "with [a few] laudable exceptions, leadership studies have had next to nothing to say about such complex problems" (Guthey, Kempster, & Remke, 2018, p. 279). In the face of this failure, Guthey et al, however, do offer some hope in claiming that "leadership research and leadership development practice have the potential to address such pressing social and environmental challenges, to help to repair fractured communities, and to contribute to the betterment of society on a global scale" (p. 279). As leadership educators how can we study, teach, and practice leadership by raising the

consciousness of students (including our own) to not only focus on their (our) particular academic practices but also engage with the larger challenges confronting humanity at multiple levels in our world?

Organizing

Our paper will be organized as follows. First, we will introduce who we are as leadership educators and why we have chosen to work with each other in this common project. Second, we will address the essential purpose of leadership through the eyes of James McGregor Burns who has been called a founder of Leadership Studies (Barbour, 2006) and demonstrate how this is connected to our shared interest. Third, we will focus on the current turn to the Arts and Humanities by scholars and practitioners in Leadership Studies and address the limits of traditional logic (scientific rationality) in answering our research question. Finally, we will make an interpretive turn to the contribution of the Arts, in particular poetry and music, and explore their meaningful responses to our research question, “*What Then Must We Do?*”

Who Are We?

As leadership educators in the fields of music/jazz (Gillis), sociology/narrative inquiry/ leadership studies (Amaladas), we share an interest in narrative knowing. Polkinghorne (1988), a professor in counselling and a practicing psychotherapist, for example, maintains that “human beings exist in three realms – the material realm, the organic realm, and the realm of meaning” (p. 183). The last is the domain of the human sciences, and developments in several of them to capture the meaning of human action suggest that the keys to understanding are furnished by narrative or stories.¹ As leadership educators, we view both music and poetry (literature) as

¹ We use the notions of narratives and stories interchangeably.

forms of storytelling. We suggest that the actions of music and poetry is like writing a story, and that the understanding of action is like arriving at an interpretation of a story.

Stephen Holley, coordinator of the Commercial Music Program at the Kent Denver School in Englewood, Colorado, for example, shares his story and interpretation that “a musician has the responsibility to listen, react, adjust, refocus, and add to the conversation on an almost constant basis!” “This,” he continues to say, “is true in all styles of music but is arguably most prevalent in jazz and other improvisational genres” (as cited in Webb, 2011, Para 2). But more than being responsibly engaged in a conversation, for film composer Bernard Hermann, music can also “propel narrative swiftly forward, or slow it down. It often lifts mere dialogue into the realm of poetry” (as cited in Wentz, 2013, Para 1). This is the Hermann’s story. For him the power of music lies in its capacity to lift mere dialogue (mere talk) into the realm of poetry. Similarly, as we see it, music can move people in powerful ways. It can inspire, draw emotional responses, compel us to dance, calm us and even heal us. There is music for every conceivable situation, from the sacred to the profane.

And what is the power of poetry? For a poet, William Wordsworth (1802/2016), “poetry is the first and last of all knowledge - it is as immortal as the heart of man” (n.p.). And he further goes on to say that poetry is immortal and timeless because its focus is on human experience.

Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, ‘that he looks before and after.’ He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs; in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and

knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. (n.p.)

We can imagine Wordsworth, Hermann, and Holley as saying that both musicians and poets are involved in the larger purpose of *binding together* the vast experience of human society in spite of their differences, in spite of things silently forgotten, and in spite of things violently scarred, battered, and destroyed. Insofar as music “lifts mere dialogue into poetry,” both musicians and the poets are engaged in this larger project of bringing together in their present moments, the “before” (past) and the “after” (future), by “carrying everywhere” with them “relationship and love.” A similar sentiment has been expressed by Tim Lautzenheiser in his book *Music Advocacy and Student Leadership*. For example, he noted that the “strong-armed approach to leadership success has given way to the concept of allowing the follower to become an invested contributor to the overall mission” (p. 91). He argues that for far too long we have allowed the “great man” concept of leadership to influence our understanding of what it means to lead. The psychological basis of this theory has contributed to what is commonly known as the Big-Five Factor Personality Model of Leadership (Goldberg, 1990; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002) – extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, low neuroticism, and agreeableness. At the same time, the hubris of this personality-centered leadership model has also resulted in leading through fear, competition, comparison, self-aggrandizement or self-abasement. The “great leader” and control model does not build confidence, creativity or leadership, and it does not build a collaborative community

As leadership educators, our joint participation in this paper (project) is intentionally guided by our imagination that both music and poetry are lovingly engaged with a binding dance with each other: poetry as music and music as poetry, for the sake of keenly connecting our

divided world, for the sake of building a collaborative community, and for the sake of better understanding what both music and poetry can teach us as we seek to answer our question:

“*What Then Must We Do*” in our battered and scarred times?

On the Essential Purpose of Leadership

Burn’s (1978) in his “masterpiece” or “chef d’oeuvre,” *Leadership*, as Bennis, (1982, p. 202) described it, suggested that we must first *feel the need* to pay attention and attend to our battered and scarred times. He formulated the essential purpose of leadership in this way.

Essentially the task of the leader is consciousness raising on a wide plane. ‘Values exist only where there is consciousness,’ Suzanne Langer has said. ‘Where nothing is felt, nothing matters.’ The leader’s fundamental act is to induce people to be aware or conscious of what they feel – to feel their true needs so strongly, to define their values so meaningfully, that they can be moved to purposeful action. (Burns, 1978, pp 43-44; Parenthesis mine)

We choose to interpret the word “task” as purpose rather than simply a job to be done. For Burns, the fundamental purpose of leadership, and by implication leadership educators, is to “induce people to be aware or conscious of what they feel.” Why? Because as Suzanne Langer noted, “Where nothing is felt, nothing matters.” And as Burns’ suggests, if nothing is deeply felt about our ‘scarred and battered times,’ then we will not see any need to move to purposeful action simply because they simply do not matter. But this insight is not new. In the 19th century, a similar sentiment was passionately expressed by Karl Marx (1856/1978), when he reflected on the glory and pain of industrialization: “But although the atmosphere in which we live weighs upon everyone like a 20,000 lb. force, do you feel it?” (p. 577). It appears as if Marx also understood well that *if nothing is felt, nothing matters*.

To be moved to purposeful action, in other words, requires that we ‘give a damn,’ about our scarred and battered times. To give a damn is to be called to a relationship of caring. So, whereas the poet Wordsworth described the poet as being a “rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love,” through the eyes of Burns, we see leaders and followers as expressing relationship and love through their act of caring. This leads us to the following question. How can we as leadership educators go about the process of raising consciousness where others can *feel* the need to care so that they can moved to purposeful action (not simply as a means to an end, but rather as action that is desired for its own sake)?

A Turn to the Arts

Today we notice a deliberate turn to the Arts to answer both our research question and the question raised in the preceding paragraph. Since the publication of Max Depree’s *Leadership as Art* (1989), there has been a purposeful turn to study leadership through the lens of the Arts. For example, Oba T’Shaka’s two volumes of *The Art of Leadership* (1990-1991), Michael Jones’ *Artful Leadership* (2006), and Ladkin & Taylor’s (2010) *Special Issue: Leadership as Art*, in the British based *Leadership* journal is further evidence of this turn. But why the turn to the Arts as a way of understanding leadership or for that matter to seek answers to our research question?

Ladkin and Tylor suggest that living in our complex world “cannot be fully understood solely by reference to scientific forms of logic and sense-making” (p. 235). And for a scholar from the world of organizational studies and management, Karl Weick (2007) the tools of “traditional logic (scientific) and rationality.

...presume that the world is stable, knowable, and predictable. To set aside those tools is not to give up on finding a workable way to keep moving. It is only to give up one means

of direction finding that is ill-suited to the unstable, the unknowable, and the unpredictable. To drop the tools rationality is to gain access to lightness in the form of intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words, and empathy. All of these nonlogical activities enable people to solve problems and enact the potential. (p. 15)

Weick seems to suggest that in our world of instability where one can reliably count on the predictability of unpredictability, a turn to the Arts, will enable us “to gain access to lightness” in the form of feelings, stories, imagination, awareness in the moment, and so forth, and hence offer us a different way of addressing our research question. Moreover, a sociologist, Max Weber, as early as 1946, had already written about the limits of logico-scientific knowing in his famous essay *Science as a Vocation*.

Tolstoi (sic) has given the simplest answer, with the words: ‘Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important for us: ‘What shall we do and how shall we live?’ That science does not give an answer to this is indisputable...Science does not ask for ...answers to such questions. (Weber, 1946, pp. 143-144)

And even when science presupposes that “what is yielded by scientific work is important in the sense that it is ‘worth being known,’” what remains problematic for Weber (1946) is that “this presupposition cannot be proved by scientific means. It can only be *interpreted* with reference to its ultimate meaning, which we must reject or accept according to our ultimate position towards life” [Italics in original] (p. 143). Unlike the traditional logic and logico-scientific rationality of science, Weber suggests that responses to our research question, “what must we do, how shall we live?” (What Then Must We Do?) can be accessed only through an

“interpretive turn” (Rainbow & Sullivan, 1979) in relation to “our ultimate position towards life,” and not through traditional logic of deduction or induction which was characteristic of “yesterday’s sense-making” (Barry & Meisiek, 2010).

In turning to the Arts, McKee (2003), a screen writer, par excellence, advises his audience to “forget about PowerPoint and statistics” (p. 52). His advice is instead to “involve people at the deepest level” by telling a compelling story. “In a story,” he said, “you not only weave a lot of information into the telling, but you also arouse your listener’s emotions and energy” (p. 52). He further noted that stories “fulfill a profound human need to grasp the patterns of living – not merely as an intellectual exercise, but with a very personal, emotional experience” (p. 52).

Methodologically, then, we choose to understand the turn to the Arts as a turn to knowing and understanding our “battered and scarred” (Welch, 1957) times, narratively. It is a necessary turn because “paradigmatic knowing” or “logico-scientific knowing” (Bruner, 1986, p. 11), which Weick claims as being the tools for traditional logic and rationality, does not answer the research question raised. In fact, as Weber (1946) argues, it does not even ask for answers to this question because of its desire and claim to be “value free.” Unlike the traditional logic of science, the turn to the Arts and to interpretation, places us squarely in the realm of values, and as Weber notes, in accordance with our “ultimate position towards life.” Unlike logico-scientific knowing, the aim of narrative knowing “principally works to draw together [the meaning of] human actions and the events that affect human beings...” [Parenthesis mine] (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 6). At a methodological level, we will proceed by “drawing together” the meaning of human actions as they are reflected in the literature (poetry) and in the practice of the performing arts (music) for the sake of moving people to purposive action. Allow us then to turn to the

human actions and its meanings as they are reflected in Myra Brooks Welch's compelling poem *The Touch of a Master's Hand* and relate her poem to what leadership educators (both in leadership studies and music) must do.

Myra Brooks Welch - A Touch of a Master's Hand

Welch's poem (story) is set within the context of an auction.

T'was battered and scarred,

And the auctioneer thought it scarcely worth his while to waste much time on the old violin.

But...with a smile... he said, 'What am I bid, good folks... "A dollar, a dollar; then two!"

... Two dollars, and who'll make it three? Three dollars, once; three dollars twice; going...

Within the narrative structure of her story we have, two living actors, the audience, the auctioneer, and one inanimate object, a "battered and scarred" violin, which the auctioneer thought "scarcely worth his while to spend much time." In effect, the appearance of the violin does not give the auctioneer much reason to care. At the same time, narrative researchers would remind us that as readers we too are living actors in her story, and as readers, we make sense of her poem through the art of interpretation. Within the context of an auction setting, the scripted roles of the audience and the auctioneer are predetermined. The auctioneer, as the manager of the auction, manages the process of selling items. The audience's pre-scripted role is to bid on items being sold. Bidding is a choice that belongs to the audience, in that they can freely choose to bid or not bid. The success of this "game" is dependent on all participants agreeing on the rules of the game and playing their pre-scripted roles.

As a manager, the auctioneer is also entrusted with the responsibility of transacting the activity of the crowd. The success of the auctioneer's performance is measured against his or her ability to obtain the highest economic bid for the object being sold, irrespective of its condition. Burns (1978) noted that in similar ways "the relations of most leaders and followers are *transactional* - leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another" [Italics in original] (p.4). Transactional relationships, however, are at best, ephemeral. Once an economic transaction is completed, audience-members go their separate ways and continue to live their lives in ways that remain emotionally untouched by their normal routinized auction-experience. But this is precisely where Welch's poem sets her apart from conventional transactional-leadership experiences. Something 'special' occurred. Welch continues,

But no, from...far back of the room, a grey-haired man came forward and picked up the bow

Then, wiping the dust from the old violin, and tightening the loose strings, he played a melody so pure and sweet as caroling angel sings.

The Courage to Interrupt with Purpose

While in the middle of the bidding process, we are confronted with an interruptions of a pre-scripted transactional process. Unless we are prepared to say that he came forward just for the fun of it, we must suggest that he was not only *disturbed* by what he noticed, but he also *felt compelled* to act. Here is a story of one everyday person who elected to take a stand, by making an enlightened choice. He chose not to leave in disgust, or merely complain while remaining at the far back of the room or be a bystander. If, as Suzanne Langer noted, "values exist only where there is consciousness," he could be heard as asking, "how can I raise their consciousness to see

(value) what they do not see (value)?” or “how can I *disturb* them to *feel* differently about what they see?” because where “nothing is felt, nothing matters” (as cited in Burns, 1978. p. 14).

In stepping forward, this grey-haired man intentionally interrupted the predictable and pre-scripted procedures of an auction. His potentially disruptive action stands in stark contrast to how some management practitioners understand the changing role of leadership while in the middle of today’s “digital disruption.” In an interview with a journalist for the *Globe and Mail*, Kate Morican, partner of strategic change and transformation for Deloitte Canada, noted that “in the past,” the role of leadership “was more about consistent, efficient, and effective performance, so people knew what to expect.” Today, “it’s about leaders helping you interpret disruption...” (Lindzon, 2017, Para 3). Welch, however, offers something different. In coming forward this man did not interpret disruption. Rather he triggered a potential disruption.

At the same time, this grey-haired man was not able to predict the consequences of his action. This did not stop him. He came forward with a faith in the cooperation of the auctioneer. And as Hansen, Ropo, and Sauer (2007) noted, the “motivation to take that leap of faith is not always based on rational, objective, and empirical evidence, because there may be none” (p. 549). While the risk he took is akin to how Heifetz (1994) talks about adaptive leadership in that those who choose to interrupt and set something new in motion risk being “marginalized, diverted, attacked” (as cited in Taylor, 1999), this man believed that it was a risk worth taking.

The Courage to Pay Attention

Stepping forward, the grey-haired man picked up the bow, dusted the old violin and tightened its loose strings. He paid attention and attended to what was calling for his attention before he played a “melody so pure and sweet as sweet as the caroling angels sing.” As a competent violinist, his angelic melody would not have been possible if he ignored the work that

he needed to do in the present. We cannot deny his competence to play the violin well, but the violin required something else of him for it to be able to demonstrate its potential. It needed him to care enough to prepare it to showcase its potential. As leadership educators, we are also called to ask the question: “what is calling for our attention” in the here and now?

How then can leadership educators within the context of music education go about the process of building confidence and care for enabling their students to showcase their potential? It is here that we draw Bennis’ (1989) distinction between the practices of “doing the right things” and “doing things the right way.” The concern for doing things the right way might move a conductor of a large orchestra to be stern, demanding of perfection, and drilling the ensemble over a small amount of music. Every entrance and ‘attack’ is scrutinized. Whereas the focus may be directed toward accuracy, or a right and wrong way of being engaged in an ensemble, by comparing one musician against another, the resultant feeling among ensemble members or students is anxiety and a lack of confidence in their own capacities to play their instruments well.

Doing the right things on the other hand, focuses not on perfection and details but on tapping into the *essence* of music (rhythm, story-telling). To do this we must provide the right culture – a non-threatening environment, with respect, patience and humour. Making mistakes are necessary in developing musical skill and creativity. We must encourage those in our charge to “go for it”. If the goal of music performance, as Yo-Yo Ma noted, is not perfection but expression, then leadership educators must create a safe, challenging and encouraging environment. Conversely, “if the atmosphere of the rehearsal is threatening, students will put a higher priority on survival (avoidance of pain) and safety (maintaining their dignity) than on extending their talents and skills for the common goal of the ensemble.” (Lautzenheiser, 2005, p. 124).

At the same time, it must be noted that when a group of musicians gather, like in an ensemble, it is not as if they participate in a ‘free-for all’ or free engagement. The ensemble and the conductor pay collective attention to their “musical score.” The musical score is their ‘structure.’ Their shared musical score offers all an opportunity to participate in community. It is similar to enabling a conversation involving a large group of people. What must be emphasized is that as leadership educators, we must focus on the three-way relationship between the conductor (teacher), ensemble (students) and the structure (musical score). To paraphrase St. Francis of Assisi, the musical score (structure) allows us to start by doing what’s necessary and then proceed to doing what’s possible. Giving ourselves over to such a process will, for St. Francis, enable us to “suddenly...do the impossible.” It is not a matter of controlling the musical score (structure) but surrendering to its potential.

As leadership educators, we are also called to pay attention to those who assemble to experience our art. Our conviction is that our audiences are affected as much from what they see as what they hear. What they see and hear affects what they feel. And, as members of society, what they feel can influence their interpretation and experience. Take the example of assembling a musical ensemble for an installation ceremony of a female University Chancellor. Imagine the optics of an all-male ensemble for this event? The right thing to do in this situation was not merely to bring together the best performers, irrespective of gender, but rather to pay attention to gathering a representative ensemble of musicians, irrespective of “best” performers. In this case, as a leadership educator, our concern must not only be what the audience hears but also about what they see. This does not mean that women are second-best performers. No. It simply means that we needed to pay attention to the representation of best performers.

The Courage to Withhold Judgment

Returning to Welch's poem, as a manager of the auctioneering process, the auctioneer could have prevented the grey-haired man from disrupting the scripted process. He did not. In his/her non-intervention, she/he enabled the audience to witness his performance without judgment. In this, the auctioneer chose to step out of his administrative role. What we, as readers, witness as occurring is the interaction between three types of leadership and their corresponding actions (see Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). First, we are exposed to the administrative leadership of the auctioneer, namely as one who is focused on procedures and rules. Second, we witness the adaptive leadership of the grey-haired man, insofar as he chose to interrupt the process. Heifetz (1994), for example, defines adaptive leadership as the courage to "influence the community to face its problems by jointly tackling and making progress on tough problems" (p. 14-15), with "no guarantee of... success (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 2009, p. 231). And third, we also see the auctioneer as embracing the role of enabling leadership, in that he enabled the space for the grey-haired man to do what he needed to do. While the grey-haired man in Welch's story is seen by the audience as being the Master, the temptation might be to view him as the "leader." Listen for example to how the audience received the grey-haired man's performance.

*And when the music ceased, the auctioneer, with a voice quiet and low,
said; 'What am I bid for the old violin?' ... Three thousand, once...twice...gone.'
The people cheered, but some of them cried, 'What changed its worth?'
Swift came the reply: "The touch of a master's hand."*

But Welch (1957) offers something more. The *complexity* of the relationship among the grey-haired man, the audience, and the auctioneer resided in something other than a linear cause-effect

relationship. It is closer instead to Burns' (1978) formulation of social causation in that it is part of a story that is caused by human action (p. 433). Leadership, Welch (1957) could be heard as offering, is not simply the function of one person. Instead leadership emerges through the interaction among people. We see leadership as emerging through the *interaction* between and among adaptive, administrative, and enabling aspects of what it means to lead.

As leadership educators we are called to embrace all three aspects of leadership. In withholding judgment, we enable the potential of students to emerge. In withholding judgment, we create conditions where students are allowed to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes. Unlike administrative leadership, the courage to withhold judgments necessitates that leadership educators give themselves over to experiencing their own discomfort with the 'problem' of 'making mistakes.'

The Courage to Not Settle for Less

As Welch continued in her poem, we glimpse another response to our research question.

And many a man with life out of tune, and battered and scarred with sin,

Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd...

A 'mess of pottage, a glass of wine; a game - and he travels on.

Welch elevates her readers' consciousness. What really disturbs her is that human life that is "out of tune and scarred with sin," can also be "auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd," by settling for less namely, for a "mess of pottage or a glass of wine?" The language of settling for a "mess of pottage," has a rich history. It goes back to the Old Testament story when Esau settled for less by selling his "birthright" to his younger brother, Jacob. As that story appears in Genesis 25:29-34, "mess" refers to a "meal," and "pottage," refers to "bread and lentil stew."

Once Jacob had made a soup, and Esau returned from the countryside exhausted. Esau said to Jacob, ‘Let me eat the red soup... I am exhausted...’ Jacob said, ‘First sell me your birthright...’ Esau said, ‘Here I am, at death’s door; what use will my birthright be to me?’ Then Jacob said, ‘First, give me your oath.’ He gave him his oath and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave him bread and lentil soup, and after eating and drinking, he got up and went. That was all Esau cared for his birthright. (Jerusalem Bible, pp. 43-44)

As leadership educators, we are also called to not settle for less. What does this mean? To settle for less would mean that we give ourselves over to being limited by what we see and hear, rather than imagining the possibility of what could be. To imagine the possibility of what could be is to give ourselves and our students the permission to be exceptional and to enjoy the process of learning.

The Courage to Hope

In the face of our battered and scarred times, or negative experiences, Welch (1957) offers leadership educators a hopeful possibility. For example, she concludes her poem by saying:

‘He is going once...going twice, He's going...almost gone.’

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd never can quite understand the worth of a soul and the change that's wrought by the touch of the Master's hand.

Welch affirms that we can lead well while in the middle of volatility and complexity, without losing hope. A life without hope is a life of despair which parasitically feeds off fear and cynicism. For Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastava (1997,) “when people hope, their stance is not only that reality is open, but also that it is continually becoming... people prepare the way for

possible futures to emerge...” (Ludema et al., 1997, p.12). Hope is that spirit which enables us to live in our complex world in ways that moves us in the direction of imagining and acting on compelling images of possibility. And for Burns (1978), as “the expression of needs become more purposeful, hope” namely “looking forward with desire and with belief in possibility” (p. 117) can be escalated to aspirations, sanctioned expectations, and political demands (p. 118).

We can now understand why Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., did not give a ‘I Have a Strategic Plan!’ speech at the March in Washington in 1963. Instead, he delivered an ‘I Have a Dream!’ speech. His dream was a transformation of hope into a political demand that pushed for the realization of promised freedom and justice. At the same time, while Burns was aware that this conversion from hope to political demand “may not be this neat” (p. 118) as those in positions of power may not perceive those purposeful needs “in the same light” (p. 118), he continued to insist that “disappointed expectations or rejected demands” are all “materials for political leadership” (p. 119). However, we must also admit to the limit of realizing the dream from the perspective of human action, is that the very nature of action is such that it can suffer unintended consequences (Arendt, 1958).

For example, about forty years after Martin Luther King’s speech, we witness the election of the first Black President of the United States of America, Barrack Hussein Obama, who willingly embraced the label of being a “hope-monger.”

You know people have remarked on the fact that I talk about hope a lot... You know, they...tease me a little bit. Some have been scornful. They say, ‘Ah, he’s talking about hope again. He’s so idealistic. He’s so naïve. He’s a hope monger.’ That’s okay. It’s true... I talk about it a lot because the odds of me standing here today are so small, so remote that I couldn’t have gotten here without some hope. You know my...daddy left me

when I was two years old. I needed some hope to get here. I was raised by a single mother. I needed some hope to get here.... I wasn't born into money, or great wealth, or great privilege, or status. I was given love, an education, and some hope. That's what I got. That's my birthright. (Obama, 2008)

Unlike Esau, Obama was not prepared to give up his "birthright." To give up his birthright, would mean denying the love, education, and hope, that brought him to a place of serving his nation as their President, and at the same time, "forsaking the future." (Obama, 2008). Within the larger scarred and battered story of slavery and institutionalized exclusion of Afro-Americans into the mainstream of American life, while being elected President was "so remote," there he was. Therein lay his audacity of hope (Obama, 2006). His audacity of hope enabled him not to deny the diagnosis of his time but to deny the verdict of such a diagnosis.

Eight years after he was elected President, and in his final year in that role, he continued to affirm that he still believed in the "politics of hope."

And for all the challenges of a rapidly changing world, and for all the imperfections of our democracy, the capacity to reach across our differences and choose that kind of politics -- not a cynical politics, not a politics of fear, but that kind of politics -- sustained over the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime, that's something that remains entirely up to us. (Obama, 2016)

Obama deeply understood that the politics of hope was, for him, ultimately a hard choice, but a "right choice," because "for all the changes of a rapidly changing world," it is "a lot easier to be cynical," to believe that the politics of hope is really hopeless, and to think that the politics of hope in a volatile and complex world is simply naïve, and idealistic (Obama, 2016). It is easier to give in to a politics of fear and "to lash out against those who are different" (Obama, 2016a).

Obama, however, chose to book-end his tenure as President with the “audacity of hope” (Obama, 2006) because it offered him and his followers a real opportunity to “reclaim the American dream,” by reaching across differences, to act and speak in concert, and to live together. The limit of his choice to “live up” to the highest standards of his country (moral leadership), is expressed in his regret as he left office.

Unlike Welch’s poem, Obama’s tenure as President did not culminate in “and they lived happily after” type of an ending. In his final *State of the Union Address* in 2016 Obama sadly reflected: “It’s one of the few regrets of my presidency - that the rancor and suspicion between the parties has gotten worse instead of better.” As President of his nation, he did not completely achieve what he intended because others did not choose to share his “burden” or join him in “finishing the job” of reaching across differences (action as *prattein* and *gerere*). Perhaps he did not pay sufficient attention to reaching across differences (Ladkin, 2018). Does this mean that what we have here is a failure of leadership? No. While we may have a failure of Burns’ (1978) “ultimate test of practical leadership,” namely “*the realization of intended, real change that meets people’s enduring needs*” [Italics in original] (Burns, p. 461), we do not, according to Arendt (1959) have a failure because, as she noted, “*the strength of the beginner shows itself only in his initiative and the risk he takes, not in the actual achievement*” [Italics in original] (Arendt, 1958, p. 190). The nature of action as initiative, as she sketched, is conditioned by both its inherent boundlessness and unpredictability (Arendt, pp. 188-192). Boundless, in that others may choose to accept (join in) or reject the initiative of the beginner, or that they may strike out on their own in reaction to that which is initiated. Unpredictable, in that outcomes are not guaranteed. To eradicate unpredictability would in effect require Obama to eliminate or discredit

any form of resistance, and force conformity. It would require him to adopt the practices of a ruler, manipulator, or a power-wielder. And he chose not to do that.

As leadership educators, we understand that while our outcomes or results are not guaranteed, this does not stop us from continuing our work, because we are governed by the vision of what could be.

Conclusion

In this paper we appealed to Welch's poem as our way of answering and understanding what we must do in our battered and scarred times. We began with the proposition that if nothing is felt, nothing matters. With that end in view, we raised a secondary question: how do we enable conditions where others can feel the need to care for that which matters? Our interpretation of her poem leads us to five responses our research question. Each of the responses are prefaced by the word 'courage.' These include:

1. The courage to interrupt with purpose.
2. The courage to pay attention to what is calling for our attention.
3. The courage to withhold judgment from those who choose to initiate change.
4. The courage to not settle for less.
5. The courage to hope.

Grounded in the language of '*cor*' or *coeur* (heart), the Oxford dictionary defines courage as "the ability to disregard fear...to act on one's beliefs," and the Cambridge Dictionary defines courage as "the ability to control fear and to be willing to deal with something that is dangerous, difficult or unpleasant." If this is so, then what leadership educators must do in our battered and scarred times is not easy and there are no easy solutions or answers (Heifetz, 1994). At the "heart" of the courage to act is the decision to deal with things that are dangerous, difficult, and unpleasant. At

the “heart” of courage is a decision to not be determined by fear. This is the ‘holy’ ground upon which leadership educators stand. We end our paper with the insights of President J.F. Kennedy in his speech at Amherst College. From the perspective of the Arts, while he spoke to the power of poetry as a way of understanding the courageous ordeal and triumph of the human spirit, we see his comments as equally applicable to music.

Our national strength matters, but the spirit which informs and controls our strength matters just as much. This was the special significance of Robert Frost. This was the special significance of Robert Frost. He brought an unsparing instinct for reality to bear on the platitudes and pieties of society. His sense of the human tragedy fortified him against self-deception and easy consolation. "I have been" he wrote, "one acquainted with the night." And because he knew the midnight as well as the high noon, because he understood the ordeal as well as the triumph of the human spirit, he gave his age strength with which to overcome despair. At bottom, he held a deep faith in the spirit of man, and it is hardly an accident that Robert Frost coupled poetry and power, for he saw poetry as the means of saving power from itself. When power leads men towards arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses. For art establishes the basic human truth which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment. (Kennedy, 1963, Para 1)

References

- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1968/1993). *Men in dark times*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Barbour, J.D. (2006). "Burns, J. M." *Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration*. (Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 93-94.
- Barry, D., & Meisiek, S. (2010). The art of leadership and its fine art shadow. *Leadership* 6(3) 331-349.
- Bennis, W. (1982). Leadership. A Review by Warren Bennis. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 88(1) 202-205.
- Bennis, W. (1989). *On becoming a leader*. New York, NY: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- DePree, M. (1989). *Leadership is an Art*. New York, NY: Dell.
- Guthey, E., Kempster, S., & Remke, R. (2018). Leadership for What? In *What's Wrong with Leadership?* R. Riggio, (ed). pp. 279-281. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Hansen, H., Ropo, A., & Sauer, E. (2007). Aesthetic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(6), 544-560.
- Heifetz, R. (1994). *Leadership without easy answers*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jones M (2006) *Artful Leadership: Awakening the Commons of the Imagination*. Victoria, Canada: Trafford Publishing.
- Kennedy, J.F. (1963). Remarks at Amherst College. *National Endowment for the ARTS*. Retrieved from <https://www.arts.gov/about/kennedy-transcript>
- Ladkin, D., & Taylor, S. (2010). Leadership as art: Variations on a theme. *Leadership*. 6(3) 235-241.
- Lautzenheiser, T. (2005). *Music advocacy and student leadership*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc.
- Lindzon, J. (2017), Interrupting disruption: The changing role of leadership, Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/management/interrupting-disruption-the-changing-role-of-leadership/article35010208/>
- Marx, K. (1856/1978). Speech at the anniversary of the people power. In R.C. Tucker (Ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*. pp. 577-578.

- McKee, R. (2003). Storytelling that move people. A conversation with screenwriting coach Robert McKee. *Harvard Business Review*, June 81 (6), 51-55
- Obama, H.B. (2006). *The audacity of hope: Thoughts on reclaiming the American dream*. New York, NY: Broadway Paperbacks.
- Obama, B.H. (2008). *Ebenezer Baptist Church Address*. Delivered January 20. Retrieved from <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamaebenezerbaptist.htm>
- Obama, B.H. (2016). *Final Presidential State of the Union Address*, Delivered January 12, 2016. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/the-white-house/president-obama-s-2016-state-of-the-union-address-7c06300f9726#.7846novvm>
- Obama, B.H (2016a) *Address at the 64th National Prayer Breakfast*. Delivered, February 4, 2016. Retrieved from, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobama2016prayerbreakfast.htm>
- Rainbow, S., & Sullivan, W.M. (1979/1987). *Interpretive social science: A second look*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Taylor, W. C. (1999). The leader of the future.: Harvard's Ronald Heifetz offers a short course on the future of leadership. *Fast Company*, May 31. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/37229/leader-future>
- Tolstoy, L. (1886/1991). *What then must we do?* (A. Maude, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Green Books.
- T'Shaka O (1990) *The Art of Leadership*. Vol. 1, Richmond, CA: Pan Afrikan Publications.
- T'Shaka O (1991) *The Art Leadership*. Vol. 2, Richmond, CA: Pan Afrikan Publications.
- Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., & McKelvey, B. (2007). Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting leadership from the industrial age to the knowledge era. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18:4, 298-318.
- Webb, N. (2011). Paying Attention to the Musical Conversation. *National Association for Musical Education*. Retrieved from, <https://nafme.org/paying-attention-to-the-musical-conversation/>
- Wentz, A. (2013). The Power of Music in Storytelling. *Centerline Digital*, Retrieved from <https://www.centerline.net/blog/the-power-of-music-in-storytelling/>

Wordsworth, W. (1802/2016). *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. Online. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/Preface-Lyrical-Ballads-William-Wordsworth/dp/1539322742>