Leadership
Limits and Possibilities

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Introduction

Although leadership research seems to be increasing exponentially we have yet to establish what it is, never mind whether we can teach it or predict its importance. In this context I consider leadership as limited in two senses: first, our understanding is limited even if our information is apparently unlimited; second, despite all the claims for leaders as the solution to all kinds of problems, I will suggest that the role of individual *leaders* is very limited, even if the significance of leader*ship* should not be underestimated.

This book is designed to explore the theoretical definitions and practical accomplishments of leadership. It is not intended as a complete review of the extant literature – which would takes years to read never mind assimilate and review – nor is its primary focus on retreading the traditional approaches; I have attempted this in several other publications and interested readers are referred to these (Grint, 1998, 2000; Bratton *et al.*, 2004).

The first chapter takes Gallie's notion of an Essentially Contested Concept as the principle explanation for our limited advances in defining leadership and suggests that a consensus on a definition of leadership is unlikely, even in the long run. It then establishes a four-fold typology that embodies some of the most important varieties of leadership definition and illustrates why the quest for a consensus is both forlorn and unnecessary. Instead there are (at least) four quite different ways of understanding what leadership is:

- **Person:** is it WHO 'leaders' are that makes them leaders?
- **Result:** is it WHAT 'leaders' achieve that makes them leaders?
- **Position:** is it WHERE 'leaders' operate that makes them leaders?
- **Process:** is it HOW 'leaders' get things done that makes them leaders?

This may explain why we have so much trouble explaining leadership, trying to understand it and trying to teach or reward it. Of course, some of these definitions overlap and it may be that leadership oftentimes involves all four elements, but sometimes they mean radically different things to different people. In each section I first consider some of the leadership theory in the field and then proceed to explore the

field through a related case of leadership practice that highlights the different ways of understanding leadership, often by picking an extreme case to illustrate the viability of the argument.

Chapter 2, for example, takes the last definition – Leadership as Person – and explores two aspects of the identity of the 'leader' that might not normally be considered but can be summarised as 'putting the "ship" back into leadership'. Leadership as Person implies that there is something remarkable about the character of the leader that makes him or her a leader, and this is often related to assumptions concerning leaders having been 'born' rather than made, though as has been recounted many times – all of us are born. However, the problems of taking this approach are established in two different dimensions, both concerned with leader'ship'.

The first 'ship' concerns the traditional assumptions about leaders as 'individuals' and suggests that this assumption is extremely tenuous: leadership is necessarily a relational not a possessive phenomenon for the individual 'leader' without followers is demonstrably not a leader at all. This issue is evaluated through that most conventional and ostensibly 'possessive' characteristic of individual leaders: charisma. Through an analysis of several individuals held to be charismatic I suggest that the identity of the leader is essentially relational not individual: thus leadership is a function of a community not a result derived from an individual deemed to be objectively superhuman.

The second element of the identity of leader'ship' is the extent to which this identity is necessarily limited to human embodiment. I argue that in all but a very few cases leadership is essentially hybrid in nature – it comprises humans, clothes, adornments, technologies, cultures, rules and so on and so forth. There are, in effect, almost no cases of successful human leaders bereft of any 'non-human' supplement – that is, naked. This argument is then used to establish the nature of hybrid leadership on D-Day, 6 June 1944 and in particular with regards to the primary means for the first assault troops to land and cross the beaches: small boats. In the event many of these hybrids had significant weaknesses but they were primarily a consequence of political and cultural arguments rather than scientific or technical limitations. In short, these troops were led, and sometimes misled, in and through hybrid leaders.

Chapter 3 configures leadership through its results. In the last decade there have been many examples of Leadership-by-Results – and many examples where the results expose the consequences of this apparently Machiavellian embodiment: Enron and Worldcom to name just two business cases, though the conflict over Iraq would be another. In the first part of this chapter we consider the extent to which results are caused by leaders and the ethical aspects of this assumption. We then proceed to take two forms of leadership that appear to be radically different in their results to test the viability of defining leadership by its apparent results: the 'successful' leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Theresa and the 'unsuccessful' leadership of slave rebellions in Roman and Nazi times. The conclusion, uncomfortable though it may be for some, is that the linkage of results to 'successful' leaders is usually tenuous and even nominal 'failures' can be configured as successful leadership. These very same lessons have important ramifications for contemporary and future leadership: it is extraordinarily difficult to quantify the result of leadership, and yet the results of leadership seem extraordinarily important. To analyse either of these we need to be very clear about what we mean by leadership but that does not mean we need to agree on its 'true' or 'objective' nature. On the contrary this is neither necessary nor helpful, though we do need to be clear about what *we* mean by leadership.

Chapter 4 takes the third of the four approaches – leadership as a process – and investigates the extent to which the method by which leadership is executed enables us to differentiate leadership from any other organizing category, such as 'management' or 'administration'. In this case I take the process of leadership literally and consider the process through which leaders 'learn to lead'. Learning to lead is a complex phenomenon and one that remains controversial. This discussion starts with some of the learning literature and suggests that a parallel can be drawn between learning to be a parent and learning to be a leader: in both cases, and counter-intuitively, it is the junior that teaches the senior how to do the senior's job: children teach adults how to be parents and subordinates teach their superordinates how to lead. This is not just because power is a relationship and not a possession but because much of both parenting and leading seems to be acquired through experiential – and reflective – trial and error. Moreover, the engagement in a learning process is performative in two senses: first the engagement is rooted in discursive practices that constitute rather than merely reflect 'reality'; second, it is a performance that needs to be continually reproduced for it to be effective. But there is more to this parallel than an interesting argument: children can be extraordinarily effective in teaching parenting skills because of their open and honest feedback. A number of historical cases then explore this argument and provides the basis for the claim that Calchas, the mythical Trojan who helped the Greeks defeat the Trojans, provides an interesting case for modelling the way leaders might recruit and retain people willing to replicate this open and honest feedback that alone may stop them from failing in the long term.

The second part of the process chapter moves us from the theoretical class room to the practical experience of learning to lead by way of a study of an RAF leadership training course. We explore the process of leadership here because the RAF provides a classic case where formal authority is tightly embedded in, and executed through, the military hierarchy: the process is tightly demarcated, transparent and well tried. However, the learning literature suggests that such an organizational setting is ill-equipped to provide the best environment for learning, so how do the RAF manage to teach leadership? The case suggests that it embodies much that resonates with the Community of Practice ideas originally formulated by Wenger (1998) and that these notions also generate some important limits to the assumption that the process of leadership is inherently embodied in the acts of individuals.

The final chapter moves from learning the process of leadership to evaluating the importance of leadership as a position. This most traditional way of understanding

leadership is explored through a brief review of the contemporary debates on complexity, networks, hierarchies and heterarchies. It has been argued for some time that organizations of all forms are changing their architecture to divest themselves of unnecessary management layers and to become flatter, slimmer and more agile. As such the formal leaders of these organizations have to respond by leading in a different way, by distributing authority and responsibility downwards so that they 'facilitate' rather than control their followers. By recent convention Distributed Leadership has been invested with all kinds of positive values and considered as a way of transcending the current 'crisis in leadership' that allegedly prevails. However, taking two case studies I suggest that this may not be so, either in temporal terms or in moral evaluation. In the first case – that proclaims the arrival of a new leadership model – I consider the role of Distributed Leadership in the (re)acquisition of civil rights for African-Americans in the 1960s through the alternative narratives of the charismatic leader, Martin Luther King, and the mass movement of Distributed leaders. In the second case – that attributes an essentially moral compass to Distributed Leadership – I consider how the model informs an analysis of the leadership of terrorist groups, in particular al-Qaida. Distributive Leadership can, then, provide both a constructive and a destructive approach to organizations and it can explain not just why democratic organizations are more successful but also the resilience of terrorist groups in the face of conventional democratic authorities.

This brings us back to the beginning, because how we define leadership determines how we deal with such groups: if leadership is concerned with results or with individual charismatics who lead from the top we can (literally) undermine the organization by beheading the leadership – as the US-led coalition forces tried to do in the second Iraq war; but if leadership is more concerned with the community and with the process of leadership then such a strategy is unlikely to succeed. Leadership, then, is not just a theoretical arena but one with critical practical implications for us all and the limits of leadership – what leaders can do and what followers should allow them to do – are foundational aspects of this arena. Leadership, in effect, is too important to be left to leaders.

1

What is leadership: person, result, position or process?

Introduction

This chapter begins by setting out the context for answering the question – what is leadership? The first section considers whether this question needs to be contextualized in space and time and proceeds to investigate the links between ethics and leadership. It then confronts the issue of leadership definitions and explains why these definitions may be contested and why no consensus is either likely or necessary – because leadership is 'an essentially contested concept'. Taking each of the primary definitions in turn, the chapter explores the foundational assumptions of the different answers to the question by structuring the debate around four different answers: Person, Result, Position or Process. That leadership often draws upon on all four modes is self-evident but it is also the case that different people and organizations approach the answer to the definitional question quite differently and this may have profound effects upon how we perceive, recruit, reward and apportion responsibility to 'leadership'.

Time for leadership?

Leadership, or the lack of it, seems to be responsible for just about everything these days. On the day this was written – 22 April 2004 – the front page of the *Guardian* newspaper has four stories, three of which relate to leadership: global warming – and the lack of leadership in attending to the problem; a series of suicide bombings in Basra, related to the leadership of Blair, Bush, Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda; and Blair's leadership over the British government's U-turn on holding a referendum over the new European constitution. The back page has three further stories, two of them about leadership: the 'lead' taken by Stuart MacGill, an Australian cricketer who announced he would not tour Zimbabwe on moral grounds; and a threat by the

Portuguese football team, Porto, to take Chelsea to the ruling body Fifa for trying to 'mislead' Porto's coach, Jose Mourinho, towards a new job in England. These notions of leadership are distinctly different but all have some commonality: they imply change, relationships and morality – though the writers and the actors involved also seem to disagree about all of these aspects. But has leadership changed since the beginning of the twenty-first century or even the beginning of the twentieth century? Do we need to reconstruct leadership because the situation has changed irrevocably and that is why five of the seven lead stories in today's newspaper relate to leadership?

If the assumption is that space and time are irrelevant to modelling leadership, then it does not matter what the twenty-first century organization or business will look like because the leadership format will remain stable: leadership requirements are eternal. Thus the question is not what leadership model is most suitable for the future but what kind of leadership model is best, period. This kind of model has been associated with a wide number of leadership theories, including Carlyle's 'Heroic Man' and some trait theories that suggest certain traits are both essential to leadership and essentially unchanging across space and time. Some form of charisma, the ability to envision a radically different solution to an aged problem, the ability to mobilize followers and so on are, in this approach, just a few of these universal requirements because the future is merely a reflection of the past.

The most radical version of this approach relates to the 'hard-wiring' model of evolutionary psychology. In this perspective leadership is something that we have always had and something that some of us are born with. This genetic make up tends to propel 'alpha-males' – those with high levels of testosterone – into positions of leadership where – if successful – they then generate high levels of serotonin, a hormone associated with happiness. The subsequent forms of natural selection eliminate all but the fittest, or rather all but the most appropriate for leadership positions (Nicholson, 2000: 97–125). In effect, the requirements of leadership are hard-wired into humans and remain relatively stable across space and time. Or as Nicholson (2000: 1) puts it: 'We may have taken ourselves out of the Stone Age but we haven't taken the Stone Age out of ourselves.'

Under these circumstances we might, perhaps, follow Plato in concentrating on the question: 'Who should rule us?', even if his answer – the wisest rather than the most popular – runs contrary to our current democratic trend. But if leadership is hard-wired then simply facilitating the process of natural selection should be sufficient to resolve the problem because the kind of leadership is unlikely to change in the near or distant future. The persistence of this selection model is evident in the large number of TV programmes that operate on precisely this philosophical basis, such as Big Brother, Popstars, Fame Academy and so on. We might then ask whether all the concern for different leadership styles is mere propaganda, a shifting debate about morality generated by the chattering classes or by those who believe history is on their side but ultimately deployed by those with what Nietzsche called 'the will to power'. In other words, the ideological justification for domination may vary but the cause remains the same.

Often this approach relates the apparent universality and timelessness of human leadership to our animal nature because leadership in animals appears unchanging and tends to be amongst the most hierarchical and brutal. Lion leadership, for example, is primarily undertaken by lionesses in terms of hunts and tending the young but the alpha male dominates in terms of eating privileges and chasing away rival males. Wolf packs tend to be family units of between 2 and 12 individuals led by the alpha pair who alone breed. A strict hierarchy exists within wolf packs in which the alpha male leads hunts and territorial defence while the alpha female leads the pups.[1]

But if human leadership is a mirror of the animal world then we should most closely resemble the world of chimpanzees, our closest genetic cousin. De Waal's (2000: 77–135) account of Chimpanzees suggests that leadership is not determined by size or necessarily by hard-wiring but by coalition building. Hence during the observation period three different males (First Yeroen, then Luit and finally Nikkie) took control over the group but this was only possible by alliances built up over time both with one of the two other adult males and with the larger group of females. Moreover, no leadership was permanent or self-stabilizing – each of the three leaders had to create and recreate the network of support and undermine the counter-alliances on a regular basis to maintain control. What is also intriguing is that the final male leader, Nikkie, who was rather young to be the group leader, had great difficulty maintaining control over the female adults and only succeeded by sharing his authority, collective leadership, with the oldest male, Yeroen, who undertook the 'policing' activities in the group on Nikkie's behalf. De Waal (2000: 118), in a reformulation of Thomas Hobbes's precondition for submission to a leader, suggests that this may be a consequence of the perception amongst the females that Nikkie was unable to protect them from attack. Whatever the cause it does seem that chimpanzee leadership is essentially rooted in the ability to create and maintain a network of support – and to undermine any rivals attempting to build competitive alliances.

A related biological argument suggests that human altruism is not an ethical philosophy rooted in helping others, possibly by leading them, but a gene-based determinant. In other words, what might appear to be altruistic behaviour is in effect the consequence of genes maximizing the chance of their survival. Hence although laying down one's life for one's brother or sister might appear to be altruistic, the supporters of Socio-biology (E.O. Wilson, 1975) or the Selfish Gene (Dawkins, 1989) would probably relate this action to the propensity of related genes in kin groups to protect each other. Of course this raises enormous problems for anything other than Transactional Theories of leadership because only self-interest can determine follower- and leader-behaviour. There will certainly be no likelihood of Transformational Leadership succeeding because this suggests followers should subordinate their personal interests to those of a group that are unlikely to be restricted to kin groups. However, experiments by Falk *et al.* (2003) suggest that self-oriented behaviour has significant limits. In the first experiment two people are required to share £100, but one (A) will decide who gets what. It is then up to the other (B) to

accept their 'share' or reject the entire package, and if the latter course is chosen then A is deprived of his or her share too. Since even £1 is better than nothing, it would be logical for B to accept whatever A offers but the experiment suggests that when B's share drops below £25, B usually punishes A by refusing to participate at all. Related experiments in public good confirm the suspicion that there is a lot more to behaviour than gene-based selfishness and people are willing to punish selfish behaviour, even if it causes them harm too.[2]

Moreover, if the assumption is that space and time are critical to changing organizational forms rather than genes or traits, because the organizational form determines the appropriate kind of leadership, and that organizational form changes, then we need to be very clear about the future and equally clear about the connection between the context and the leadership kind required. Precisely what context requires what kind of leadership remains subject to dispute but there are several variants rooted in different models of time, of which four will detain us here.[3]

The linear model perceives time as both a straight line and (usually) an ever-improving line such that our notions of, and expertise about, leadership improves across time, irrespective of space. Thus historically we might consider how the prior authoritarian and absolutist models of political and business leadership have gradually changed from tyrannies to participative democracies. In this 'whig' model of historical change, Genghis Kahn, Louis XIV, Hitler and Stalin are replaced by democratic leaders; authoritarian business bosses, such as Henry Ford and Robert Maxwell, are replaced by liberals such as Richard Branson; and authoritarian military models, for instance, the Prussian Army of Frederick the Great, are replaced by decentralized military models, for instance, the Strategic Corporal model currently under development by the US Marine Corps (Krulak, 1999) or the Distributive Leadership approach that we will consider in Chapter 5. If this model were adopted we would expect the future leaders to be ever more liberal and participative, in line with Western democratic philosophies drawn from the enlightenment. Such a model is certainly popular – as witnessed by the popularity of Fukuyama's (1993) claim about the end of history: democratic capitalism had both undermined all ideological opposition and marked the zenith of political systems. However, the events since 9/11 indicate that, to paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of the death of all opposition are premature. Furthermore, such a model has yet to account for the rich diversity of leadership forms that have existed in both time and space: in short, there have been more casualties to authoritarian leadership in the twentieth century than in any other, there are many examples of decentralized leadership in previous centuries, and the growth of fundamentalist religious governments – of all kinds and including Christian, Hindu and Muslim – in the last two decades does not bode well for a continuously enlightening leadership style.

Indeed, the metaphorical straight line that connects the problems of the past to the solutions of the future resonates with the popularity of the quest for the 'answer' to the leadership 'question'. Many harassed executives attend many 'leadership course' ostensibly in the hope that the solution to their leadership problem will mysteriously emerge from participating in the course in a manner akin to the smoke from the Vatican chimney that marks the election of a Pope – and thus the 'solution' to the leadership 'problem'. But the quest for an answer, like the search for the Holy Grail, is unlikely to be successful because the leadership problem is inherently intractable – that is impossible or difficult to manage. Rittel and Webber (1973) observed problems could be divided between 'Wicked' and 'Tame'. The latter could be complex issues but each 'Tame' problem was theoretically capable of resolution through the application of established techniques and processes; that is to say, 'tame problems' can be solved by management. However, if the problems are essentially novel, indeed unique, if they embody no obvious resolution point or assessment mechanism, if the cause, explanation and apparent resolution of the problem depends upon the viewpoint of the stakeholder, and if the problem is embedded in another similar problem, then the problem is Wicked. Wicked Problems are potentially open to better or worse developments but not 'right' or 'wrong' solutions and are thus only amenable to leadership – defined as dealing with something novel – rather than management – defined as dealing with something which is both known and which has a pre-existing resolution. A Tame problem, however complex, is teaching your children to pass their driving test; a Wicked problem is remaining a successful parent to them. A Tame problem is 'winning' the war in Iraq; a Wicked problem is securing a just and lasting peace in Iraq. A Tame problem is heart surgery; a Wicked problem is providing unlimited health services to all who need them on the basis of limited resources.[4] Management might be focused on solving complex but essentially Tame problems in a unilinear fashion: applying what worked last time; but leadership is essentially about facing Wicked problems that are literally 'unmanageable'.

Perhaps, then, if space and time are important in generating radically different organizations and unique problems that demand significantly variable leadership forms then a contingency-based approach (Fiedler, 1997) would be better than a linear model. This suggests that once we have established the context and format of such organizations then, and only then, can we begin to decipher the 'needs' for leadership. This form of reasoning, often nestling within a functionalist philosophy, usually implies some form of materialist determinism; in effect the future material world will determine the cultural context that supports leadership. So, for example, if our future world is very dynamic, competitive and unstable, then we 'need' to provide flexible and decentralized leadership systems. On the other hand, if the future returns to the more stable global system that we allegedly experienced just after the Second World War, or if the future that we were allegedly about to enter resembles 'the end of history' that was almost upon us after the collapse of communism, then we can return to the stable hierarchies and centralized administrative leadership that dominated the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, it may be that 'crisis' situations require authoritarian or at least decisive leadership, while more stable periods facilitate the development of more liberal models. However, precisely what the context is – and how we come to agree on this – never seems clear. Moreover, as the scissor, paper, stone game analogy

suggests, the context is constantly changing anyway as competing groups respond to each other; an idea that resonates closely to the 'fitness landscapes' of complexity theory where strategy is closer to walking on a water-bed than on dry land: everything moves as multiple actors enter and thus change the context (Battram, 1998: 209–23).

A third take on time is in a circular format. Here the fashions of leadership revolve across time and space so that authoritarian and liberal leaders displace each other in sequences that may last some time. There is no essential 'end point' in this model, just a sequence of revolutions but these changes can be related to the differing contexts within which they occur. In Barley and Kunda's (2000) version of this the endless cycle of management styles relates directly to a period within the Kondratiev economic 'long wave'. Hence, expansionary periods are associated with 'rational' or scientific forms of management, such as Scientific Management or Systems Theory approaches, while contracting economic periods are associated with more 'normative' management styles, such as Industrial Betterment, Human Relations and Organizational Cultures and so on. Here the future leadership style will depend upon the point of the next cycle so the trick is to predict the cycle and then derive the appropriate leadership style. Elitist models of leadership, such as Pareto's (1997), also tend to adopt the cyclical approach but lock them into the oscillating forms of elites rather than cycles of the economy. However, like Kondratiev's Long Wave theory, what appears an interesting argument has yet to establish itself as the accepted truth.

The final variant on temporal change is that there is no pattern here, just a sequence of changes that have no 'destination' and thus no prediction is possible: the future may be an extrapolation of past trends or it may reveal a cyclical return to 'old fashioned virtues' or it may simply be completely novel, something beyond our current comprehension. If the latter is true then the chances of anyone predicting entirely novel developments are remote and we shall simply have to wait and see. Of course, this then returns us to the possibility of an eternal leadership style: it doesn't matter what the future holds, 'traditional' leaders will still lead. But there is a different 'take' on the requirements of leadership that needs further exploration here: the very idea of 'requirements' legitimizes rather than simply explains the role of leaders.

It could be argued that the causal direction of the question should be reversed – thus the question should not be what kind of leader will the future organization need but what kind of future organizations will the current crop of leaders construct? This 'construction' can itself be of two variants.

First, leaders 'build' the future context – in the sense that Hitler laid the foundations for the Nazi State, or Roosevelt laid the foundations for the USA to enter the Second World War or Mao Tse-tung constructed the ideological basis for Communist China and so on. Of course, this leader-focused approach assumes that individuals rather than collectives are responsible for the construction of the future – in much the same way that Carlyle suggested, or in one of Napoleon's favourite examples 'The Gauls were not conquered by the Roman legions but by Caesar' (quoted in Goldsworthy, 2003: 377). Tolstoy believed the opposite – that leaders were merely

propelled by their organizations as a bow-wave is propelled by a boat, but it can still be argued that the future is constructed by contemporary leadership even if that leadership has a collective form (Ackerman and Duvall, 2000).

Second, we need to consider whether we can ever secure a transparent rendition of the context without reference to the relationship between leaders and organizations. In other words, are leaders neutral in the interpretations of contexts and organizations or are they deeply implicated in those renditions – to the point where no 'objective' analysis is available? This goes beyond the popular idea that 'spin-doctors' are responsible for distorting the 'truth' because this kind of approach assumes there is an objective 'truth' out there somewhere, waiting for our language to describe it. Instead I would suggest that what counts as the 'truth' is always contested so the point is not what the spin-doctors are doing to the 'truth' but why we believe some versions of what we take to be reality but not others. Hence language does not so much describe reality as construct it. Or as Rorty (1999: xxvi) puts it, 'languages are not attempts to copy what is out there, but rather tools for dealing with what is out there'. Magritte's marvellous painting 'This is not a pipe' demonstrates this well – it is indeed not a pipe, it is a *representation* of a pipe in the same way that photos of missile sites or mobile biological laboratories are not objective evidence of missiles or mobile biological laboratories but photographic *representations* of these. The most recent case of a leader using this mode of persuasion might be Colin Powell, then the US Secretary of State, trying to persuade the UN on 6 February 2003 of the existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction by reference to photographic 'evidence'[5] (an echo of the famous 'Adlai Stevenson Moment' on 25 October 1962 when the then US Ambassador to the UN showed photographs of Soviet Missiles in Cuba to the UN Security Council).[6]

So who says what the context is (it's usually a crisis)? And who says that – as a consequence of the context – we therefore need leaders of a particular kind (it's usually 'decisive')? Usually the answer is: the existing leaders. If, for instance, we are to believe Prime Minister Blair and President Bush, the situation just prior to the second Gulf War was perilous – Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction were on the verge of being mobilized and could be deployed within 45 minutes. This 'objective situation' clearly required leadership that was decisive and effective – hence the war against Iraq. But it is no longer clear precisely what this military threat actually was: it may be that there was no threat, so the situation did not require military conflict because the policy of containment was working and had done so since the end of the first Gulf war. Now the point is not whether there ever were weapons of mass destruction but that the situation is *constructed* by those with control over the information. Thus the anti-war campaigns tried and failed to construct an account of the situation that downplayed the threat. What remains, therefore is not a true and a false account of the situation because we will probably never know what that actually was. Instead we have contending accounts, some of which are perceived as more powerful than others and which are therefore able to mobilize support for particular actions. It is often very difficult, then, to establish what the context actually is and what the

requirements of the situation are, and quite different forms of leadership have succeeded in markedly similar circumstances to bedevil our attempts to link the situation to the 'required' leadership (Grint, 2001).

Time for moral leadership?

If we cannot agree on whether the requirements for leadership have changed radically recently, can we at least agree that the time for moral leadership has arrived? If only we could agree on the definition of terms, and then agree on a process for peacefully resolving disputes, perhaps we could avoid the suffering of those at the 'wrong' end of leadership. Perhaps, but as we shall shortly see the calamitous consequences of leadership failures are seldom mechanically attributable to the moral treachery of our leaders. Adel Safty (2003), in contrast, argues that management and governance are neutral terms while 'Leadership is or at least ought to be normatively apprehended as a set of values with connotations evocative of the higher achievements of the human spirit.' Leadership is not only tied to these norms but the norms themselves are explained as 'the promotion of human development for the common good of people in a democratic environment'. In effect, leadership, which is necessarily moral, is also necessarily tied to democracy. Clearly this would place almost all of human history and society beyond the limits of ethical leadership.

However, there are many who would argue against the democratic essence of leadership: Plato certainly despised it as a system for encouraging leadership by demagogue rather than leadership by the wise, and the democratic element of leadership has certainly not been adequate in restraining several of the 'lapses' that Safty himself rails against: Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf wars to name a few. He rightly laments the havoc caused by leaders such as Mussolini, Hitler and Saddam Hussein but suggests that their catastrophic impact relates primarily to the absence of higher moral purposes and defines such people as Rulers rather than Leaders, in much the same way that MacGregor Burns (1978) distinguishes between Transformational Leaders and Power-Wielders, Zaleznik (1974) differentiates between psychologically 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' leaders, Howell (1988) contrasts Socialized and Personalized Leaders, and Bass (1985) distinguishes them between Authentic and Inauthentic/ Pseudotransformational Leaders.[7]

But there is a problem here: who decides on which side of the divide they sit? This is not just a question of applying twenty-first century Western standards as universally good, but suggesting that all the leaders defined as sitting on the 'wrong' side of the fence probably perceived themselves to have a 'moral' purpose. Of course, most of us would regard such claims as extraordinarily dubious – but we are not the ones who followed these people. Thus Hitler probably believed he was acting morally and in the best interests of the German population in his simultaneous assaults upon Jews, Communists, the disabled, Gypsies, homosexuals and anyone else who got in his way.

That most people disputed this assumption vigorously matters not one jot because to imply that these Rulers were simply evil is to simply miss the point – how did they mobilize so many followers if it was self-evident to all their followers that no good would come from their leadership? In other words, for all that I side with Safty in his assault upon immorality, what counts as immoral is neither easy to define nor does it explain the success of such leaders.

For instance, in May 2004 two American soldiers faced courts martial for actions that remain morally controversial: Specialist Jeremy Sivits was on trial in Baghdad for taking photographs of abused Iraqi prisoners inside Abu Ghraib prison, while Sergeant Camilo Mejia was on trial in Fort Stewart army base for abandoning his unit after six months in Iraq on the grounds that to remain would have been to follow orders that he believed were immoral or illegal. As Ramsey Clark (former US attorney general during the Vietnam campaign) suggested, 'The irony is that they are being court martialed over there [Iraq] for the very things that he is being court martialed for over here [USA] for not going back to do' (quoted in Goldenberg, 2004: 4).

Another example would be the dropping by the Bush administration of the word 'Crusade' in the war against terrorism. Did not the original Crusaders believe they were acting morally, doing their God's work? Did not Saladin's followers believe exactly the same thing – but from the opposite direction? And do not many contemporary terrorists proclaim their acts to be moral, as defined by their own religious perspective? Indeed, it does not actually matter what we think of the (im)morality of contemporary terrorist organizations and their leaders – it's what their followers think that matters and most of them seem to believe they are acting morally in their quest to free their communities from oppression, drive out the non-believers, return the earth to its rightful owners, or push humanity to oblivion as quickly as possible.

In this respect it is more than likely that the followers of bin Laden believe him to be acting 'morally' even if the rest of the world does not. The same logic must apply in Serbia where, in December 2003, the ultra nationalist Serbian Radical Party secured the single largest proportion of the Serbian Parliamentary votes (28 per cent of the votes and 33 per cent of the seats) whilst its two most (in)famous members, the formal leader Vojislav Seselj, and the former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, were on, or awaiting, trial at the UN tribunal in The Hague for alleged war crimes.

The solution for Safty is 'People-Driven Moral Leadership', though most of the examples used derive from the overthrow of old Soviet bloc or eastern dictatorships rather than contemporary democratic societies. And there's the rub: for Safty it seems that democracy, morality and authentic leadership go hand in hand; they reflect and reinforce each other. But don't all the democratic leaders claim this – even when, for many of their citizens, they are manifestly not acting democratically, morally or authentically? Indeed, People-Power may be in line with the wishes of the majority but this does not make it moral, does it? If the majority of a population decide to enforce a religious law that requires the stoning of 'fallen' women is that essentially and objectively moral because it is democratically decided?

A related problem concerns the importance of emotion to leadership. It is self-evident that leadership is not a wholly rational process any more than people are emotionless. And it is, therefore, equally obvious that emotions, or emotional intelligence, or whatever label is in vogue, is an important element of leadership. But this does not directly translate into the approach which suggests that people with high emotional intelligence (EQ) are morally superior to those without high EQ. Hitler, for example, was extraordinarily effective in manipulating people's emotions but this does not make him objectively moral. Moreover, it is because emotions are such a powerful motivator that we ought to limit their significance – that, after all, is the reason for living according to a system of laws rather that at the whim of a tyrant whose EQ is a liability for all who disagree with the tyrant.

The limits to the effectiveness of a call for 'morality' to be reinserted into political leadership are also self-evident in the inability of the UN to control its own members or to engage in effective peacekeeping duties. Those failures cannot be resolved by further appeals to moral behaviour any more than pacifism has proved effective in preventing wars (Cf. Ackerman and Duval, 2000; Schell, 2003). Indeed, as long as the UN remains dependent upon the military power of a few nations to do its global policing, it will remain a morally upright 'paper tiger'. An alternative solution to the problematic call for moral leadership is to demand a global parliament – a United Nations without the distorting influences of the Permanent Members of the Security Council and with the necessary powers to enforce the democratic decisions of the majority. Though again, a democratic UN does not guarantee moral behaviour, even if it is preferable to the status quo.

Perhaps we should look again at Karl Popper: he always claimed that democracy was not a good in and of itself but the best system available for inhibiting a greater evil: tyranny. Is this the unpalatable truth: that all claims to the moral high ground should be treated with suspicion? Moral leadership is not the way to secure democracy, morality and justice because morality, like power and leadership is an essentially contested concept; hence we might be better off seeking a more pragmatic alternative to the calls for 'moral leadership': a functioning global democracy – while no guarantee of global morality – might be the best opportunity we have for inhibiting their opposites.

Popper's suggestion that science should advance through the quest for fallibility rather than infallibility, accepting error rather than asserting perfection, might also be a useful analogy for our review of leadership. After all, if we could construct a science of leadership then the more we knew about what leadership was the closer we would be to perfecting and predicting it, wouldn't we? But has this happened?

What is leadership?

Despite over half a century of research into leadership, we appear to be no nearer a consensus as to its basic meaning, let alone whether it can be taught or its moral

effects measured and predicted. This cannot be because of a dearth of interest or material: on 29 October 2003 there were 14,139 items relating to 'Leadership' on Amazon.co.uk for sale. Assuming you could read these at the rate of one per day it would take almost 39 years just to read the material, never mind write anything about leadership or practice it. Just two months later that number had increased by 3 per cent (471 items) to 14,610. Assuming this increase was annualized to 18 per cent we can look forward to just under 20,000 items by the beginning of 2005, 45,000 by 2010, 100,000 by 2015 and a little later we should have more items than people! Put another way, since there were just three books on followership available in 2003 we will soon get to the interesting position where there are more books on leaders than physical followers. It should be self-evident that we do not need more 'lists' of leadership competences or skills because leadership research appears to be anything but incremental in its approach to 'the truth' about leadership: the longer we spend looking at leadership the more complex the picture becomes.

Traditionally, leadership is defined by its alleged opposite: management. Management is concerned with executing routines and maintaining organizational stability – it is essentially concerned with control; leadership is concerned with direction setting, with novelty and is essentially linked to change, movement and persuasion. Another way to put this is that management is the equivalent of *déjà vu* (seen this before), whereas leadership is the equivalent of *vu jàdé* (never seen this before). Management implies that managers have seen it all before and simply need to respond correctly to the situation by categorizing it and executing the appropriate process; leadership implies that leaders have never seen anything like it before and must therefore construct a novel strategy. But this division is often taken to mean that different people are necessary to fill the different roles – hence anyone relegated to the role of 'mere' manager, cannot be considered as bringing anything unique to the party – after all, their task is limited to the mechanical task of recognizing situations and applying pre-existing processes. The consequence of the role subordination implied by this should be obvious: get out of management and into leadership! And if the organization is under-managed and over-led well it isn't your fault, is it? That most roles actually require both recognition and invention should also be clear.

Another way of approaching the problem might be to consider what the most popular textbooks have to say on the issue. Probably the top four selling general review texts on leadership in 2003 were Hughes *et al.* (1999), Northouse (1997), Wright (1996) and Yukl (1998). On the very first page of their book, Hughes *et al.* (1999) suggest that 'if any single idea is central to this book, it is that leadership is a process, not a position'. They then illustrate the gap between leadership research and personalized accounts of leadership by exploring three short case studies: Colin Powell, Madeleine Albright and Konosuke Matsushita. Now by any stretch of the imagination these three are leaders in a positional sense, irrespective of the processes that they employ, so already we have at best a contested concept and at worst a contradiction. They go on (1999: 8) to list the various definitional forms that include: inducing

subordinates to behave in a desired manner; an influencing relationship, directing and coordinating group work; a volitional, as opposed to a coerced, interpersonal relationship; a transformative relationship; actions that focus resources to create desirable opportunities; creating the conditions for teams to be effective; and finally the one that they adopt, that leadership is the influencing of an organized group towards accomplishing its goals (Roach and Behling, 1984). Thus for Hughes *et al.*, 1999, and despite their examples the conclusion is that leadership, above everything else, is not a position but a process.

Northouse (1997: 2) begins by noting Stogdill's (1974: 7) famous quip that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it, and accepts that leadership has different meanings for different people. He then proceeds to relate Bass's (1990: 11–20) typology that distinguished between leadership as the focus of group process, the embodiment of the collective will, leadership as a personality issue, a complex phenomena that induces others to accomplish tasks, and finally leadership as an act or behaviour – the things leaders do to bring about change in a group. Noting the importance of power, processes, goal achievement and groups, Northouse (1997: 3) settles on a definition that suggests leadership 'is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'. This is clearly very close to that adopted by Hughes *et al.* on the basis of Roach and Behling's definition.

In contrast, Yukl (1998: 2), who does accept that there is no 'correct definition', does not distinguish between leadership, management and 'the boss', also considers Katz and Kahn's (1978: 528) suggestion that leadership is 'the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization'. Leadership might also be demonstrated by 'those who consistently make effective contributions to social order and who are expected and perceived to do so' (Hosking, 1988: 153), or it may be 'a process of giving purpose to collective effort' (Jacobs and Jaques, 1990: 281), or 'the ability to step outside the culture ... to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive' (Schein, 1992: 2), or even 'the process of making sense of what people are doing together so that people will understand and be committed' (Drath and Palus, 1994: 4). It could be the activity involved in 'articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished' (Richards and Engle, 1986: 206). This is a much more differentiated collection of terms and Yukl (1998: 5) concludes that 'It is neither feasible nor desirable *at this point* in the development of the discipline to attempt to resolve the controversies over the appropriate definition of leadership' [my italics]. However, 'over time it will be possible to compare the utility of different conceptions and arrive at some consensus on the matter' (1998: 5). In other words, for Yukl at least, the problem is not inherent to the topic but a consequence of its novelty.

Finally, Wright (1996: 1) also begins by acknowledging the complexity and ambiguity of the concept, especially concerning the role of personality, the existence of leadership positions, the role of coercion, the determination of effects, and the

evaluation of performance, nevertheless, he concludes that common to most approaches are the notions of influence and the role of followers.

Apart from noting the variegated properties of these definitions we are left more rather than less confused by them. Leadership does seem to be defined differently and even if there are some similarities the complexities undermine most attempts to explain why the differences exist. That is to say, that we know differences exist but we remain unable to construct a consensus about the concept. However, the dissensus seems to hang around four areas of dispute, leadership defined as: *person, result, position and process.*

There are several potential resolutions to this problem of leadership definition:

1. Stop the research now: since the research is making things worse not better we should stop while we are not totally confused.
2. Keep going in the hope that someone will eventually discover the truth about leadership and save us all 39 years of wasted reading time.
3. Reconstruct why we are unable to generate a consensus on what leadership is and consider what this might mean for leadership *practice* as well as theory.

The rest of this chapter focuses upon the last of these and I want to suggest one explanation for the problem and a way of constraining its effects. I hesitate to use the word 'resolution' because the explanation actively inhibits any resolution, but it does enable us to establish some parameters that we might use to understand why the differences exist in the first place. In other words, this does not provide a first step towards a consensus but a first step towards understanding why a consensus might be unachievable. Moreover, the point is not simply to redescribe the varieties of interpretation but to consider how this affects the way leadership is perceived, enacted, recruited and supported. For example, if organizations promote individuals on the basis of one particular interpretation of leadership then that approach will be encouraged and others discouraged – but it may well be that other interpretations of leadership are critical to the organization's success. Hence the importance of the definition is not simply to delineate a space in a language game and it is not merely a game of sophistry; on the contrary, how we define leadership has vital implications for how organizations work – or don't work.

Leadership: an essentially contested concept?

50 years ago W.B. Gallie (1955/56) called power an Essentially Contested Concept (ECC). Gallie suggested that many concepts – such as power – involved 'endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of the users' to the point where debates appeared irresolvable. For example, a discussion about whether Bush or Blair are 'good' leaders is likely to generate more heat than light and precious little hope of a consensus amongst people who bring different definitions of 'good leadership' to the

debate. For Gallie (1964: 187–8), 'Recognition of a given concept as essentially contested implies recognition of rival uses of it (such as oneself repudiates) as not only logically possible and humanly "likely", but as of permanent potential critical value to one's own use or interpretation of the concept in question.' Examples of ECCs are multiple, as are the attempts to resolve the contestation: Strine *et al.* (1990), consider Performance as an ECC; Kellow (2002) applies it to Sustainable Development; Bajpai (1999) uses it to analyse Security; Cohen (2000) takes Civil Society as an ECC; and finally Terrorism is the subject of Smelser and Mitchell's (2002) application of an ECC.

The problem of evaluating leadership is exemplified by Jack Welch: was he 'the best' business leader of the 1990s because GE under his 'leadership' made more money than any other company or would GE have been this successful anyway and did his methods unnecessarily destroy hundreds of careers? We could equally argue that Sir Peter Bonfield, ex-CEO of BT, was 'the best' because despite losing over £30 billion it could be argued that he saved BT from bankruptcy. In other words, it is always possible to devise a way of measuring 'successful leadership' but the measures may not generate a consensus because they are neither objective nor do we all agree on the way to measure success because our definitions and interpretations of leadership are ECCs. Furthermore, and on a more practical note, if we select, criticize and reward people for their 'leadership' we should not be surprised if they fail to come to our standards – it may well be that their conception of 'leadership' is radically different from ours; thus we should then be in a position to add a clarifying statement – 'and by leadership we mean X not Y'.

Let us first generate the taxonomy of leadership. This must include the Process issues that most of the texts highlight, but also the Positional issues that they tend to use as illustrations of leaders. However, a huge amount of research has focused upon the Person of the leader as well, and it would be strange indeed if leadership research bore no interest in the result of leadership activity – though note that this takes as given that leadership makes a difference to the product, the results. This fourfold typology does not claim universal coverage but it should encompass a significant proportion of our definitions of leadership. Moreover, the typology is not hierarchical: it does not claim that one definition is more important than another and, contrary to the consensual approach, it is constructed upon foundations that *may* be mutually exclusive. In effect, we may have to choose which form of leadership we are talking about rather than attempt to elide the differences. It is however, quite possible that empirical examples of leadership embody elements of all four forms. Thus we are left with four major alternatives:

- Leadership as Person: is it WHO 'leaders' are that makes them leaders?
- Leadership as Result: is it WHAT 'leaders' achieve that makes them leaders?
- Leadership as Position: is it WHERE 'leaders' operate that makes them leaders?
- Leadership as Process: is it HOW 'leaders' get things done that makes them leaders?

All these aspects are 'ideal types', following Weber's assertion that no such 'real' empirical case probably exists in any pure form, but this does enable us to understand the phenomenon of leadership better, and its attendant confusions and complexities, because leadership means different things to different people. This is therefore a heuristic model not an attempt to carve up the world into 'objective' segments that mirror what we take to be reality. I will suggest, having examined these four different approaches to leadership, that the differences both explain why so little agreement has been reached on the definition of leadership and why this is important to the execution and analysis of leadership.

Defining leadership

Person-based leadership

Is it who you are that determines whether you are a leader or not? This, of course resonates with the traditional traits approach: a leader's character or personality. We might consider the best example of this as the charismatic, to whom followers are attracted because of the charismatic's personal 'magnetism'. Ironically, while a huge effort has been made to reduce the ideal leader to his or her essence – the quintessential characteristics or competencies or behaviours of the leader – the effort of reduction has simultaneously reduced its value. It is rather as if a leadership scientist had turned chef and was engaged in reducing a renowned leader to his or her elements by placing them in a saucepan and applying heat. Eventually the residue left from the cooking could be analysed and the material substances divided into their various chemical compounds. Take, for instance, Wofford's (1999: 525) claim that laboratory research on charisma would develop a 'purer' construct 'free from the influences of such nuisance variables as performance, organizational culture and other styles of leadership'. What a culture-free leader would like is anyone's guess and this attempted purification is literally *reductio ad absurdum*: a pile of chemical residues might have considerable difficulty persuading other people to follow it. Yet clearly some authorities remain wedded to such an approach and, to be fair, it may be that some chemical residues do, paradoxically, have exactly this ability: heroin, for example, is often blamed for 'leading' people astray. Moreover, this kind of approach might also suggest that the search for the answer to the question 'What is leadership?' is untenable because it implies an essential element, an essence that simply does not exist in such a form. At its most basic the 'essence' of leadership, *qua* an individual leader, leaves out the followers and without followers you cannot be a leader. Indeed, this might be the simplest definition of leadership: 'having followers'.

A complementary or contradictory case can also be made for defining leadership generally as a collective, rather than an individual, phenomenon. In this case the focus usually moves from an individual formal leader to multiple informal leaders.

We might, for example, consider how organizations actually achieve anything, rather than being over-concerned with what the CEO has said should be achieved. Thus we could trace the role of informal opinion-leaders in persuading their colleagues to work differently, or to work harder, or not to work at all and so on. This 'negotiated' or 'distributed' or 'deep' leadership is often overlooked precisely because it remains informal and distributed amongst the collective rather than emanating from a formal and individual leader. This does not necessarily imply that everyone is a leader – though it might do – but rather that a relatively small number of people are crucial for ensuring organizations survive and succeed – and this minority or critical mass, may or may not coincide with those in formal leadership positions (Gronn, 2003; Ridderstrale, 2002: 11). There are, for instance several hunter-gatherer societies, or rather 'bands', such as the Hadza of Tanzania, who are formally leaderless. Individuals do 'lead' in specific tasks at particular times but the identity of the task leader tends to change across time. Here, as in most such bands, decisions are made in a democratic forum by a consensus of adult members with dissenters free to leave if they wish. Similarly, Josephy (1993: 268–9) argues that conflict between Native American Indians and the US government over opening up the Oregon Trail in 1851 was, in part, rooted in the false assumption made by the latter that the Sioux nation could be bound by the word of a single leader – chosen by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs – when the Sioux themselves insisted that no single person could take such a decision.

Either way, leadership along this criterion is primarily defined by *who* the leader is or who the leaders are (formal and informal), and it may be that such an approach is associated with an emotional relationship between leader and followers or between leaders. At its most extreme, as in Le Bon (2002), this emotional relationship renders the followers in 'the crowd' incapable of discriminating between good and bad actions – as indeed does the leader of the crowd. Freud (Surprenant, 2002) however, retains the notion of the leader embodying the ego-ideal of the followers who project onto their leader all their aspirational characteristics.

Despite the Western fetish for heroic individuals as leadership icons it is not at all clear that such examples exist in social isolation. For instance, Newton may claim to have 'led' the discovery of gravity but it was, in effect, the result of collective work by Robert Hooke and Edmund Halley as well as Newton. Take the discovery of penicillin as a further example of this. In September 1928 Alexander Fleming was cleaning some Petri dishes in St Mary's Hospital, London, when he 'discovered' that bacteria had been impeded by a mould. On the conventional account, under his leadership the momentous discovery that *Penicillium* had antibacterial effects was followed by years of painstaking research and by 1942 penicillin was launched as a life-saving antibiotic. His leadership was subsequently recognized by 25 honorary degrees: providence may have played a hand but it was Fleming's research leadership that recognized its significance and developed the drug.

Yet the antibacterial properties of penicillin had been known since Lister's work in 1872 and Duchesne's doctoral thesis in 1897, though the strain that Fleming fortunately worked with – *Penicillium notatum* – was far more effective. Indeed, far from Fleming continuing to lead a dedicated research team to transform the mould into a miraculous cure for septic wounds in the Second World War, he actually abandoned research on it, regarding it at best as a 'local antiseptic', and made only one minor reference to it in 1931; the rest of his work focused upon the value of mercury-based compounds for treating wounds. Other researchers took up the project at various periods but without Fleming's help and it was not until the team of Howard Florey, Ernst Chain and Norman Heatley began working on the issue from 1938 to 1941 at Oxford University that any radical advance was made.

Without any assistance from Fleming (one of the team thought he was already dead) Florey *et al.* developed penicillin to the point where its therapeutic properties were self-evident and mass production was possible. The team then published their results in the *Lancet*, and the *British Medical Journal* published an editorial which, while noting Fleming's modest involvement at the beginning, lavished praise on the 'real' authors of the new 'wonder-drug'. Instantly Fleming mobilized Almroth Wright, head of Fleming's department at St Mary's Hospital, and Lord Moran, head of the hospital and confidant of Winston Churchill and Lord Beaverbrooke, to write to the *Times* proclaiming Fleming as the discoverer and thus a major press and political campaign was initiated that sidelined Florey *et al.* and promoted Fleming to 'leader' (Waller, 2002: 247–67).

Nevertheless, whoever is the 'real' leader, conventional leadership, it would seem, is naked. Search as one may for a definition of leadership that encompasses anything beyond the human, the most likely trail leads back to the comforting figure of a homo sapien. Few would disagree with Northouse's (1997: 3) view that leadership 'is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal' but my particular concern here is whether the identity of the leader is necessarily human, and if so is it sufficient just to be a human, in reality to be a naked leader?

In some ways the 'transparent' appearance of a human leader can be effective. For instance, in July 2002, the Chevron-Texaco Escravos oil terminal in Nigeria (then producing around 1/2 million barrels of oil per day) was closed by 150 women demanding schools, health clinics, pollution clean up, water supplies and jobs. After a 10-day occupation and no concessions from the company the women threatened to remove all their clothes – a symbol of enormous cultural shame – that eventually forced the company to agree to their demands.[8] Nevertheless, naked humans are often the weakest link in any hybrid and that generates a search for stronger resources. Edwards (1979) reinforces this with his argument that the development of what he called Technical Control – assembly lines and the like – was a form of non-human persuasion that developed in response to the problems of Personal Control in factories. Once bullying supervisors and factory bosses became counter-productive – because of the resistance they generated amongst the labour force – Technical Control replaced Personal Control because subordinates were less resistant to being 'led' by things than to being led by people. This, of course, begs the question: what does it

mean to be 'led'? If 'to lead' implies 'to set goals and alter behaviour to achieve those goals' then we could still argue that assembly lines 'lead' people. That is, the machinery sets the required output of widgets and then persuades its human operatives to exert effort in specific ways to achieve this output. Of course, there is a human 'behind' the machinery but Edwards' claim is that machines embody superior persuasive techniques to humans in these circumstances.

We might want to differentiate here between leadership as means and ends. For instance, the assembly line is the *means* by which workers are 'led' to act. But the *ends* do not originate in the machinery; instead the 'ends' are constructed by the present but invisible human leader. So does this analytic separation solve the problem: non-humans can be the means to lead but not the ends? Well, self-evidently human leaders cannot dissociate themselves from technical supports completely, for even at a mundane level leaders usually act in a 'dressed' manner, surrounded by all kinds of technologies and non-human supports, so, in effect, there are no 'pure' leaders, though the issues of purity and contamination remain crucial (Douglas, 2002), hence all the concern for dressing in a culturally appropriate manner for a leader, whether that is a pinstriped suit, a sports jersey, a twin-set, a sari or whatever. Latour (1988), for example, makes a robust case for Actor-Network theory with his suggestion that a naked Napoleon would have been markedly less effective than a clothed Napoleon, surrounded by clothed soldiers with weapons.

Actor-Network Theory has a history and origin that need not detain us here (see Callon, 1986; Latour, 1993; Law and Hassard, 1999) but it suggests both that wholly social relations are inconceivable – because all humans rely upon and work through non-human forms, through hybrids – and that humans distinguish themselves from animals, amongst other things, on the basis of the durability or obduracy of their relations. That is, they encase their social relations into material forms. This does not mean that material forms determine things but that these material forms are an effect of the relations.

Does this imply anything about the link between hybridity and agency? We do not need to enter the debate about whether the future is destined to be dominated by robots or Cyborgs here (see Brooks, 2002; Geary, 2002; Haraway, 1991) to note the increasing degree of hybridity amongst 'people'. In Actor-Network terms agency sits in the hybrids, rather than located within either the humans or the non-humans whose relationship forms the hybrid actant (Latour, 1993). And an actant – that is something that acts or to which activity is granted by others – implies no special motivation of human individual actors, or of humans in general. An actant can literally be anything provided it is legitimated as the source of an action (Latour, 1993: 4). Hence, for example, when the regular 'Human versus Machine' chess competitions appear, are we to assume that the 'Machine' side has no human input or that the 'Human' side has had nothing to do with technology?

Yet it could still be argued that non-human leadership fails because the non-human element of the network does not instigate the changes and does not act as a *mobilizer* of networks: human leaders are not naked but naked technologies cannot lead because they do not instigate the vision or mobilization. Thus it is the pivotal *creative* role played by humans in these collaborative hybrids that distinguishes them as *primus inter pares*. But this is a little like saying the driver is the most important part of a car; in some sense that might be true but without a car you cannot drive (Michael, 2001). And precisely what the creative forces of the network are is debatable: God, alcohol, human emotion, destiny, culture and genes are all potential culprits here. Moreover, since invented futures have to be inscribed and communicated, and since humans are never without technological supports, we might still argue that human–non-human networks are critical for leadership. In essence, we might conclude that the search for an essence is irrelevant because the important element is the hybrid not the elements that comprise the hybrid, nor any alleged network essence. If this is valid then 'human' leaders should be reconsidering how they can strengthen the links in the hybrid networks not because non-humans do not embody volition but because non-human leadership is as mythically pure as human leadership. And there lies the (essentially contested) rub – it isn't the consciousness of leaders that makes them leaders or makes them effective, it's their hybridity; not how they think but how they are linked. We will pursue this particular creature in Chapter 2.

Result-based leadership

It might be more appropriate to take the result-based approach because without results there is little support for leadership. There may be thousands of individuals who are 'potentially' great leaders but if that potential is never realized, if no products of that leadership are forthcoming, then it would be logically difficult to speak of these people as 'leaders' – except in the sense of 'failed' or 'theoretical' leaders': people who actually achieve little or nothing. On the other hand, there is a tendency (e.g., Ulrich *et al.*, 1999) to focus on products as the primary criteria for leadership: since X achieved a 200 per cent increase in profits, or 'led' the team to victory, or successfully 'led' the defence of the nation, they must be successful leaders. Of course, there is then an issue about *which* products should be pursued by leaders and Elkington (1999) has argued vigorously that unless the 'Triple Bottom Line' – environmental quality and social justice as well as economic prosperity – are included then product or results-based approaches are ultimately doomed. But there are two other issues that need further examination here: first, how do we attribute the collective products of an organization to the actions of the individual leader? Second, assuming that we can causally link the two, do the methods by which the products are achieved play any role in determining the presence of leadership?

The first issue – that we can trace effects back to the actions of individual leaders – is deeply controversial. On the one hand there are several studies from a psychological approach that suggest it is possible to measure the effect of leaders (e.g., Gerstner and Day, 1997) but more sociologically inclined authors often deny the validity of

such measures (e.g., Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). A related controversy suggests that this dispute is itself deeply encased within most traditional approaches to leadership and implies that leaders embody agency. Lee and Brown (1994) suggest that to be human is to possess agency but this, of course, begs the question of agency itself. Volition is the exercise of freewill or conscious choice, as opposed to determinism, hence, if human action is determined (by coercion, biological genes or technology or whatever) then the intentional element of leadership is removed and we may have a problem in determining individual responsibility. In effect, we may have products but no responsibility and therefore no leadership: thus the legal defence enacted by those who regard themselves as acting under duress. In fact, taking this approach to its logical conclusion in the case of biologically inherited characteristics would be to suggest that those leaders with 'criminal genes' are not responsible for their leadership of criminal gangs, even if the results are significant in terms of people killed or money stolen and so on. And if we insist that action is determined by biological requirements over which individuals have no volitional control then we might even consider looking for the leadership gene that is making them act.

Yet we still regard people as leaders even if they are not 'responsible'. For example, we do not hold young children or the insane as responsible for their actions but they can still lead others on. Indeed, it may be that some cult leaders are schizophrenic – and thus not capable of volitional control as we ordinarily understand it – but they are still leaders. In other words, even individuals who are irrational, unreasonable, insane or under the influence of drugs, can still act as leaders provided we assess their leadership through the results of their action rather than their intention, volition or responsibility.

One could also argue that leadership can be linked to fatalism amongst followers or subordinates. For example, Nelson, Churchill, Hitler, Martin Luther King, Joan of Arc and General Patton, to name but a few, are all associated with significant achievements – for better or for worse – but all believed themselves to have been chosen by fate for a particular and very significant mission on earth. This fatalism induces enormous self-confidence and facilitates what others would regard as dangerous risk-taking. Yet this stymies our account of leadership – for now leadership is divorced from volition. In effect, if leaders believe themselves to have no choice and no freedom of action, because of a particular belief structure or threat, or religion or whatever, then no matter what we, the observers, might decide, these leaders experience their leadership as non-volitional, as determined by forces beyond their control.

The most extreme case against results-based leadership – especially the results of 'Great Men' – is made by Tolstoy in *War and Peace* in which he likens leaders to bow-waves of moving boats – always in front and theoretically leading, but, in practice, not leading but merely being pushed along by the boat itself. In the same context-determined approach, Peter Sellers in the movie *Being There* plays Chancy Gardner, a simple-minded gardener who is mistaken for a very successful business executive. Because of the assumptions made by those around him Chancy's homilies on gardening are interpreted as Zen-like statements of wisdom about the economy and as a consequence Chancy becomes the 'leading' economic forecaster to the US President.

In such approaches the role of the leader is not necessarily to cause things to happen but to act as 'hero' when events work out advantageously and to act as 'scapegoat' when things go wrong; after all, it is usually very difficult, for example, to establish precisely what contribution a professional sports' coach makes to a team's performance – but it is usually far easier (and cheaper) to replace the coach than to replace the entire team. So while Gemmill and Oakley (1997) conclude that leadership is probably just an 'alienating social myth' – an essentially contested concept if ever there was one – it might also be a convenient social myth. Whether it is a myth or not depends upon causally relating the results to the leader and, as such, the practical achievements rather than the personal characteristics of the leader are manifestations of this shifting in attention from leadership as a noun to leadership as a verb (Hosking, 1988). Even when we may be assured that individuals are responsible for remarkable results the failure of such 'stars' to perform elsewhere suggests that results are as much to do with a supportive culture and system as anything individuals can do. For example, the analysis of 1000 'star' US stock analysts in the 1990s by Groysberg *et al.* (2004) suggests that it is very difficult for them to replicate their success elsewhere because they are so dependent on their prior support system and because the staff of their new organizations often resent the new 'transplants' and overall performance often deteriorates.

This brings us to the second issue at the heart of result-based leadership – does the process by which the results are achieved actually matter? Most certainly, the office or school bully who successfully 'encourages' followers to comply under threat of punishment becomes a leader under the results-based criteria – providing they are successful in their coercion and its effects. But such a results-based approach to leadership immediately sets it at odds with some perspectives that differentiate leaders according to some putative distinction between leadership – which is allegedly non-coercive – and all other forms of activity that we might regard as the actions of a 'bully' or a 'tyrant' and so on. Northouse (1997: 7–8), for instance, examines 'leaders who use coercion [such as] … Adolf Hitler … Jim Jones'. But he then suggests that we should distinguish between coercion and leadership and thus writes a large proportion of human 'leadership' out of view by implying that 'Leaders who use coercion are interested in their own goals and seldom interested in the wants and needs of subordinates.' A recent review by Doh (2003) of six leading leadership scholars reflects this line and suggests that the use of 'unethical' methods negates the claim to 'leadership'. Since what counts as 'ethical' behaviour is not discussed this leaves us stuck in the contestable ethical treacle: it could be argued that Hitler was unethical and therefore was not a leader or it could be argued, as suggested above, that since Hitler managed to align his followers' 'ethics' in line with his own the issue is not the pursuit of some indefinable ethical position but the mutual alignment of what counts as 'ethics'.

The confusion between coercion and leadership, and the conflation of coercion and self-interest, are dubious logical steps at best and at worst remain essentially contested concepts. It should be apparent that many coercive leaders believe themselves to be working for the benefit of the group not themselves and, furthermore, it is difficult to think of any leader who is not, to some extent, coercive. Indeed, most aspects of leadership use motivational strategies that can be regarded by some people – especially those subject to them – as coercive. Thus a religious charismatic might regard his or her actions as simply based on revealing the truth to their followers – who are then free to choose to follow or not as they wish. But if the followers believe that failure to adhere to religious principles will lead to eternal damnation and a slow roast in hell, then they might consider that as coercive. Equally, an employer may not regard an employment contract as coercive since both parties freely enter into it, but if the employee feels that failing to work at the requisite level will lead to 'the sack' – with all its attendant embarrassment, discrimination and penury – then he or she may believe the contract to be coercive. Nevertheless, for those who perceive leadership to be primarily focused on results, the process by which these results were obtained, or even whether the leader was responsible for them, may be insignificant.

Of course results-based leadership need not be restricted to authoritarian or unethical leaders; on the contrary, it can also be exemplified by eminently practical people who may be distinctly uncharismatic but very effective in getting things done. Much of their work may often go unnoticed but it may also be critical in keeping the organization moving, and this form of leadership may be associated with an appeal to the interests of followers, rather than their emotional relationships.

One particularly well-supported case of this is Benjamin Franklin whose approach seems not to have been one of articulating a compelling vision and rousing the emotion of followers to transcend their personal interests in favour of the greater good. On the contrary, Franklin's pragmatic leadership was rooted in finding practical solutions to outstanding problems that engaged the interests, rather than the emotions, of others. Yet those mobilized by Franklin were not simply involved in an exchange process with him, as understood in transactional theories of leadership, because, for example, in instigating the development in Philadelphia of a police force, a hospital, a paper currency, paving, lighting and volunteer fire departments and so on, Franklin's skill lay in persuading his colleagues to help solve their own practical problems (Mumford and Van Doorn, 2001). An important point here is the visibility of Franklin's leadership, for although the results are clear, the hand that secures the results is not. In effect, if Franklin had died early in his career it may well be that much of this backroom networking may not have become apparent and that he would not have been considered a great leader. Thus results-based leadership can embody both highly visible charismatic individuals and almost completely invisible 'social engineers' but, as I suggested above, not everyone accepts that the most important issue is the results rather the methods, so does focusing upon the processes by which leadership is recognized offer a radically different perspective?

Process-based leadership

There is an assumption that people that we attribute the term leadership to, act differently from non-leaders – that some people 'act like leaders' – but what does this mean? It could mean that the context is critical, or that leaders must be exemplary or that the attribution of difference starts early in the life of individuals such that 'natural' leaders can be perceived in the school play grounds or on the sports field etc. But what is this 'process' differential? We might drag on stage a whole host of leadership types to flesh out this typology. The errant sergeant major would be a good start with the archetypal call: 'Do as I say not as I do', which can, of course, be linked to its opposite 'Walk the Talk.' So are leaders those that allegedly embody the exemplary performance we require to avoid any hint of hypocrisy? And when sacrifice is required or new forms of behaviour demanded from followers is it exemplary leaders that are the most successful?

Perhaps, but think of two counter-examples that contradict this ideal type: first, sergeant majors tend to secure followers whether they embody exemplary action or not. We might argue, following Northouse, that coercive sergeant majors who scream at recruits on the parade ground are not 'really' leaders, but if their leadership processes do indeed produce trained soldiers are we to deduce that the military, because it is rooted in coercive mechanisms, cannot demonstrate leadership? Or is it that what counts as legitimate leadership processes depends upon the local culture? That is, soldiers expect to be coerced and would probably not recognize attempts by their sergeants or officers to reach a consensus by egalitarian debate as 'leadership'? And since military cultures differ radically in space and time we cannot even suggest that the processes of leadership can be recognized by their occupational context because that also remains contested. If it did not then we would have difficulty explaining the outbreak of mutinies or even the Xmas Truce in December 1914 (Weintraub, 2002).

The second counter-example is Admiral Nelson, an individual whose military successes were almost always grounded in a paradoxical situation wherein he demanded absolute obedience from his subordinates to naval regulations but who personally broke just about every rule in that same rule book (Grabsky, 1993). Yet Nelson's success was not simply a consequence of rule-breaking actions but also a result of his engagement with, and motivation of, his followers, most importantly his fellow officers in his battle fleet, his 'Band of Brothers' (Kennedy, 2001). Hence, at one level this process approach may encompass the specific skills and resources that motivate followers: rhetoric, coercion, bribery, exemplary behaviour, bravery and so on. Leadership under this guise is necessarily a relational concept, not a possessional one. In other words, it does not matter whether you think you have great process skills if your followers disagree with you. Thus it may be that we can recognize leadership by the behavioural processes that differentiate leaders from followers, but this does not mean we can simply list the processes as universally valid across space and time.

After all, we would not expect a second century Roman leader to act in the same way as a twenty-first century Italian politician, but neither would we expect an American Indian leader to act in a fashion indistinguishable from an American President (Warner, 2003). Yet it remains the case that most of our assumptions about leadership relate to our own cultural context rather than someone else's.

Indeed, while many accounts of the leadership process might focus upon the acts of 'Great Men' it has long been a point of great controversy as to whether men and women lead in the same way or in ways that are genetically or culturally influenced by their genders. And while Carlyle's heroic 'men' *solve* the problems of their followers Heifetz and Linsky (2002) suggest that leadership is really related to what they call 'Adaptive' rather than 'Technical' work. Here Adaptive work requires novel responses by those facing the problem and thus leadership means making followers face up to their own responsibilities. Technical work, on the other hand, can be resolved by managers who have the authority to execute pre-existing routines and procedures. In sum, if there is an essential process of leadership for Heifetz and Linsky it is as much to do with making followers responsible as with anything the leader does – an interpretation directly at odds with that of Carlyle. Gemmill and Oakley (1997: 281) take a similar line to suggest that 'Leadership as a social process can be defined as a process of dynamic collaboration, where individuals and organizational members authorize themselves and others to interact in ways that experiment with new forms of intellectual and emotional meaning.'

In effect, the process approach to leadership is more concerned with how leadership works – the practices through which they lead – their rhetorical skill that entrances the followers, or their inducing of obedience through coercion or whatever happens to work. But whatever the dispute about the processes, none of these seem important without some element of positioning. What, for instance, is the use of great rhetorical skill or having a big stick when you are in solitary confinement or on a desert island?

Position-based leadership

Perhaps the most traditional way of configuring leadership is to suggest that it is really concerned with a spatial position in an organization of some kind – formal or informal. Thus we can define leadership as the activity undertaken by someone whose position on a vertical, and usually formal, hierarchy provides them with the resources to lead. These are 'above us', 'at the top of the tree', 'superordinates' and so on. In effect, they exhibit what we might call 'Leadership-in-Charge'. This is how we normally perceive the heads of vertical hierarchies, whether CEOs or military generals or Head Teachers or their equivalents. These people lead from their positional control over large networks of subordinates and tend to drive any such required change from the top. That 'drive' also hints at the coercion that is available to those in-charge: a general can order executions, a judge can imprison people and a CEO can discipline or sack employees and so on. But note that Hughes *et al.* (1999) remain adamant that position is not related to leadership so, yet again, we have an ECC at the heart of the issue.

A related aspect of this vertical structuring is what appears to be the parallel structuring of power and responsibility. Since the leader is 'in charge', then presumably he or she can ensure the enactment of his or her will. But we should be wary of this parallel universe that irreversibly links a hierarchy of labels to a hierarchy of power because there are good grounds for linking them both in obverse and in reverse. That is to say, that the hierarchy of power simultaneously inverts the hierarchy of labels. While a formal leader may *demand* obedience from his or her subordinates – and normally acquire it because, *inter alia*, of the resource imbalance – that obedience is never guaranteed. In fact, following Lukes (1979), one could suggest that power encompasses a counterfactual possibility, a subjunctivist verb tense rather than just a verb – it could have been otherwise. Indeed, one could well argue that power is not just a cause of subordinate action but also a consequence of it: if subordinates do as leaders demand then, and only then, are leaders powerful.

The limitations of restricting leadership to a position within a vertical hierarchy are also exposed when we move to consider Leadership-in-Front, a horizontal approach, in which leadership is largely unrelated to vertical hierarchies and is usually informally constituted through a network or a heterarchy (a flexible and fluid hierarchy). Leadership-in-Front might be manifest in several forms, and where it merges into Leadership-in-Charge might be at the penultimate rank at the bottom of a hierarchy. For instance, within an army such leadership might be manifest in corporals who have some degree of formal authority but may secure their position with the private soldiers – their followers – through leading from the front. Indeed, the leadership abilities of low-level leaders may be critical in differentiating the success of armies, both in prior conflicts and in the current focus on 'strategic corporals' in the US Marine Corps (Krulak, 1999).

More commonly, though, we might conceive of Leadership-in-Front from a fashion leader – someone who is 'in front' of his or her followers, whether that is trends in clothing, music, business models or whatever. These leaders provide guides to the mass of fashion-followers without any formal authority over them. But leading from the front also encompasses those who guide others, either a professional guide showing the way or simply whoever knows the best way to an agreed destination amongst a group of friends on a Sunday stroll; both guides exhibit leadership through their role in front but neither is necessarily formally instituted into an official hierarchy. Indeed, often these informal guides – such as Native American Indian guides in the US Army in the nineteenth century – are situated beyond the boundaries of the formal organization. And again these horizontal leaders are commonly related to a temporal dimension: they are 'the first' to signify, recognize or embody new fashions and they are also the first to shed 'yesterday's' approach and maintain their leadership by being 'ahead of their time'.

Often such informal horizontal leaders position themselves in conscious opposition to vertical leaders: for instance, Michael Moore's career as film maker embodies little of the conventional authority rooted in organizational hierarchies but his films against President George W. Bush and the Iraq War – *Fahrenheit 9/11* – and against the American gun-culture – *Bowling for Columbine* – demonstrate a very powerful form of leadership against the establishment. We might even retrace the origins of the English words for leadership to shed light on this aspect. The etymological roots of 'Leadership' derive from the Old German '*Lidan*' to go, the Old English '*Lithan*' to travel, and the Old Norse '*Leid*' to find the way at sea. Thus the origins tend to support both vertical and horizontal positional approach.

The horizontal perspective generates a rather more positive role for the followers of leaders. The English word 'Follower' is derived from the Old English word *Folgian* and the Old Norse *Fylgja*, meaning to accompany, help or lead. The etymological roots are relatively positive and are reproduced in the following current definitions:

1. An ordinary person who accepts the leadership of another
2. Someone who travels behind or pursues another
3. One who follows; a pursuer, an attendant, a disciple, a dependent associate, a retainer

However, the negative images of 'follower' are more clearly visible in these definitions:

4. A person or algorithm that compensates for lack of sophistication or native stupidity by efficiently following some simple procedure shown to have been effective in the past
5. A sweetheart, a Trollope
6. (Steam Engine) The removable flange of a piston
7. The part of a machine that receives motion from another; Gaelic, for instance, surname ending in 'agh' or 'augh' means 'follower of' – Cavanagh stands for 'Follower of Kevin'

Those readers familiar with Harry Enfield's character 'Kevin' – a teenage nightmare of sullenness and irresponsibility – will note that the diminution of the role of follower in the light of the superordinate 'leader' is much closer to the vertical notion of leadership than its horizontal equivalent.

Leadership-in-Front might also be provided in the sense of legitimizing otherwise prohibited behaviour. For instance, we might consider how Hitler's overt and public anti-Semitism legitimated the articulation of anti-Semitism by his followers. And again it has been suggested that acts such as suicide provide 'permission' by 'leaders-in-front' for others to follow, hence there are often spates of similar acts in quick succession almost as if the social behaviour operates as a biological epidemic (Gladwell, 2002).

Leadership along this positional dimension, then, differs according to the extent to which it is formally or informally structured, and vertically or horizontally constituted. Leadership-in-Charge implies some degree of centralizing resources and authority, while Leadership-in-Front implies the opposite.

Conclusion

I began by suggesting that although it has become fashionable to comment on the importance of leadership, in its positive and negative impacts, it is by no means clear that the twenty-first century poses unique problems for leaders, let alone that some people's definitions of 'moral' leadership is the solution to the world's contemporary problems. Indeed, there appears to be little consensus on what defines leadership and hence considerable conflict over what counts as demonstrations of leadership, whether leadership can be taught and what its effects might be. Following a brief review of four leading leadership texts I then reduced the multiplicity of accounts to four approaches to leadership that embody significantly different approaches. Although all four approaches are adopted by different organizations at different times the lack of clarity as to which definition of leadership is being used can inhibit organizational success.

If organizational leaders assume that leadership is primarily *positional* so that, for example, only those people in formal positions of power are recognized as leaders, then those without formal positions may well be discouraged from taking actions that are vital for organizational success but deemed by the formal leaders to be irrelevant. Hence it may be that risk-taking, showing initiative, taking responsibility and so on are not actions that non-formal leaders will take. The result may well be an extremely bureaucratic and torpid organization.

On the other hand, for some interpretations leadership is essentially related to *results*, though whether we can causally relate the results to an individual leader, and, if we can, whether we can ignore the processes by which these results were achieved, or what the results were, is very debateable. Nevertheless, if organizations consider leadership to be manifest only or primarily through results and nothing else then we should not be surprised to find hospitals and schools manipulating their activities to generate the requisite results even if the overall performance as a health or education provider plummets. Nor should we be surprised by the Enrons of this world: if shareholders only recognize result-based leadership then ethical and process issues tend to be sidelined.

Those *processes* of leadership imply that we can distinguish leaders from non-leaders on the basis of examining what it is that leaders do but, irrespective of the issue of coercion, it is still not clear that successful leaders are necessarily exemplary nor that such processes are generic across space and time. Again, if the form by which leaders are judged is the extent to which they embody the required formal processes then we may end up with leaders who are excellent 'actors', whose behaviours are tightly tied to the monitoring requirements but who are actually rather ineffective in generating results.

Finally, I suggested that even when we revert to the *person* of leaders we are still no nearer a consensus, not simply because so much lies in the eyes of the beholder but also because leaders appear to be essentially hybrids of human and non-humans. Yet, even here the traditional analytic approaches to understanding and predicting leadership proved inadequate because hybrid leadership is a performance to be achieved not a script to be rolled out. In short, hybrid leadership is more appropriately configured not simply as a verb rather than a noun but as a specific tense of verb: subjunctivist – something that *might* occur, rather than something that has occurred or will occur. And if it does occur then leadership is an effect as much as a cause of this. Leadership remains then, like power, an ECC. And because it remains contested exactly how we recognize, train, teach, exert and limit leadership depends fundamentally on that first definitional step.

Notes

1 See: Mech, D.L. 'Leadership in Wolf, *Canis lupus*, Packs' at http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/2001/leader/results.htm and http://home.globalcrossing.net/~brendel/wolf.html
2 For related papers see: http://ideas.repec.org/e/pfe29.html
3 See Hassard, 1996 for a review of the importance of Time in organizations.
4 Thanks to David Knowles of the Kings Fund for this example.
5 See http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/02/05/sprj.irq.powell.transcript/
6 See http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/cmc_exhibit_2002.html This episode is also captured in the 2002 movie *Thirteen Days*.
7 See Chapter 9 of Bratton, J., Grint, K. and Nelson, D. (January 2004), *Organizational Leadership* (Mason OH: Thomson-Southwestern).
8 http://www.corpwatch.org/news/PND.jsp?articleid=3128 accessed 20 November 2003.

2

Leadership as person: putting the 'ship' back into 'leader-ship'

Introduction

This chapter takes its starting point from the approach to leadership that perceives it to be a consequence of a person – an individual human who embodies and demonstrates personal characteristics traditionally associated with leaders. However, the first part suggests that this reduction of leadership to the individual human constitutes an analytically inadequate explanatory foundation and this is illustrated by reference to the importance of followers and especially their commitment to 'sense-making', to their community and to independence from their leader. Hence the subtitle: putting the 'ship' back into leadership. I go on to suggest that leadership might be better configured as a function of the community – 'the god of small things' – rather than the result of superhuman individuals. However, this expansion of the term 'person' is still unable to explain how leadership actually occurs and for this I then explore the viability of approaching leadership beyond its individual human embodiment and beyond a collective human form towards a notion of hybridity. That notion is then tested against a second account of putting the ship back into leadership – this time moving beyond the 'ship' conceived as the crew to the literal ships that were used to 'lead' troops on D-Day to the Normandy beaches.

Leadership, followership, commitment and independence

When listing the traits required by formal leaders it is usual for a class to come up with any number of characteristics: charisma, energy, vision, confidence, tolerance, communication skills, 'presence', the ability to multitask, listening skills, decisiveness,