

**Going to the movies: interpreting effective
leadership and the public interest in times of crisis**

by

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August 2024

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the author's knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my primary supervisor, Professor Paul Pickering AM, and associate supervisor Professor Tom Frame AM. Recognising that this dissertation is an interdisciplinary one, Paul and Tom provided an important balance of deep expertise in the key areas of this research. Their advice and encouragement enabled me to make the discovery I was seeking, and to see the function of leadership in human activity in a more nuanced and useful way. I am particularly grateful for their encouragement that this work should be done, and their advocacy for it.

My inspiration in wanting to explore how leadership works, and the positive difference leadership can make, was awakened by working with Dr Des Griffin AM when Des was the Director of the Australian Museum in Sydney and I was his Executive Officer. Beyond our years working together, I have been privileged to have Des as a friend and to benefit from countless conversations drawing on his extraordinary understanding of leadership in organisations, and his relentless curiosity about the subject. I was privileged, too, in experiencing the inspirational leadership of Dr W. Richard West, inaugural Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Rick left a deep impression on my thinking about thoughtful leadership, moral courage, and the beauty that is to be found in complexity.

I have benefited greatly from the advice and encouragement of my colleagues in the Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Research Program throughout this project. The particular value of the Program is in the diversity of thinking and perspective it has provided, and in finding ways of keeping such a large concept within reasonable limits. I am grateful for Dr Kate Bowan's support when I was initiating my project, and as a member of my supervisory panel.

This research was made possible by funding through an Australian Government Research Training Program (AGRTP) scholarship for which I am greatly appreciative.

Finally, work of this kind can be a lonely pursuit without people who have faith in you, and so I dedicate this work with gratitude to Lisa and Keiran, and to the memory of June.

Author profile

Tim Sullivan has a BA (Hons) majoring in American history and English literature, and a Master of Management based in research done while a Smithsonian Visiting Research Fellow at the NMAI. That research focused on the response of leadership and management in US museums in implementing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) 1990. He has more than 30 years of experience as a senior manager and executive leader in the museum and heritage sectors in Australia.

Abstract

Prominent scholars on the practice of leadership have attributed high-profile failures of leadership that have damaged public and private interests to moral and ethical failures in leadership decision-making. They have pointed to shortcomings in leadership development (LD) programs that pay insufficient attention to engaging with the humanities, particularly in ethical and moral decision making, and in developing a concept of the public interest.

This dissertation demonstrates a stronger relationship between theorising on leadership effectiveness and awareness of the public interest as a philosophical concept and a political commitment than is evident in the literature. In contrast to recent work in the field, I argue that understanding leadership effectiveness is derived from closer attention to the function of leadership than to contrasting styles of leadership. Focusing on the function of leadership reveals the crucial nexus between purpose and power. Power is delegated to leaders to perform tasks that are purposeful, that is, protecting the interests of the organisations they lead and promoting its purposes. I contend that in contemporary society, leaders are accountable not only for the interests of those who are intended beneficiaries of leadership action, but also to the publics outside the organisations they lead and whose interests are affected by the leadership action whether its consequences are intended or unintended. Consequently, effective leaders in the public interest must have a working concept of the public interest, and the obligations embedded in it.

I further contend that leadership is more deeply institutionalised to protect the public interest than is recognised in the extant literature, that is, the power of leaders is constrained by the system of bureaucratic and political checks and balances intended to prevent the abuse and misuse of power. That institutionalising of leadership in the public interest exists in two distinct domains: the bureaucratic and the political. The *bureaucratic* comprises the mechanisms used by government agencies and of governance structures that test the compliance of leadership decisions with legal statutes, codes of conduct and best practice, together with nuanced judgements of societal values and attitudes. The *political* comprises the institutions that represent the collective interests of the people, and the power exercised by political players over the bureaucratic processes and institutions.

The framework of ethical and moral decision-making in this dissertation is based on Arendt's idea of representation, that is, of consistently and consciously bringing to mind the interests of others in decision-making. The principles presented in this dissertation are illustrated in a selection of movies interpreting action involving the US presidency in four differing contexts of leadership power: institutional, executive, corporate, and popular movement.

The significance of this work is in establishing principles for a stronger understanding of the relationship between the function of leadership and the power to make decisions, and the concept of the public interest as a primary concern of leadership ahead of sectional or private interests.

Theme for the whole work

But it may be truly said, that men too much conversant in office, are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms in which it is conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well, as long as things go in their common order; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can ever give favour.¹

Edmund Burke (1729-1797), MP, in a speech 'On American Taxation' in the British Parliament's House of Commons, 1774

¹ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Great Melody: a Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992), 109.

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Introduction

This dissertation aims to identify the principles that redefine the relationship between leadership effectiveness and the public interest. I will use a selection of motion pictures (hereafter movies) depicting leadership in times of crisis to illustrate those principles of effective leadership that is in the public interest. My main contentions are these: *first*, the function of leadership in organisations is more deeply institutionalised than much of the contemporary and popular literature on leadership accepts; and *second*, the institutionalisation of leadership practice is a mechanism intended to protect the public interest from the abuse and misuse of positional power by leaders. The academic disciplinary bases of this dissertation are principally leadership and leadership development, although I draw on the insights of history, philosophy, and politics.

The dissertation is motivated by reflecting on my decades-long professional career in civic institutions (primarily museums and heritage management organisations) and the effective discharge of leadership. It is influenced by the views of highly-regarded leadership theorists claiming that leadership development (LD) programs were (and are) not responding effectively to ethical and moral failures in public leadership: failures that have caused considerable harm to people, and severely undermined confidence in political and business leadership.

In the first chapter, I outline the particular concerns of several critical theorists insisting that LD should engage more closely with the humanities to increase the likelihood that emerging leaders will be more aware of the public interest in the performance of their duties. In my close reading of their concerns, and assessing my own experience of LD programs, the typical engagement with the humanities is through case studies that examine historical examples of effective leadership. Most of these case studies are, however, stripped of their historical context for the sake of brevity and designed to lead to answers that are consistent with the discipline focus of those delivering the particular LD program. In other words, to arrive at answers that are consistent with the perspective of the dominant discipline focus in the program.

My experience in 2002 of the Cranlana Colloquium delivered by the Centre for Ethical Leadership in Melbourne, Australia, showed me that there is a relationship between leadership theory and reflection on the moral and ethical issues that are most important in developing a functional concept of the public interest. The Colloquium is a residential program involving moderated group reflection on a collection of primary sources chosen by academic experts on the philosophical principles that have underpinned thinking about an ethical or just society over two millennia. As a course participant, I was attracted to considering the foundational relationship between independent individuals with inalienable rights and the governance arrangements they endorsed to ensure peace and stability in the societies they formed. Although the Colloquium is aimed at leadership development, it does not integrate the theory on the function of leadership with the philosophical principles that underpin a concept of the public interest.

The Cranlana experience inspired me to think about how the humanities might be more purposefully engaged in understanding the function of leadership in groups and organisations as described in leadership theory, and the ideas that have shaped contemporary views of the public interest and how it might be promoted and protected.

Consequently, in this dissertation, I will focus on revisiting the leadership theory to discern the principles that are fundamental in understanding the function of leadership in groups and organisations. I begin with leadership theory out of a concern that contemporary and popular literature has focused on relational and distributed models of leadership processes, often derived from approaches more closely related to behavioural psychology. While these models are appealingly inclusive, they do not properly address how leadership functions in organisations, especially the leader's delegated responsibility to make decisions for which the leader is held uniquely accountable, nor do these models properly consider the use of leadership power, and the potential resort to coercive power, in implementing decisions.

Purpose as a means of defining what an entity seeks to achieve—what it does, for whom, and why—is well developed in the contemporary leadership literature as a factor promoting cohesion and efficiency in successful organisations pursuing their best interests. What is much less explored in the literature on leadership is what happens when an organisational purpose collides with the interest of others, especially when that collision diminishes or causes harm to the interests of others. The heart of this dissertation is uncovering the nexus between purpose and power that is rarely explored in the dense field of leadership theory or in the surprisingly thin literature dealing with the concept of the public interest. My review of leadership theory has established that the primary function of leadership relates to the use of power by leaders to achieve purposes that are (ideally) in the shared interests of those they lead, and the function of leadership as:

1. providing an elevated perspective on the organisation's fit with its external environment;
2. providing direction through clearly articulated goals and strategies to achieve those goals;
3. ensuring the organisations they lead are structurally and culturally aligned with the goals and strategy;
4. forming the leadership team;
5. making delegations and allocate resources and ensure they are used efficiently and effectively in achieving the goals;
6. making decisions to ensure the entities they lead are adapted in the most optimal way to be successful;
7. ensuring there are systems to resolve conflicts within the organisation and those external conflicts that are relevant to the organisation's success;

8. ensuring effective governance relationships; and,
9. fostering an organisational culture that recognises and rewards behaviours that contribute to achieving the goals, that encourages people to work together, is perceived as being fair in its dealings internally and externally, and encourages innovation in adapting to change.

I will contend that the power used by leaders is typically delegated to them to achieve the purposes for which the power is delegated, that is, to achieve the shared goals that reflect the group's purposes and that advance the group's shared interests. I will further contend that leadership in the public interest is institutionalised by a framework of law, codes of practice and ethical conduct, and societal expectations in order to constrain or limit the leader's use of power to ensure that it is not used against the group (or common, shared, or collective) interest. Consequently, leaders who are effective in protecting or promoting the public interest will be constantly aware of the sources, uses, and limits of the power that is at their disposal and the extent of their institutional authority and responsibility.

My focus on the function of leadership, especially as it relates to themes of the public interest, provides an essential limit to my research in the vast literature on leadership. First, it excludes investigation of models such as collective leadership that are largely undeveloped in the leadership literature, or are situated primarily in academic fields such as anthropology, social science, or cultural studies. By focusing on the function of leadership, I avoid becoming deeply entangled in the contemporary focus on leadership styles which has, in my view, done much to obscure a proper focus on the far more important matter of the function of leadership in groups. My research is also limited to the function of leadership in representative, pluralist, democratic contexts rather than authoritarian or undemocratic systems of government where the public interest is often elided with the interests of a prevailing oligarchy or ideology.

I will explore the nature of the institutionalisation of leadership in the public interest by proposing that it exists in two distinct but interrelated domains: the bureaucratic and the political. The bureaucratic public interest involves the institutions of government and governance in the application of rules created to give assurance that leadership decisions are demonstrably in the public interest. The trust and confidence of the public in its leadership depends on the independence and effectiveness of these bureaucratic tests. But the bureaucracy is the creation of the political domain which is representative of the people in all its diversity, and which makes the laws and institutions that define the public interest. Therefore, where there are ambiguities of interpretation or conflicts of interest that the bureaucracy cannot resolve, the ultimate recourse is to politics to amend the rules or conventions by which the public interest is determined, protected, and promoted. It is because the principle of political representation of the citizenry is fundamental to the workings of a pluralist democracy that the political domain will have primacy over the bureaucratic domain, albeit the integrity of the bureaucratic processes depends on its being free of vested interests manipulating its decision-making. Consequently, it is crucial for leaders

with public interest duties to develop an understanding of how these domains work, the principles that frame and inspire their operations, and the reasons why the institutions of each domain were created in deference to the importance of the public interest. As Tom Frame has put it, the public interest must be understood as a philosophical concept and a political commitment.¹

I will argue these propositions in the two parts of this dissertation. First, in Chapter 1, through a fine-grained discussion of the literature on leadership theory, I identify the most important principles and characteristics that explain the function of leadership in groups and organisations, and the relationship between purpose and power in describing effective leadership. Second, in Chapters 2 and 3, I examine the literature on the public interest which leads me to propose a model of two distinct but related domains in discussing the public interest. The first domain is a bureaucratic public interest described by practitioners in the judiciary and legal administration, public service and its administration, governance, and academic theorists in the field. The literature on the public interest is heavily weighted towards the bureaucratic method in determining the public interest, that is, reviewing matters of contemporary conjecture against previous cases and judgements, and in the light of perceived changes in societal expectations, attitudes, and values. In this respect, the literature gives inadequate attention to the second domain—the political public interest, and especially to the importance of representative institutions and the principle of political representation. For the political domain, I revisit in Chapter 3 the thinking of those philosophers and political scientists discussed in the Cranlana Colloquium that are most relevant to leadership. In this sense, the selection of those thinkers is a pragmatic one. There is a plethora of other thinkers who might have been relevant to my purpose, but given that a selection has to be made to keep the dissertation within reasonable boundaries, the Cranlana Colloquium selection is highly relevant to the discussion of political thought and the public interest as a context for leadership studies. In doing so, I am not offering an historiographical account of those ideas or how they relate to one another, nor of how they have been applied in the constitutions or conventions of governance through history. I am drawing on those ideas that resonate with the principles of effective leadership, and, consequently, with the principles that are reflected in the institutions—bureaucratic and political—that govern the public interest.

Third, in Chapter 4, I describe the importance of storytelling as a communication strategy for leaders and followers alike in explaining the function of leadership in organisations. Stories work in sharing things that people have in common, including their identities and histories, their values, their aspirations, and the things that matter to them. All of those factors contribute to the group's understanding of the individual interests that comprise the group, and those that are in common as shared interests. For leaders having to make difficult decisions when there is a conflict between interests in the group, or when there is threat to the shared interests, stories can help leaders communicate with

¹ Tom Frame, personal communication, 4 June 2024.

those they lead in explaining decisions and their intended outcomes. Stories help leaders secure support for their decisions and strategies, and to find points of connection with those in the group who may disagree or are adversely affected by a decision, and develop a shared understanding of what is at risk. It is in the weighing of the various interests in play when making difficult decisions that leaders will confront choices that challenge their ethical and moral reasoning. I argue in Chapter 4 that in these moments, the way in which leaders bring to mind and consider the interest of others affected by their decisions is crucial in evaluating the leader's effectiveness. How options for action and the consequences of each are evaluated will reveal a leader's moral imagination and capacity to make decisions that are the best for the public interest. Where that best decision presents a risk to the leader's own best interest, or the interests of those closest to the leader, then moral courage in standing up for a difficult decision may be most evident. In these moments of crisis, leaders and the groups they lead may experience apotheosis and a transformation that enables them to understand and live with a new reality that may have seemed incomprehensible before the crisis.

Finally, in Chapters 5-8, I will use a selection of movies that tell stories about the actions of leaders in times of crisis that dramatically illustrate the principles of effective leadership in the public interest that I am proposing. The selection of movies is based on their usefulness in interpreting four different contexts of leadership in the public interest: from within an institutional perspective; the use of executive or prerogative power; from within a private, corporate entity engaging in the political domain; and leadership from within a popular movement. Each tells a story of extraordinary challenges faced by each of the leaders portrayed and the choices they made, and insights into the nature of leadership, its limits, and its obligations. It is not my intention to situate any or all of the movies in the wider canvas of film history or film studies, nor in the historiography of the themes and subjects of the selected movies. This dissertation is not intended as a contribution to the study of American history, nor of the lives and work of some key philosophers in the Western tradition. Any contribution to those areas of study is collateral. Rather, my purpose is to illustrate the principles that characterise effective leadership in the public interest during times of crisis through the lens of the selected movies as texts as my unit of analysis. The main attraction of this approach is encouraging reflection on the effectiveness of the decisions made by the leaders portrayed in the films, the ways in which the public interest is interpreted and protected, and the ethical and institutional frameworks that were applied in their leadership decision-making. Ultimately, this dissertation is a contribution to the study of leadership and the public interest.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I describe a crisis as an event or events in which the usual forms or rules of decision-making are inadequate or unsuited to the situation in hand. A crisis within a group or organisation or a nation may be generated from outside its boundaries, or, designed from within in order to make necessary change to adapt to changing circumstances. An apt description of crisis that

fits with my overall purpose is when an organisation's 'tendency toward stability'² runs into disruptive change that cannot be avoided. In other words, a crisis is when:

Environmental change, subsystem differences, and the diversity of human beings result in organisational contexts being defined by complexity, conflict, and dynamism. Under these conditions, end goals and paths to goal attainment, are, at best, uncertain. To survive and prosper, organisations must control conflict, position themselves to adjust to change, and choose the best paths to goal attainment.³

During times of crisis, when the prevailing ways of framing and making decisions to respond to existential threats are inadequate and transformative change is unavoidable, effective leaders will be forced to reconsider the assumptions on which they have relied in making decisions. That will include what is in the best interests of those they lead, and the best decision that can be made to protect, preserve, or promote their interests. In times of crisis, the diverse interests of a pluralistic society will influence how the apparent threat is perceived and the description of proposed solutions. Clearly, some actions will benefit the self-interest of some at the expense of others and may be antithetical to the broad public interest. Consequently, effective leaders must not only be sure of their judgments about the nature of the looming or enveloping crisis: they have to apply a concept of what constitutes the common good and display a commitment to sustaining a civil and cooperative society.

In this dissertation, I offer a new approach in thinking about the relationship between the function of leadership and the concept of the public interest. I will argue that the conceptual link is in the sense of purpose which brings cohesion to the function of leadership and legitimacy to the power delegated to leaders, and, how purpose animates the moral and political commitment to leadership in the public interest. This nexus is crucial in understanding what effective leadership in the public interest looks like, yet it is largely unexplored in the literature on leadership or on the public interest. I argue that this relationship can only be properly understood by attending closely to the function of leadership in organisations—not on the styles of leadership that proliferates much of the contemporary leadership literature. I further contend that the institutionalisation of leadership in order to protect the public interest is a much stronger constraint on leadership than is conceded in recent writing in the discipline. The reasons for that institutionalisation are poorly represented in leadership development programs and in the popular literature on leadership which is overly concerned with the interpersonal behaviours of leaders and followers.

While the extant literature on the public interest is rightly focused on defining, discerning, and defending the public interest, particularly by the institutions of government and corporate governance, it does not adequately correlate with the principles that guide that interpretation to the function of

² Michael D. Mumford *et al.*, "Leadership skills for a changing world: solving complex social problems," *The Leadership Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2000): 13.

³ Mumford *et al.*, "Leadership skills for a changing world: solving complex social problems," 13.

leadership in organisations. I will argue that foregrounding these crucial connections will produce better leadership, and better leadership decision-making in the public interest. As I demonstrate in Chapter 4, the best way forward is through a closer consideration of the relationship between moral and ethical decision-making and the central idea of delineating a public interest purpose as the fundamental consideration in the practice of leadership in organisations, and in promoting or preserving the public interest. It is my contention that the relationship between leadership and the public interest must be based on a conscious and continuing focus on the purpose and function of leadership, and of the place of the public interest in the exercise of public leadership. That nexus provides the basis for explaining the proper use of the power delegated to leaders to do things that are in the public interest, and, how the public interest can be represented earlier in leadership decision-making processes rather than as a consideration in evaluating outcomes after the fact.

I have proposed exploiting the power and persuasiveness of movies as a means of promoting a deeper reflection on the whole context of leadership. While there is an emerging body of literature on using the arts, literature, and movies in leadership development, they tend to focus more on the personal style of leaders in relation to others, and are preoccupied with idealised models of leadership behaviours. Although these models have pedagogical value in the development of emerging leaders, I am arguing that movies provide richly contextualised interpretations that can support a deeper reflection on the function of leadership in society and the difference effective leadership makes.

Part One

Chapter 1: Effective Leadership

A crisis in leadership development

The literature on Leadership Development (LD) programs reveals concerns that LD is not equipping people for contemporary leadership challenges in business, government, or civic roles.¹

The Study of Australian Leadership (SAL)² by the Centre for Workplace Leadership at the University of Melbourne in 2016 included the most comprehensive survey of leadership ever conducted in Australia. SAL involved 8000 individuals across 2703 organisations and 2561 workplaces. SAL reported a strong correlation between investment in LD and more capable leaders with stronger self-belief, better performance, and a capacity for innovation but found major gaps in the capability of Australian enterprises to address future challenges.

Of its seven major findings, four related to LD:

1. many Australian leaders are not well-trained;
2. too many Australian organisations underinvest in LD or invest in the wrong places;
3. leadership in most Australian organisations does not reflect wider social diversity; and
4. many senior leaders do not draw on strategic advice in making decisions about the future and are vulnerable to poor strategic insight in a complex environment.

The principal deficiencies in contemporary LD are apparent in four areas:³ First, the context is wrong. Too often LD (and training for managers) is not aligned with the organisation's strategy or the challenges in operating environments that are more uncertain, volatile, complex, ambiguous, and changing quickly. Second, the transfer of learning is not achieved in the organisation or work unit because of a lack of clarity on how the LD initiative fits with organisational strategy; a change-resisting dominant organisational culture; and unsupportive leadership. Consequently, emergent leaders are re-absorbed into the status quo and its expectations, accept the routines of bureaucratized thinking, and frustrated in their expectations of being able to apply new insights and experiences that could transform

¹ Claudio Feser, Nicolai Nielsen, and Michael Rennie, "What's missing in leadership development?," *McKinsey Quarterly*, no. 3 (2017); Claudio Fernández-Aráoz, Andrew W. Roscoe, and Kentaro Aramaki, "Turning potential into success: the missing link in leadership development," *Harvard Business Review* 95, no. 6 (2017).

² Peter Gahan *et al.*, *Leadership at Work: do Australian Leaders Have What it Takes* (University of Melbourne: Centre for Workplace Leadership, 2016).

³ Michael Beer, Magnus Finnstrom, and Derek Schrader, "Why leadership training fails—and what to do about it," *Harvard Business Review* 94, no. 10 (2016); Gahan *et al.*, *Leadership at Work: do Australian Leaders Have What it Takes*; Ryan W. Quinn and Robert E. Quinn, "Change management and leadership development have to mesh," *Harvard Business Review* (7 January 2016). <https://hbr.org/2016/01/change-management-and-leadership-development-have-to-mesh>; Feser, Nielsen, and Rennie, "What's missing in leadership development?."

their leadership. Third, what is learned is generic—customised to varying degrees, but too often complying with idealistic (and often irrelevant) models that emphasise cognitive, rational, analytical, and managerial skills rather than developing the attributes of judgement, dealing with complexity, using information, interpersonal skills in building relationships, and understanding the individual's fit with the organisation's values. Finally, how leadership is taught falls short of achieving the transformational outcome emerging leaders are seeking through experiences that are more personalised, better contextualised for a rapidly changing and complex environment, socially constructed, and that enable lifelong learning.⁴

SAL's findings are important because the literature critical of contemporary leadership failings points to failures of judgement, of ethical frameworks, and of historical understanding by leaders in dealing with complex challenges to the entities they lead. Leadership failings are generally not a failing of technical or professional skills, but rather a failing to understand and manage the complexity of interrelationships between people and systems inside the organisation, and with the external world in which the organisation operates. Often, leadership failings are the result of a failure to understand and manage the consequences of irrational human behaviour and how it interacts with systems designed to produce rational and consistent decision-making for a sometimes ill-defined collective interest.

Expectations of leadership development

The personal characteristics most often correlated with successful students in LD programs are the right motivation, curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination. Meanwhile, surveys of corporate leaders found that the most needed organisational competencies in business reflect an emphasis on the function of leadership: a deep sense of purpose, a results orientation, a strategic perspective, collaboration, influential communication, team leadership, developing organisational capabilities, change leadership, market understanding, and inclusiveness.⁵ These competencies reflect the views of people in executive leadership roles about the things leaders ought to be able to do. That includes being able to recognise emerging challenges in their environments and inspire organisational responses⁶; to interpret information with many variables and to deal with uncertainty when the data is incomplete; and to reveal any hidden strategic, competitive, economic, and political complexities to make better-informed decisions that will produce the intended outcomes.⁷ At the same time, leaders will maintain emotional

⁴ Mihnea Moldovenau and Das Narayandas, "Educating the next generation of leaders," *Harvard Business Review* March-April (2019).

⁵ Fernández-Aráoz, Roscoe, and Aramaki, "Turning potential into success: the missing link in leadership development."; Polly La Barre, "Developing mindful leaders," *Harvard Business Review* (30 December 2011). <https://hbr.org/2011/12/developing-mindful-leaders>.

⁶ Feser, Nielsen, and Rennie, "What's missing in leadership development?."

⁷ Warren G. Bennis and James O'Toole, "How business schools lost their way," *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 5 (2005): 99.

resilience under pressure; build a capacity for self-reflection; sustain relationships with others⁸; and manage the shifts in leadership perspectives and behaviours appropriate as circumstances change.⁹

Leaders have to be able to manage the politics of negotiation with a diversity of special interest groups to achieve feasible (or optimal) rather than ideal solutions, and explain the intended outcomes of those solutions. Leaders have to draw the right lessons from moments of crisis and challenge in order to be better prepared for the next ones. And in doing so, leaders should understand that the next crisis or challenge will have a combination of new and unique characteristics that may not have been dealt with before, or, which have their seeds in the solutions that resolved the last crisis. In dealing with that, an historical understanding of the consequences—intended and unintended—of previous decisions and their effects becomes more important as the accountability for decisions in the public interest becomes more demanding and contested.

It is clear from this extensive list of expectations that LD will be a lifelong commitment to interdisciplinary learning and personal development.

Rebalancing science and the humanities

One of the most important thinkers on business in society, the late Sumantra Ghoshal, believed the moral and ethical failures of most business entities flow from flawed ideologies inculcated by business schools.¹⁰ The adoption of a pseudo-scientific methodology imposes a model of empirically validated, rational behaviour as a universal explanation of leadership decision-making that has created what Ghoshal described using Hayek's terms as 'the pretence of knowledge.' Ghoshal sought to rebalance the influence of science and the humanities in our striving to understand the function of leadership in a healthy civic society. Empirical theorising on leadership has sought to explain the emergence and function of leadership within groups, to evaluate or even predict leadership effectiveness, to provide a rational basis for explaining the relationship between a leader's actions and the outcomes achieved, and strategies for improving leadership. In doing this, empirical theory has provided important understandings of the attributes of leadership from a diversity of psychological perspectives, and to correlate leadership action with functional outcomes using measures of group performance or satisfaction.¹¹

However, Ghoshal challenged the limitations of leadership theory in providing explanations of a causal relationship (typical of a rational world) between leadership action and outcomes when the

⁸ Bennis and O'Toole, "How business schools lost their way." Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis, "Making judgment calls," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 10 (2007). Richard Davis, "We need more mature leaders," *Harvard Business Review* (18 October 2011). <https://hbr.org/2011/10/we-need-more-mature-leaders>.

⁹ Michael D. Watkins, "How managers become leaders," *Harvard Business Review* 90, no. 6 (June 2012).

¹⁰ See particularly Sumantra Ghoshal, "Bad management theories are destroying good management practices," *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 4, no. 1 (2005).

¹¹ Peter G. Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2019).

environment of leadership action is often irrational or dependent on variables outside the assumptions of a particular leadership theory. No single theory has accounted for the many variables in the individual skills and personalities of leaders and those they lead, or for explaining the effect leaders and followers have had on each other in resolving challenging situations.

Bennis and O'Toole observed that the unhealthy obsession with 'scientific' research in LD is because it assumes business is an academic discipline rather than a profession calling upon the knowledge of many disciplines and only made coherent by an interdisciplinary approach.¹² Consequently, LD programs are not grounded in the actual work of leaders and must be much more engaged with the humanities to be more relevant and useful. Bennis and O'Toole quote the observation of Thomas Lindsay, Provost of the University of Dallas, that business education's focus on technical training is 'ironic because...studies showed that executives who fail—financially as well as morally—rarely do so from lack of expertise. Rather, they fail because they lack interpersonal skills and practical wisdom: what Aristotle called prudence.' Lindsay references Aristotle who 'taught that genuine leadership consisted in the ability to identify and serve the common good.' That requires more than technical training: it 'requires an education in moral reasoning, which must include history, philosophy, literature, theology, and logic.'¹³

Robert Skidelsky, an economic historian, observed a similar trend in Economics and its preoccupation with defining doctrines and axioms as models of the truth but which cannot cope with the real world of human behaviour. Skidelsky points to the problems for theory caused by people making choices that may not be rational, that is, not in their individual or group best-interest, but may be influenced by their relations with others, and by irrational motivations such as 'love, devotion, pity, courage, honour, loyalty, ambition, public service, which on any reasonable interpretation are not motivated by subjective calculation of gain or outcome.'¹⁴ For Skidelsky as for Ghoshal, a rebalancing with the humanities, especially history, is likely to be beneficial because it would help connect theories and their application to 'particular historical conditions and episodes' rather than being universal truths. Skidelsky asserts that it 'is important for students to get a sense of which period and place they are living through, and the power relations of their societies without swallowing the view that economic doctrines are 'merely' reflections of the historical conditions and power structures of the day.'¹⁵

Ciulla writes that embracing the humanities properly is essential if leadership scholarship is ever to understand leadership rather than just explain it.¹⁶ Applying the humanities to LD would help students

¹² Bennis and O'Toole, "How business schools lost their way," 98-9.

¹³ Thomas Lindsay, Provost of the University of Dallas, in Bennis and O'Toole, "How business schools lost their way," 104.

¹⁴ Robert Skidelsky, *What's Wrong with Economics? A Primer for the Perplexed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 9.

¹⁵ Skidelsky, *What's Wrong with Economics? A Primer for the Perplexed*, 13.

¹⁶ Joanne B. Ciulla, "Leadership ethics: mapping the territory," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1995): 14.

understand that ‘the very nature of leadership is inextricably tied to the human condition, which includes the values, needs, and aspirations of human beings who live and work together.’¹⁷

The call for LD that is more effectively integrated with the humanities, particularly political science and history, acknowledges that leadership theory alone cannot be the basis of developing effective leaders. The challenges that will test a leader’s effectiveness so often arise in times of disruption, instability, and uncertainty when the known ways of working are not adequate to meet the challenge. The greatest challenges for leaders lie in understanding, first, the context in which leadership action is needed and most likely to be effective in delivering outcomes that benefit the group; second, the complexity of human relationships and sometimes irrational behaviours (that is, behaviours that are not consistent with the best interest of the individual or the group but which have some other perceived benefit); third, the politics of using the power of the leadership position, especially coercive and arbitrary power; and finally, decision-making in disrupted circumstances when the prevailing ways of working will not resolve a situation and in which theory cannot locate a cause, that is, a crisis. Developing an historical awareness can help leaders understand the pre-conditions to crises that leaders have had to deal with in the past, including such factors as precedent, cultural practices which may have constrained a leader’s options, political compromises between competing and powerful vested interests, or other factors that limited a leader’s capacity to influence others or to use power. A smarter engagement with the humanities could enable leaders to reflect more deeply and purposefully on the way leadership fits with the human experience. It is a call to develop in leaders the capacity for moral reasoning and judgement when decisions have to be made and as Thomas Lindsay observed to ‘identify and serve the common good.’

My own experience of more than 30 years in senior executive and governance roles tells me that the observations of those critical of LD for its lack of purposeful engagement with the humanities are true. But I think that there are so many points where leadership theory and the humanities bump into each other that the gap between them can be closed. I am thinking particularly of the more recent research in the nature of transformational leadership and the function of leadership in complex organisations that offer the greatest potential for purposeful engagement with the humanities. In this first chapter, I will review the history of modern leadership theorising and research to identify the most useful points of intersection or proximity between leadership theory and the humanities.

A starting concept of effective leadership

Simply stated, effective leaders are those who achieve their intended outcomes in making decisions consistent with the group’s or organisation’s purposes. Leaders who are perceived to be effective are those who are competent, that is, they are able to get done what they say they will do in the prevailing

¹⁷ Joanne B. Ciulla, "Ethics and effectiveness: the nature of good leadership," in *The Nature of Leadership*, ed. John Antonakis and David V. Day (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2018), 440.

circumstances, and to do so in ways that will reinforce or expand support for the leader and bring benefits to the group. That would work well enough in times of internal and external stability when the path to achieving the intended outcomes is relatively uncomplicated. The reality is that organisations and their interactions with the world around them are inherently dynamic and unstable. In times of crisis, instability and conflict become more apparent and demanding of leaders who must align an organisation's people, tasks, systems, procedures, and attitudes to adapt to the realities of change. Without that alignment, the organisation is likely to be maladapted to its environment, or adapted to an irrelevant one. The suite of executive functions typical of an effective leader in a corporate entity comprises:¹⁸

1. Setting the strategy, including a clear purpose, plans for making the most of opportunities, resource allocation, performance criteria, and a view of the entity's unique fit with the world.
2. Aligning the organisation's people, processes, structure, and systems with strategy; influencing values and a productive organisational culture; and balancing stability and responsiveness to change.
3. Leading the top team to model teamwork, smart decision-making, and coherent management.
4. Working with the board to monitor performance; manage important external relationships; ensure integrity; and maintain an effective balance of composition, experience, and expertise.
5. Being the face of the company to external stakeholders, advocating its social purpose, managing regulatory and investment relationships, and evaluating patterns of change relevant to the entity.
6. Managing one's own time and energy to ensure sustained effectiveness and capability.¹⁹

In considering how these skills are put together in a complex organisation, I propose a concept of leadership that has helped shape my inquiry into the nature and functioning of leadership. I propose that effective leadership is the task of using the power available to a leader to organise and motivate people to work together towards achieving a set of shared goals and objectives. In doing that work, leaders strive to derive the best value out of the resources available as responsible and efficient custodians, and to learn from mistakes and successes to be more effective and capable in managing change. In the context of public leadership, the function of leadership is in achieving things that are demonstrably for the common good or in the public interest.

This concept of leadership identifies that effective leaders will have certain skills (or competencies) that make them fit for the leadership task; that leadership exists in relation to others—those who follow, or who are members of the entity in which they work together, or who hold a stake in its success; that a leader's effectiveness is assessed by the outcomes achieved; a leader will have a perspective on the

¹⁸ Carolyn Dewar, Martin Hirt, and Scott Keller, "The mindsets and practices of excellent CEOs," *McKinsey Insights* (25 October 2019). <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-mindsets-and-practices-of-excellent-ceos>.

¹⁹ See Appendix 1 for a more detailed breakdown of the suite of subsidiary functions in these categories.

future in ensuring the entity is better able to deal with its next challenge; and that the outcomes achieved are of value within the entity and externally to it—that what it does matters, and ideally, produces benefits for others.

Padilla et al. have proposed an appealingly concise statement of leadership as a function in group performance, involving influencing individuals to forego selfish, short-term interests and to contribute to long-term goals.

All significant human achievement requires leadership to unite people, channel their efforts, and encourage contribution toward the goals of the collective enterprise.²⁰

Northouse has identified six elements that should be included in a concept of leadership: a focus on group processes or interactions; a personality perspective including any special traits or characteristics; acts or behaviours—the things leaders do to bring about change in a group; power and its use to effect change in others; transformational processes that move followers to achieve more than their perceived self-interest; and a perspective on skills or the capabilities (which I describe as the experience, knowledge, skills, and imagination) required of effective leadership.²¹ This concept recognises that ‘people’ may not be individuals only but are typically organised in groups, or see themselves as part of a group, a community, a profession, or another kind of collective. For the purposes of this project, the public interest may embrace a nation and a society with all their diversity of interests and interest groupings. Northouse proposes a definition of leadership relevant to the concept above:

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.²²

Northouse’s concept and definition imply that leadership flows one way—to effect change in others. What about change wrought by the processes of leadership in the leaders themselves through personal discovery, or, through the influence of those they lead? Northouse chooses ‘influences’ to describe the leader’s function rather than ‘directs’ which implies the use of power and authority. Antonakis and Day propose a definition of leadership reflecting a contemporary research agenda and which also avoids reference to a leader’s power to coerce or to be directive:

Leadership is a formal or informal contextually-rooted and goal-influencing process that occurs between a leader and a follower, groups of followers, or institutions. The science of leadership is a systematic study of this process and its outcomes, as well as how this process depends on the leader’s traits and behaviours, observer

²⁰ Art Padilla, Robert Hogan, and Robert B. Kaiser, "The toxic triangle: destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments," *The Leadership Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (2007): 178.

²¹ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 5.

²² Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 5.

inferences about the leader's characteristics, and observer attribution regarding the outcomes of the entity they lead.²³

Antonakis and Day recognise that leadership is formal (relating to position in a hierarchy or structure) and informal (relating to influence or standing). The definition gives primacy to the 'science' of leadership theory, and to traits and behaviours as the basis of defining leadership. They avoid consideration of power in their definition saying that 'power refers to the means leaders potentially have to influence others.'²⁴ In this dissertation, I contend that power should not be assumed to equate with 'influence'. Power is the most obvious means by which a leader does more than influence others by directing, or, coercing them, and is a fundamental element of leadership that must always be a factor in evaluating how leadership works.

The Leader as Individual

The Shifts in Leadership Theory

Even though the development of leadership theory has gone through many shifts and transformations, there is a remarkable continuity of ideas that transfer from one shift to the next.²⁵ Surveys of leadership theory over time have used a variety of analytical methods including chronological, thematic relationships, analytical groupings, or social science approaches. The table at Appendix 3 shows how the theories relate to one another, and the degree of commonality between them in recognising the most influential leadership theories over time. Each theoretical approach continues to be relevant to some degree in contemporary leadership thinking, and has something to say about the way leadership in society works. Most continue to attract interest and are often adapted to incorporate contemporary societal change and the expectations of leaders in relation to those they lead.

The trends in development of theory have generally been along two intersecting axes: first, the degree of power and influence attributed to leaders and followers in the functioning of leadership in groups and organisations in one direction; and the balance between a task-orientation and relationship-

²³ John Antonakis and David V. Day, "Introduction," in *The Nature of Leadership* ed. John Antonakis and David V. Day (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2018), 5-6.

²⁴ Antonakis and Day, "Introduction," 6.

²⁵ I am reluctant to say theory has 'evolved' because of the risk of a connotation with biological (or Darwinian) evolution. There is a body of historical and contemporary research which seeks to explain aspects of human behaviour and society, including leadership, the formation of groups, and the nature of cooperation and collaboration, as functions of biological evolution which enhances the survival of individuals and groups. One of the eminent theorists in this area was the world-renowned Harvard socio-biologist E.O. Wilson and his highly controversial work on 'consilience' or the unity of knowledge in arriving at evolutionary explanations of human behaviours: see Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: the Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Vintage, 1999). Eminent biologists such as Stephen Jay Gould rejected thinking of culture as a form of genetic determinism because of its potential to be misused to justify exclusivist and discriminatory practices that have caused so much harm in the past. Socio-biological approaches will not be a factor in my analysis of leadership theory, although they enjoy some continued interest in identifying leadership attributes in individuals and archetypes as a basis for predicting likely fit for leadership roles.

orientation in the other. The most obvious shift in leadership theory is from the leader-centric trait and attribute approach to leadership as a social process, implicitly negotiated between leaders and followers, and its character being dependent on the circumstances in which the group finds itself. This shift has created a view of leadership as a social function, and much more fluid than was perceived in leader-centric approaches. Contemporary leadership is less likely to consider leaders as hero figures with unique abilities that set them apart from those they lead, and more likely to give greater weight to the importance of networks, collaboration, relationships within and between teams, and to the responsibility of leaders to develop individuals in the group or organisation to make their optimal contribution to the organisation's success. Rather than an individual pursuit, leadership is seen as most effective as a shared responsibility, with members of the group having degrees of leadership attributes and responsibility relative to their life experience, education, interpersonal skills, commitment, and opportunities to apply them. Effective leadership is more typically seen as broadly-based or networked rather than hierarchical, and as a result, the accountabilities of leadership are more distributed within the group.

My concern with the contemporary relational theories is that they inadequately account for the function and effect of power delegated to and used by leaders in explaining the way leadership works in groups, especially in times of crisis and disruption when vested interests are motivated to protect or advance their status at the expense of others. I contend that we can attribute to relational theories the greater efficiency and productivity derived from more collaborative and team-based ways of working with more open systems of communication and of reward and recognition, and commitments to training and job-related development. All of those benefits will contribute to a leader's effectiveness, and may reflect a leader's style and practice of leadership in an organisation. The reality is that leadership roles in complex organisations and political entities are typically institutionalised and have delegated to them powers and responsibilities for which those leaders—and they alone—are ultimately accountable before the law, to their governing bodies, to electors, and to those with property rights in the entity.

From its beginning, leadership research and theory sought to identify the attributes, skills, and behaviours that may be unique to leaders. As research developed, it became more apparent that rather than unique and non-transferrable skills, effective leaders were those who applied natural abilities and learned skills within organisational contexts where leadership was necessary. Increasingly, the context of leadership became as important as the leader's individual skills, and the influence of the leader within an organisation became paramount.

Leader as hero

In 1840, a popular series of lectures by Scottish historian, Thomas Carlyle, characterised great leaders as heroic in their exemplary character, values, sense of destiny, and selfless actions in elevating the material, spiritual, and intellectual lives of those who follow and worship them.²⁶

Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these.²⁷

What became known as Carlyle's 'great man theory' has been maligned because of the gender-specific expression typical of its times. Contemporary theorising on leadership does not identify any attributes of effective leadership or of the function of leadership that are specific by gender or by race, sexuality, or other factors over which individuals have no control. But Carlyle did some important things in these essays. First, he reignited serious thinking on the general principle that leadership is an important area of study. He argued for the difference leadership and the acts of leaders made in the lives of peoples and states, and which made leadership an essential function in a well-ordered society. Second, that there was an important relationship between the leader's use of power and effectiveness as a leader. Carlyle recognised different types of power, particularly the power to coerce individuals to comply with the leader's direction through the use of force and sanctions; or to persuade and influence individuals to cooperate through example, shared ideas, and rewards. And third, his purpose in these six lectures was to identify specific attributes of character or ability that might help in recognising effective leaders. Each essay focused on attributes that might explain 'the great ones; the modellers, patterns...the creators' and what they did as emergent archetypes: the hero as divinity, as prophet, as poet, as priest, of letters, and as king. His case studies revealed people he considered heroic because of their superior skills and competence in their careers; how they broadened their knowledge and experience of human affairs beyond the narrower domains of knowledge in their chosen fields; how they possessed unique insight and judgement that led to good decision making; and a belief in themselves and their destinies that set them apart from others. Carlyle saw that each had personal attributes that appealed to those they led. In doing this, Carlyle was perhaps pointing to the characteristic that later leadership theorists would describe as 'charisma' and foreshadowing the emergence of

²⁶ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Milton Keynes: Dodo Press, 2021).

²⁷ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, 1.

transformative and charismatic leadership theories that were so influential in the last third of the 20th century. Carlyle portrays the leader as the dominant figure, shaping and influencing history, effecting and inspiring change in others, but those who follow have no apparent influence on the leader or the course of events except as a resource to achieve the leader's ends. Carlyle's method is to reveal the subject's innate abilities and attributes as they confront and respond to events in the course of their lives. Whilst the heroic attributes of each subject may be pre-determined, they are tested and given meaning through the subject's life experience and thoughtful reflection. As the historian and political scientist James McGregor Burns observed, the enduring influence of Carlyle's approach is because 'of the enormous focus on political celebrities in the mass media...and because it is easier to look for heroes and scapegoats than to probe for complex and obscure causal forces.' Burns proposes that 'the study of leadership should contribute to developing more sophisticated theories of causation' rather than simplified or convenient ones related to any special insights or attributes of famous leaders. While studying those leaders may produce useful insights into their 'capacity to respond to motivations and values of themselves and others, to persuade and manipulate with skill, to relate ends and means,' Burns asserts that those individuals did not have the power to control the historical processes that define their leadership.²⁸ The British historian, E.H. Carr, also rejected views that had 'great men...imposing themselves on history in virtue of their greatness.' Carr observed that leadership is a social construction and that leaders 'owe their role in history to the mass of their followers, and are significant as social phenomena, or not at all.'²⁹

Leader and self: trait, behavioural, and skill theories

Carlyle's perspective and method as an historian dominated the study of leadership for decades until psychological profiling and psychoanalysis offered an alternative approach to identifying and describing causal relationships between the psychological make-up and behaviours of leaders, and the decisions they made. Derived primarily from psychological profiling of individuals or groups of individuals considered successful in leadership roles, research sought to identify traits, motivations, and patterns of behaviour in individuals that could be generalised as typical of effective leaders.³⁰ This approach was advanced by efforts to describe observed patterns of behaviour as skills—competencies that could be useful in identifying potential leaders, or taught and developed in others through education. This research often led to the description of archetypes, that is, logical combinations of traits, behaviours and skills that could indicate a leader's style (ways of working) or mindset (ways of thinking). Research

²⁸ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 51-2.

²⁹ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?*, ed. R. W. Davies, The George MacAulay Trevelyan Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge, January-March 1961, (London: Penguin 1987), 53-4.

³⁰ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 19-31; S. J. Zaccaro, S. Dubrow, and M. Kolze, "Leader traits and attributes," in *The Nature of Leadership*, ed. John Antonakis and David V. Day (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2018).

at this stage was considered especially useful in identifying leadership talent and in recruitment processes, and as predictors of a leader's effectiveness.

The popular literature is replete with attempts to define archetypal schemas of leadership traits, each with a descriptor evoking the circumstances or demands of the situation in which particular leadership behaviours and skills may be most appropriate (see Appendix 2 for examples of leadership archetypes). An individual may have all these archetypes present to some degree, and have a dominant or preferred way of working among them. More highly-skilled individuals are more able to navigate several archetypes to match their behaviours and skills to the demands of the situation. Many leadership development programs use archetype models in self- and group-assessment of individual styles in learning, communication, working with others, problem solving, balance of need to control or direct over creativity and collaboration, and the relative dominance of particular preferences within a suite of psychological indicators for each archetype. Amongst the most prominent contemporary analysts of the trait/behavioural approach are Zaccaro et al.³¹, Northouse³², Stogdill³³, Kirkpatrick and Locke³⁴, and Katz³⁵ who have developed suites of leadership skills and attributes (see a summary at Appendix 4). Historians have contributed to the body of work identifying the unique attributes, behaviours, or skills of leaders in times of crisis. For example, Andrew Roberts identified 37 competencies of wartime leaders (including such circumstantial ones as to 'be lucky')³⁶ while presidential biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin discerned 69 competencies demonstrated by four presidents of the United States of America in moments of crisis³⁷ (see Appendix 4).

The advantages of the trait/behavioural approach are in its identification of particular suites of skills that can be packaged for efficient delivery in short vocational and professional development programs. Case studies using history and biography are designed (or manipulated) to lead students to link a leader's success to particular behaviours, attributes, and skills that validate the leader's actions. But the literature on the trait and behavioural approach reveals its fundamental weaknesses: first, the lists of traits, behaviours, and skills indicative of effective leadership is not definitive, and continues to grow along with research in new leadership contexts in emerging skill areas; second, the traits, behaviours, and skills identified are not exclusive to leaders—they are present in those who are not in leadership roles and do not have the position or power to exercise them; third, the failure to properly account for the influence of group dynamics on the roles people assume according to the needs of the group rather than as a deterministic and inevitable response by the individual; fourth, they are leader-centric and

³¹ Zaccaro, Dubrow, and Kolze, "Leader traits and attributes," 32-3.

³² Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 23-6.

³³ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 19-20.

³⁴ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 21.

³⁵ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 44-6.

³⁶ Andrew Roberts, *Leadership in War: Essential Lessons from Those Who Made History* (Penguin Publishing Group, 2019).

³⁷ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Leadership: Lessons from the Presidents for Turbulent Times* (UK: Viking, 2018).

cannot account for the influence of the group or cultural influences on the leader's effectiveness; and fifth, the case studies used are typically reduced of complexity that might lead students to a deeper level of inquiry and to different perspectives on the appropriateness of the leader's options and the consequences of actions taken. The distinction between task-oriented and relationship-oriented skills and behaviours was a crucial development in the relevance of the behavioural school. It was recognition that leadership occurs in groups, and that skills in creating and maintaining good relationships between leaders and those they lead was crucial to effective leadership.³⁸ But the advance of leadership research has revealed the influence of other factors outside the personality or attributes of the leader that offered greater insight into understanding how leadership functioned.

Leader and self: mindset

One of the richest veins in contemporary research on leadership extended the behavioural approach of what leaders do to understanding how leaders think, that is, the cognitive capacities (or mindsets) of effective leaders. Especially important in the context of leaders dealing with crisis and discomforting change is the seminal work by American psychologist, Daniel Goleman, in researching the interrelated concepts of emotional intelligence and authenticity.³⁹ Goleman related authenticity and emotional intelligence to the degree to which leaders are aware of how their life stories have influenced their perceptions of the world and those around them, how they think and behave, their attitudes and values, and their readiness to adapt and to change. Goleman described 'authentic' leaders as having a conscious disposition towards learning about the world and their place in it. Learning is the process through which intelligence is gathered, made relevant (that is, how it relates to what we know, or, are seeking to know) and meaningful (how it matters and why we should care about it).⁴⁰ Authentic leaders are comfortable in that process of transformation in themselves, and its expression in the way they lead others. In ideal circumstances, a leader's personal example can infuse authenticity through the organisation's culture and into the ways an organisation works. Authentic leaders are comfortable in dealing with uncertainty because they trust in the process of learning, of moving through what psychologists describe as the 'proximal zone' between the safety of the knowledge they have and the knowledge they need to respond to the prevailing circumstances.⁴¹ Goleman has elaborated on emotional intelligence as a factor in

³⁸ Robert J. House and Ram N. Aditya, "The social scientific study of leadership: Quo Vadis?," *Journal of Management* 23, no. 3 (1997): 420. See also

³⁹ Goleman's most important works are Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998); Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996).

⁴⁰ Sam H. Ham, *Environmental Interpretation: a Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets* (Golden, Colorado: North American Press, 1992); Sam H. Ham, "Making meaning and experience: perspectives on interpreting the goldfields" (Nothing But Gold: 150 Years of Goldmining Conference, Bendigo, 2001); George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, "Seeking numinous experiences in the unremembered past," *Ethnology* 42, no. 1 (2003); Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, "Excursions into the un-remembered past: what people want from visits to historical sites," *The Public Historian* 22, no. 3 (2000).

⁴¹ Some of the most important works on the relationship between authentic leadership and learning are: Bill George *et al.*, "Discovering your authentic leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 2 (2007). Rob Goffee

leaders being able to direct and sustain attention on organisational problems through maintaining cognitive control under pressure; achieving the cognitive and emotional empathy to understand what matters to others in times of change; and to attend to things happening in the wider world that may influence the organisation's strategy or present opportunities for innovation.⁴² The five competencies Goleman associated with emotional intelligence are self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; and social skill (see Appendix 5 for descriptors of each of these traits at work). Whilst continuously developing these skills in themselves, emotionally intelligent leaders are developing these same skills in those they lead in order to build a resilient and adaptable organisational culture. Goleman has applied his research extensively in corporate and political leadership settings, and found important correlations between leaders with well-developed emotional intelligence and the superior performance of the groups they lead.⁴³

Goleman's work is important because it has shown that whilst intellect, cognitive skills, and technical skills are important, they are the expected or 'threshold capabilities' for competent leaders, and that it is emotional intelligence that is the necessary condition of contemporary leadership excellence.⁴⁴ Goleman's thinking provides a new perspective on that intangible quality that separates the most effective leaders from the rest: their judgement in making tough decisions under pressure and in uncertainty. Goleman's work emphasises that judgement can be developed and improved when leaders make learning from experience a deliberate and conscious process. Tichy and Bennis⁴⁵ propose that a leader's most important judgements occur in three domains—people, strategy and crisis—and grow out of a three-phase process: first, preparation—when leaders sense and frame the issue, and align the team members so that everyone understands the call and why it is important; second, making the call—the moment of decision; and third, execution—making it happen and being willing to adjust as needed. This process of judgement works best when the decision-maker is aware of the context within which a decision must occur. That involves leaders in having an idea of how to make the organisation successful; articulating and reinforcing the organisation's values; and a strategy for generating the energy to accomplish its goals.⁴⁶ Likierman likewise sees judgement being the product of learning strategies such as self-awareness and personal reflection. Likierman proposed that leaders who are better able to discern patterns that others might miss and to create fresh insights are those who are good listeners and readers; have breadth of experiences and relationships that enable them to recognise

and Gareth Jones, "Managing authenticity: the paradox of great leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 12 (2005). Robert E. Quinn, "Moments of greatness," *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 7/8 (2005). Quinn and Quinn, "Change management and leadership development have to mesh." Nonaka Ikujiro and Takeuchi Hirotaka, "The wise leader," *Harvard Business Review* 89, no. 5 (2011).

⁴² Daniel Goleman, "The focused leader," *Harvard Business Review* 91, no. 12 (2013).

⁴³ See particularly Daniel Goleman, "What makes a leader?," *Harvard Business Review* 76, no. 6 (1998); Daniel Goleman, "Leadership that gets results," *Harvard Business Review* 78, no. 2 (2000).

⁴⁴ Goleman, "What makes a leader?," 94.

⁴⁵ Tichy and Bennis, "Making judgment calls," 96.

⁴⁶ See Appendix 9 for a comparison of traditional and process approaches to leader judgement capabilities proposed by Tichy and Bennis.

parallels or analogies; if they don't know something they ask; recognise their own emotions and biases; are adept at expanding the array of choices under consideration; and are grounded in the real world.⁴⁷

Peter Drucker, a pre-eminent observer and theorist on the practical skills of leadership and management, has also emphasised that the most effective leaders are constantly learning from experience and systematically evaluating the contributions they are making to the entities they lead.⁴⁸ Especially important for Drucker is encouraging leaders to reflect on their mindsets (ways of thinking) and leadership styles (ways of working) to ensure they are aware of their strengths and the strengths that others bring; to seek the knowledge and insights needed to challenge prevailing assumptions that constrain options for improvement; to ask how they work best in making good decisions and producing the desired results; to test that their values and actions are consistent with one another; and to test what a situation requires of them as leaders and how they can best contribute (see Appendix 6 for Drucker's key questions and contexts). For Drucker, asking these questions and answering them honestly is characteristic of a learning and adaptive mindset.

Mintzberg and Gosling proposed five mindsets that are distinctive of a manager and a leader, and which require constant 'action and reflection to blend in a natural flow.'⁴⁹ The five mindsets are

1. managing self: the reflective mind-set that reviews and evaluates, thinks about values, asks key questions such as those posed by Drucker, is open-minded in finding solutions, and has a sense of history in small as well as large things;
2. managing organisations: the analytical mind-set that uses information from many sources to understand a problem and its components, but goes beyond hard, quantitative data to include intangible issues that matter to people and their perceptions;
3. managing context: the worldly mind-set that looks to learn from other worldviews and domains of knowledge, to explore the points of interaction between the organisation and its partners, its stakeholders, its interdependencies, its differences and similarities, potential collaborations and threats too;
4. managing relationships: the collaborative mind-set with its focus on developing and managing relationships between people in the entity and externally to it, and not simply managing people; and
5. managing change: the action mind-set that turns thoughtful reflection into action, characterised by a recognition of the continuity of change, mobilising energy to focus on the important things, and open to learning through curiosity, alertness to opportunity, and prepared to be experimental.

⁴⁷ Andrew Likierman, "The elements of good judgment," *Harvard Business Review* 98, no. 1 (2020).

⁴⁸ Peter F. Drucker, "Managing oneself," *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 1 (2005).

⁴⁹ Jonathan Gosling and Henry Mintzberg, "The five minds of a manager," *Harvard Business Review* 81, no. 11 (2003): 62.

In describing these mindsets, Gosling and Mintzberg brought the theories that linked traits, behaviours, and skills together with the domains in which leaders must operate to be competent at a personal level, within the organisation, and looking outward to adapt the organisation's fit with a constantly changing world. Mintzberg, as an influential theorist integrating organisational dynamics, structure, and strategy rejected what he called 'the dysfunctional separation of leadership from management.'

We all know managers who don't lead are boring, dispiriting. Well, leaders who don't manage are distant, disconnected. Instead of isolating leadership, we need to diffuse it through the organisation.'⁵⁰

Dewar et al.⁵¹ proposed six mindsets that are similar to the five proposed by Gosling and Mintzberg, but reframed as: personal behaviours in working; framing corporate strategy; aligning the organisation's talent and culture with strategy; coherent decision-making processes and internal relationships; managing external relationships; and added a sixth mindset labelled 'board engagement'. Each of these mindsets is linked to a suite of 18 leadership practices as ways of working that give effect to a leader's ways of thinking (see Appendix 7 for the six mindsets and associated 18 practices). The addition of board engagement as a leadership mindset is interesting. Failures of governance in recent decades have revealed the risk when boards become hostages to an executive team's organisational strategy whilst it produced good results, and regret for suspending their critical judgement of what is in the best interests of shareholders and stakeholders when results became poor. The description of 'board engagement' provided by Dewar et al. does not address the contemporary expectations of corporate social responsibility, but rather emphasises the familiar view of the board's responsibility for improving performance measured in shareholder value. Reference to the public interest is not seen as a board responsibility, and is placed in the mindset for management of external stakeholders.⁵²

A large study by Brown and Posner showed a correlation between a leader's learning mindset and leadership practices.⁵³ The learning behaviours ('tactics') included an action-orientation in being prepared to learn by trial and error, and in gathering information from a broad range of sources to support critical thinking; a willingness to reflect on any feelings of concern or worry; and to engage with others to discuss concerns, options, and scenarios. The ideal leadership practices were: challenging the prevailing processes of decision-making to ensure new ideas are considered; inspiring a shared and compelling image of what the future could be; enabling others to act in cooperative relationships; modelling the way by personal example; and encouraging the heart by providing support and

⁵⁰ Henry Mintzberg, "Enough leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 82, no. 11 (2004): 22.

⁵¹ Dewar, Hirt, and Keller, "The mindsets and practices of excellent CEOs."

⁵² Issues relating to governance and institutional checks on organisational behaviour will be developed in a subsequent chapter on the public interest.

⁵³ Lillas M. Brown and Barry Z. Posner, "Exploring the relationship between learning and leadership," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 22, no. 6 (2001).

motivation. Leaders who applied the ‘tactics’ associated with learning were more likely to exhibit effective leadership practices, and especially in dealing with unfamiliar situations.

Leaders and Organisations

In the preceding section, I described the most influential theoretical approaches to identifying the ways of working and decision-making mindsets that are associated with effective leaders. The survey of theorising showed the major shifts in understanding the cognitive skills (the mindsets) of leaders, and how mindsets determine the skills that will be most useful to leaders in being effective. I showed how important a capacity to learn, to reflect on life experiences, and a willingness to adapt one’s point of view and behaviours are for effective leaders. New directions in organisational theory embedded these cognitive skill approaches into the way effective organisations should work. The conjunction of these two streams of theory produced a greater focus on the function of leadership in effective organisations. What emerges most clearly from this new work is the primacy of purpose in determining the effectiveness of leaders and the organisations they lead. From a clear sense of purpose flows the organisational goals, its strategy, its values, its ways of working, and most importantly for this study, dealing with conflicts and competing interests in times of change. In the following section, I look more closely at how those relate to the function of leadership.

Leaders in organisations

Contemporaneous with the focus on leaders’ mindsets was a burst of new thinking about the role of the leader in successful organisations and how they got things done. Developments in organisational theory with its emphasis on understanding the relationships between people and systems, values and culture, and performance and outcomes, were perhaps a natural extension of the leader as a learner being broadened into a concept of the learning organisation. Peter Senge, an influential theorist of the learning organisation, proposed that successful organisations must be built to be adaptive and creative simultaneously, that is, able to cope with crisis as it emerged, and to generate new opportunities rather than just be reactive to change around it. That required a commitment to learning and improvement in all areas of the organisation’s work, including its executive functions. Senge called this approach ‘systems thinking’ because it demanded deeper levels of inquiry, intelligence gathering, and thoughtfulness in taking remedial action in the wake of failures or to take advantage of opportunities when they emerged.⁵⁴ Leaders in Senge’s learning organisation had to be designers, teachers, and stewards: designers in getting the organisational structure and collaborative processes in place that would embed learning approaches in strategy, policy, problem-solving, decision-making, and appropriate action; teachers in surfacing the prevailing mental models and assumptions of how the

⁵⁴ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (London: Century Business, 1992).

world works and challenging them—lifting the vision from reacting to events to instead responding to emergent patterns, and generating systemic solutions; and stewards in managing the people they lead towards achieving the purposes of the organisation. Mant's profiles of effective leaders in times of crisis show them emphasising relationships 'governed by the purpose or object of the relationship or by its constitutional representation rather than by interpersonal power...that is, the relationship of everybody to the higher-order ideal takes precedence over the win/lose relationships between people or sectional interests.'⁵⁵ Intelligent leaders in Mant's model are those who use the power of their positions to ensure that everyone's role is clearly aligned with the outcome all are working towards; the creativity of people in problem-solving is optimised by routinely bringing in people with relevant expertise who may be outside the formal leadership group; thinking is about the whole system of work and its sub-systems in searching for innovative ways of doing things better; key relationships are managed to build trust in others; and the intended outcome is done and fit for purpose.

The antithesis of Senge's and Mant's approach is what Argyris called 'skilled incompetence' amongst very smart senior executives: the destructive routines of reacting defensively to events or problems without thinking deeply about them; of maintaining control over inquiries to limit their scope and constrain discovery; and routines to deflect blame for system failures.⁵⁶ Argyris proposed that effective leadership throughout an organisation should be capable of learning that would enable multiple lines of inquiry simultaneously, and engages experts from within the system that is being reviewed in collaborative analysis to find the deeper systemic causes of failures to adapt to change.

This thinking about organisations opened theorising on how leader-group member relationships and group processes worked to get things done. The most dominant theories that emerged were path-goal, leader-member exchange, and situational. Each of these theories proposed that effective leaders were those who negotiated and maintained relationships within the organisation or group (and outside where appropriate) to accomplish designated tasks. Leadership effectiveness is determined by the degree to which the leader can influence or control the group processes.⁵⁷ Leaders would be expected to choose the most appropriate combination of being directive (defining goals and standards, timelines, roles, outcomes to be achieved) or being supportive (two-way communication, social and emotional support, allocating resources and rewards, seeking input, collaborative problem-solving, information sharing) in their approach to dealing with the task according to the degree of competence of the people undertaking it. A leader's effectiveness would then be in the capacity to choose the right approach to the right degree

⁵⁵ Alistair Mant, *Intelligent Leadership* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 5-7.

⁵⁶ Chris Argyris, "Skilled incompetence," *Harvard Business Review* 64, no. 5 (1986). See also Chris Argyris, "Double loop learning in organizations," *Harvard Business Review* 55, no. 5 (1977); Chris Argyris, "Teaching smart people how to learn," *Harvard Business Review* 69, no. 3 (1991); Desmond J. G. Griffin, "Managing in the museum organization I: Leadership and communication," *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 6, no. 4 (1987).

⁵⁷ House and Aditya, "The social scientific study of leadership: Quo Vadis?," 422.

across a complex range of tasks and appropriate to the situation.⁵⁸ Drucker proposes a schema for leaders to apply in any unusual situation to get the right things done, in the right ways, by following eight simple rules:

1. ask what needs to be done;
2. ask what's right for the enterprise;
3. develop action plans;
4. take responsibility for decisions;
5. take responsibility for communicating;
6. focus on opportunities, not problems;
7. run productive meetings; and
8. think and say 'we', not 'I'.

According to Drucker, by being disciplined in applying these rules, leaders will clarify the self-awareness and knowledge they need to make smart decisions, convert that knowledge into effective action, and ensure accountability throughout the organisations they lead.⁵⁹ Drucker's body of work has been influential in my thinking on the importance of purpose in defining what an organisation will do, how cohesion is created and sustained, and in determining how it will conduct its affairs. Drucker's pragmatism has influenced generations of leadership theorists and emergent leaders in understanding the primary task of infusing purpose through organisations. Drucker encouraged leaders to understand the unique perspective they have in looking outward from their organisations into the world outside for the patterns of change that will confront them. No organisation exists apart from society, and so, as a part of society, Drucker thought it essential that the organisation makes a positive social contribution no matter the scale of its operations, and can adapt to changing circumstances when opportunities emerge.

The importance of the works examined here is their value (and popularity) in presenting a more holistic context of leadership and its functions in complex organisations. In particular, the skills perceived as crucial to effective leadership became more group-oriented rather than leader-centric. Leadership was a function within an organisation, and the effectiveness of each depended on the effectiveness of the other. In determining the skills that characterised effective leadership, the context and circumstances in which leaders act were acknowledged as more relevant than notions of gifted and uniquely insightful individuals directing the response to challenging events.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 95-8.

⁵⁹ Peter F. Drucker, "What makes an effective executive," *Harvard Business Review* 82, no. 6 (2004).

⁶⁰ R. Ayman and M. Lauritsen, "Contingencies, context, situation, and leadership," in *The Nature of Leadership*, ed. John Antonakis and David V. Day (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2018), 139-44.

Transformational leadership

Espoused in the 1980s by James McGregor Burns, an historian and political scientist, transformative leadership theory (more commonly known as transformational leadership) has deeply influenced a generation of leadership researchers because 'it is consistent with society's popular notion of what leadership means. People are attracted to transformational leadership because it makes sense to them. It is appealing that a leader will provide a vision for the future.'⁶¹

The central principle of transformational leadership as Burns described it is that leadership must be goal-oriented and about 'the achievement of purpose in the form of real and intended social change.'⁶² Burns advocated that leaders have a moral role to play in influencing those they lead to achieve a heightened sense of shared purpose in what the group does and which is greater than their individual self- or sub-group interest.⁶³ For the leadership to have credibility, the means that leaders employ towards achieving shared goals must be consistent in character with the purpose. The intellectual test of transforming power 'is the capacity to conceive values or purpose in such a way that ends and means are linked analytically and creatively and that the implications of certain values for political action and governmental organisation are clarified.'⁶⁴

Consequently, transformational leadership is organised around a purpose that is collective, achieved by cooperation amongst followers and therefore relational, purposeful in being goal-oriented, dissensual in that conflict and its resolution drives awareness of what is important and strengthens shared values, and causative as the interaction between leaders and followers produces change in each and in their social relations and the political institutions that govern them.⁶⁵ The primary task of leadership therefore is to influence followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations of leaders and followers, and to induce people to feel their needs so strongly and to define their values so meaningfully, that they can be moved to purposeful action.⁶⁶ To create that state of mind, leaders can appeal to widely and deeply held values, such as justice, liberty, and fraternity; expose followers to the broader values that contradict narrower ones or behaviours inconsistent with the group's values; redefine aspirations and gratifications to help followers see their stake in new, program-oriented social movements; and gratify lower needs so that higher motivations will arise to elevate the conscience of people.⁶⁷

For Burns, the antithesis of leadership is imposing on, or coercing, followers to do what they would otherwise not do simply because it is what the leaders wanted them to do. That is an act of power, not

⁶¹ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 179.

⁶² Burns, *Leadership*, 251.

⁶³ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 164.

⁶⁴ Burns, *Leadership*, 163.

⁶⁵ Burns, *Leadership*, 452-5.

⁶⁶ Burns, *Leadership*, 43-4.

⁶⁷ Burns, *Leadership*, 43.

leadership,⁶⁸ whereas the ‘genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers’ values and motivations.’⁶⁹ Consequently, effective leadership seeks to resolve a values conflict through the process of recognising the real need underlying a conflict; uncovering and exploiting contradictions between values and practice; realigning values; reorganising institutions where necessary; and governance of the resulting change.

Fundamental to the notion of transformational leadership is that leaders and followers are changed in the processes of responding to crises and conflicts—changed individually and collectively to aspire to higher purposes. In offering ‘advanced leadership’ as a variant on transformational leadership, Kanter described leaders who can think ‘outside the boundaries of convention’ to tackle the big problems the world faces in creating a more equitable, adaptable, and sustainable future through the entities they lead.⁷⁰ Kanter’s research has revealed the extent to which leaders are transformed by their working on big problems using their institutional and societal power to address those problems. They see that change is always a risk, and so a great challenge for leadership is to give purpose and meaning to change for those who are involved or affected⁷¹. These may be moments of catharsis and apotheosis for leaders in their perception of their leadership and its reality. Burns sees this as a function of politics in a liberal democracy: it is the means by which conflicts over values and purposes are debated, new meanings and perspectives are created, and change in behavioural norms and expectations are forged. The political institutions of a democracy such as political parties, parliaments, courts, elections, and civic institutions provide checks and balances on the power of executive leaders, and are also repositories of collective wisdom and knowledge that are used by skilled political leaders in resolving crises. In profiling six heads of state or government he met over his career and in dealing with diplomatic crises, former American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, wrote that the six leaders developed ‘parallel qualities despite the profound differences among their societies: a capacity to understand the situation in which their societies found themselves, an ability to devise a strategy to manage the present and shape the future, a skill in moving their societies toward elevated purposes, and a readiness to rectify shortcomings.’⁷²

Burns’s work is so important and influential because it moved consideration of leadership from the transactional domain of business schools into a proper relationship with the humanities, especially with history. Burns focused on the use by political leaders of notions of a higher purpose in welding a group of citizens into a nation and forging a national identity. The primary task of leadership in this context,

⁶⁸ Burns, *Leadership*, 18-19.

⁶⁹ Burns, *Leadership*, 19.

⁷⁰ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Why business leaders should solve problems beyond their companies*, podcast audio, HBR IdeaCast, accessed 21 January, 2020, <https://hbr.org/podcast/2020/01/why-business-leaders-should-solve-problems-beyond-their-companies>.

⁷¹ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Think Outside the Building: How Advanced Leaders Can Change the World One Smart Innovation at a Time* (New York: Public Affairs, 2020), 201.

⁷² Henry Kissinger, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2022), 415.

he suggests, is to persuade a citizenry comprising a diversity of interests and ambitions to be conscious of the shared interests that could and would define the life of their nation. Burns envisioned a role for political leaders as teachers or mentors in advocating the ideals that would characterise the ambitions and aspirations they share with followers, and in so doing, raise the citizenry's expectations of itself and what they could achieve together in the pursuit of shared national interests. Effective leadership plays a crucial role in citizens to be active in the social and political life of their communities, and in developing a moral imagination that encompasses a wide and generous view of the public interest, its origins, and its relevance.

Transformational leadership typically views conflict over ideology and action in an historical context, that is, what one believes, and how one came to believe it. Ideological positions can become extreme in times of crisis as groups and special interests—especially those aligned with the dominant ideology—perceive threat to their status, influence, and power. In order to be effective in resolving ideological conflict, political leaders must achieve an understanding of what leaders and followers see in each other and the environment; the conflict with opposing ideologies that draws them together; their social and historical consciousness; the values that hold moral significance for them; and the social and political purposes that emerge from such ideology.⁷³

This capacity to deal with ideological conflict is developed in what Burns called the 'crucibles of leadership': those political, social, and cultural networks and affiliations in which leaders are immersed and develop from a young age, in which well-grounded relationships with followers and potential coalition partners are forged, and practical platforms of action are developed. Burns described leaders who emerge from these crucibles as being 'not merely the product of potent social and psychological influences: they are cognitive, fact-gathering, calculating creatures who link their goals—and even subordinate them—to the reality of the structures of political opportunity around them.'⁷⁴ Ambition, which Burns recognises as a strong spur to leadership amongst those who are driven to achieve great outcomes, is linked with the purposes that must characterise those political opportunities. Burns identifies the 'crucial distinction' in the study of leadership is 'between the quest for individual recognition and self-advancement, regardless of its social and political consequences, and the quest for the kind of status and power that can be used to advance collective purposes that transcend the needs and ambitions of the individual.'⁷⁵ For Burns, organised political parties are important institutional mechanisms because they generate a reciprocity of belief and values between leaders and their followers, and as the means for developing ideologically coherent policies as plans for action in achieving their shared goals. Parties comprising a diversity of interests and perspectives can be a

⁷³ Burns, *Leadership*, 250.

⁷⁴ Burns, *Leadership*, 119.

⁷⁵ Burns, *Leadership*, 106.

limiting factor (or, a check) on the leader's use of power, and while ambition is essential in driving progress, parties can serve to keep leaders pragmatic in using their power to get things done.

In looking for ways that transformational leadership is institutionalised in an organisation, Avolio et al. described the ideal condition in a stable organisation of a cascading effect in which lower-level leaders model themselves on the higher-level leader. Leaders at each level reward behaviours that are consistent with the entity's and the leadership's higher-order goals in order to continually elevate the expectations of followers. In this scenario, Avolio et al. assert that transformational leaders must be aware of how well developed their followers are in understanding and adopting the goals, and showing that behaviour at one level is consistent with the behaviour and norms at each higher level.⁷⁶ But Heifetz has concerns that the ideal conditions Avolio et al. described are rare. In adapting Burns's concept of leadership, Heifetz proposed that it had to work in less than ideal—or crisis—conditions in what Heifetz calls 'adaptive leadership'.

For Heifetz as for Burns, conflict is caused by the emergence of an external misalignment between the organisation and its strategy, and an internal misalignment of strategy and culture. These gaps between an organisation's reality—and its perception of its reality—are moments of crisis that present opportunity for adaptive leadership responses requiring 'a change in values, beliefs, or behaviour' and in exposing and orchestrating conflict or contradictions 'within individuals and constituencies [to] provide the leverage for mobilising people to learn new ways.'⁷⁷

These crises can be created by societal, cultural, political or technological trends in the environment that are causing the misalignment, or, engineered by leadership to create the circumstances to make changes in the organisation. Schein says that crises provide leaders with opportunities to test a group's underlying assumptions, and in doing so, to open the way to new norms of behaviour, adjustment of values, and new ways of working. The heightened emotional involvement in times of crisis also raises the intensity of learning.⁷⁸ The leadership task, then, is to create the conditions to manage conflict and in which resolutions can be developed by getting people to recognise the problems they face and a willingness to deal with them; to clarify what matters most to them in balance with other aspirations; and the trade-offs that are acceptable to make the necessary adaptation to a new reality. In those conditions, leaders are looked to for ensuring clarity of goals and the outcome to be expected; managing relationships with stakeholders who can apply resources and influence towards achieving the outcomes or dealing with distractions; managing conflict within the group to ensure cooperation but without

⁷⁶ Bruce J. Avolio and Bernard M. Bass, "Individual consideration viewed at multiple levels of analysis: A multi-level framework for examining the diffusion of transformational leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (1995): 206-12. See also David A. Nadler and Michael L. Tushman, "Beyond the charismatic leader: leadership and organizational change," *California Management Review* 32, no. 2 (1990); Jim Paul et al., "The mutability of charisma in leadership research," *Management Decision* 40, no. 2 (2002); Robert J. House and Jane M. Howell, "Personality and charismatic leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1992).

⁷⁷ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1994), 22.

⁷⁸ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 237.

suppressing the energy to look for creative solutions; encouraging a willingness to understand the perspectives of others and why they matter to them; and to be honest in dealing with the reality of the problem.⁷⁹

Uhl-Bien and Arena regard adaptive leadership as a particularly effective approach in managing change in complexity (described as ‘rich interconnectivity’) when the natural reflex of organisations to achieve stability or order is not feasible. The adaptive response requires the collective intelligence of groups and networks with a stake in the change to be immersed in a state of ‘emergence’—when people, technology, information and resources are combined in a networked system to create something that did not previously exist.⁸⁰ Critical to the success of the adaptive response is the leader’s enabling of ‘adaptive space’ (or ‘holding environment’ in Heifetz’s terms) in which the emergence process can develop collaboratively and free of the constraints of bureaucracy and operational routines that tend towards maintaining the status quo, and in which creative tensions or conflict over options are managed.

For Heifetz, the intensity with which leaders engage in these functions will vary according to the degree of uncertainty in defining the problem, the availability of solutions, the complexity of the adaptation required, and the consequent stress resulting from uncertainty. Heifetz’s five strategic principles that underpin adaptive leadership are therefore:

1. identifying the adaptive challenge and particularly the values at stake, and unbundle the issues that come with the problem;
2. keeping the level of distress within a tolerable range for doing adaptive work (that is, learning) by providing a ‘holding environment’ in which to control the pace and timing of change;
3. focusing attention on ripening issues and not on stress-reducing distractions;
4. delegating work back to people at a rate they can stand; and
5. protecting voices of leadership without authority in the group and who raise hard questions, probe contradictions, and provoke rethinking.⁸¹

The seven strategies that give effect to these principles (incorporating a suite of diagnosing questions for leader’s to ask for each principle) are at Appendix 8.⁸²

This prescription is ideally suited to the concept of leadership which adapts in its function and style to the problems presented by constant and unavoidable change. It fits with the appealingly progressive and inclusive contemporary approaches to understanding leadership as a social construction negotiated between those in leadership roles and those they lead. But adaptive leadership deals with the reality of power—especially the power that is held by, or delegated to, leaders within organisations and groups

⁷⁹ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 22-3.

⁸⁰ Mary Uhl-Bien and Michael Arena, "Complexity leadership," *Organizational Dynamics* 46, no. 1 (2017): 9.

⁸¹ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 128-9.

⁸² These strategies will be important in analysing the movies to be selected for this project.

who will ‘serve as repositories for our worries and aspirations, holding them, if they can, in exchange for the powers we gave them’ to resolve problems and deliver on the promise of fulfilment.⁸³

Leaders and power

Burns’s concept of leadership recognises that power is ubiquitous within a social system, and it is the responsibility of leaders to give that power a purpose. The progressive trend in leadership literature is towards relational theories that tie leaders and followers together in mutually beneficial relationships that lead to self- and group-actualisation in the common interest. For all their contemporary appeal, the research looking for connections between leadership outcomes and relational theories has produced correlational, not causal, explanations.⁸⁴ The conclusion in this dissertation is that it is possible, if not more likely, that the perceived effectiveness of relational models can be attributed to efficiencies gained through more participatory ways of working in organisations. That would include the benefits that accrue from goal and task clarity, improved communication outcomes, a clearly articulated purpose, well understood rules of decision-making, efficient resource allocation to support strategy, and transparent systems of reward for those aligned with the purpose and the desired organisational culture. Each of these things are given effect by leaders using the power delegated to them to make things happen, and in turn are factors in perceptions of a leader’s effectiveness. My concern with relational theories is that they may explain the workings of leadership in ideal conditions in a stable organisation, with little real or potential internal conflict, in which decision making is bound within well-known and understood rules, and where there is no misalignment with the expectations of the outside world. But those conditions rarely apply in a real world which is constantly changing and in which conflict between competing interests, even within normally cooperative groups, is inevitable. In those circumstances, a leader’s power may be instrumental in unifying the group. Relational theories are uncomfortable with the function of coercive power to direct members of a group to do things when ideal conditions do not prevail. Without understanding the uses of power as a means for resolving conflict, achieving outcomes, and overcoming resistance, most leadership theories will founder.

Pfeffer describes power as ‘an important social process that is often required to get things done in interdependent systems.’⁸⁵ Sturm et al. have described power as ‘the discretion and means to enforce one’s will’ within a social system.⁸⁶ Salancik’s and Pfeffer’s deeply influential paper on the movement of power in organisations argues that ‘traditional political power [is] one of the few mechanisms available for aligning an organisation with its reality’ and resolving conflicts among competing interests. Bureaucracy (‘institutionalised power’) tends to embed its own power and to mask the

⁸³ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, 69.

⁸⁴ Antonakis and Day, "Introduction," 14.

⁸⁵ Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Understanding power in organizations," *California Management Review* 34, no. 2 (1992): 35.

⁸⁶ Rachel E. Sturm and L. Monzani, "Power and Leadership," in *The Nature of Leadership*, ed. John Antonakis and David V. Day (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2018), 275.

organisation from its reality. The more power is institutionalised through control of decision-making rules, procedures, and information flows, the more likely the organisation is to be out of alignment with a constantly changing world around it.⁸⁷ Salancik's and Pfeffer's breakthrough was laying bare the assumption that the dominant (most powerful) coalition in an organisation will be the group that is perceived as the most important in dealing with challenges to the organisation's alignment with its business environment. More specifically, they revealed the conflicting assumptions that power moves with the contingencies the organisation is facing, whilst groups within the organisation—particularly that group or coalition that has been dominant—will resist any shift of power and seek to influence decisions about resources, deciding what is critical, and decision-making processes in their favour.⁸⁸ I contend that as a consequence, leaders trying to achieve a more effective organisational alignment will meet resistance from vested interests and internal constituencies inside the organisation and their allies external to it. Effective leaders must maintain the power to define what is important for the organisation, and prevent special interests accruing embedded organisational power and competing for leadership authority. Leaders determined to make a realignment must shift the balance of power in the organisation using all the tools in the leader's kit bag including restructuring to enhance the importance of the more relevant function and shift resources to it; designating key positions with the power and resources to act to benefit the new alignment; managing the flow and type of information within the organisation; and skewing the distribution of rewards.

Lingo and McGill make an important point about the context of leadership power:

Leaders may view their power as derived from personal qualities, formal roles, accreditations, skills, or experience, from the information they control and their reputations, or from their charisma, resilience and energy. But power also arises from and depends on situational factors such as your objectives, the environment, and bases of power.⁸⁹

The three integrated strands of power in the Lingo and McGill model are situational, relational, and dynamic. In dealing with a situation of change, whether it is a restructure, a refinement of a system or process, or dealing with a crisis, leaders must be conscious of identifying opportunities and blockages in pushing the change through. They will vary from one situation to another, but in all cases articulation of the purpose of change is crucial. Creating relationships or coalitions amongst those for whom the change is important may bring support, advice, information, and resources, and identify those for whom the change is important but unwelcome, and who may resist it. Power is dynamic, and the leader's

⁸⁷ Gerald R. Salancik and Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Who gets power—and how they hold on to it: a strategic-contingency model of power," *Organizational Dynamics* 5, no. 3 (1977): 3.

⁸⁸ Salancik and Pfeffer, "Who gets power—and how they hold on to it: a strategic-contingency model of power," 16-17.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Long Lingo and Kathleen L. McGinn, "A new prescription for power," *Harvard Business Review* 98, no. 4 (2020): 68.

attention to maintaining power must adapt to changes in the organisation, the social system and the environment around it, new relationships that may bring new players on board, and dealing with new and unfamiliar situations.

Whilst leaders may exercise influence because of their status and the quality of relationship they have with those they lead, the clearest expression of a leader's power is in decision-making. In times of heightened risk and crisis in which the usual decision-making rules and processes are not adequate, decision-making will confront conflict amongst sub-groups competing to protect their vested interests. Leaders can use their coercive power, but invariably those not favoured by a decision and who remain important to the group will have to be assuaged somehow. Leaders will have to negotiate, form coalitions, and use their power to make deals and trade-offs amongst those things that are valued as more or less important by the competing interests involved in order to maintain their authority within the group. In the political domain, deal-making often means finding a process that will enable decisions to be made rather than left suspended, but without having resolved the underlying conflicts of values, means, resources, or strategy.⁹⁰ All this instability, in which deal-making trumps the familiar rules and processes of decision-making, means that people have to trust each other and their leaders to do the right thing. In this environment, the familiar and reliable decision-making heuristics and rules that the group would usually apply, acquired through learning from experience, by copying the successful responses of others, or by careful selection of rules that might apply and which might not, are disrupted by the situation in which the group finds itself. In that disruption is the opportunity to learn new ways of thinking and acting in order to adapt to a new reality.⁹¹ With so much changing simultaneously—technologies, alliances, preferences, perceptions, emerging problems needing new solutions, new ideas and people involved, and uncertain or ambiguous outcomes, it may be difficult for the group to interpret what the situation is demanding and how to make decisions to resolve conflict.⁹² It is incumbent on the leadership to clarify the goals, the intended outcomes and what they mean for the group, and to articulate a decision-making model.

March⁹³ describes the conventional decision-making process as asking:

1. What are my alternatives?
2. What are my values?
3. What are the consequences of my alternatives for my values?
4. Which alternative has the best consequences?

In reality, writes March, we cannot know all the alternatives; our preferences and what we value change with time; we aim to reduce conflict between objectives through trade-offs in which we may

⁹⁰ James G. March, "Theories of choice and making decisions," *Society* 20, no. 1 (1982).

⁹¹ March, "Theories of choice and making decisions," 35-6.

⁹² March, "Theories of choice and making decisions," 36.

⁹³ March, "Theories of choice and making decisions," 35.

lose something, but gain something of value; and sometimes the choices are purely pragmatic. Consequently, the decision-making process looks more like this:

1. What kind of situation is it?
2. What kind of person am I?
3. What is appropriate for me in a situation like this?
4. Do it.

March's observation of the reality of this logic is important in this dissertation because it links the decision-making process with the need to communicate what the outcome means for those whose interests will be affected by it, that is, that the 'orchestration of choice needs to assure an audience of two essential things: first, that the choice has been made intelligently, that it reflects planning, thinking, analysis, and the systematic use of information; second, that the choice is sensitive to the concerns of relevant people, that the right people have had a word in the process.'⁹⁴

Leaders and culture

The contemporary literature on leadership theory emphasises leadership as a social function characterised by diffused power, collaboration, values-driven behaviours, and a shared sense of purpose. In this worldview, the leader is responsible for orchestrating formal and informal power and influence through others to achieve good things in good ways. Culture is an element of leadership accountability that has never been more subject to scrutiny than it is now. Culture is a factor in an organisation's internal and external relationships, and is consequently a factor in organisational and leadership performance and effectiveness.

Edgar Schein, one of the principal theorists on organisational culture, has defined the culture of a group as the product of a 'pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems.'⁹⁵ Implicit in this definition is that creating culture is a social process that is learned. This definition also works for subcultures that may emerge within the larger cultural group. Schein argues that there is a symbiotic relationship between culture and leadership 'in that leaders first create cultures when they create groups and organisations.' After that, once 'cultures exist, they determine the criteria for leadership and thus determine who will or will not be a leader.'⁹⁶ The challenge for leaders who are embedded deeply in the culture of the group they lead is then recognising when the culture of the group is dysfunctional. As Schein says, 'it is the unique function of leadership to perceive the functional and dysfunctional elements of the existing culture and to manage cultural evolution and

⁹⁴ March, "Theories of choice and making decisions," 37.

⁹⁵ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 12.

⁹⁶ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 15.

change in such a way that the group can survive in a changing environment.’⁹⁷ Unless leaders are conscious of their responsibility in managing the culture of the groups they lead, then almost certainly ‘those cultures will manage them’ and the leader’s effectiveness is likely to be compromised.⁹⁸

One of the best-selling business books in the 1990s was *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* by Collins and Porras.⁹⁹ The premise of the work is that building enduring success is based on creating and sustaining organisational cultures that ‘have core values and a core purpose that remain fixed while their business strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world.’¹⁰⁰ ‘Core values’ are descriptors of the character of the organisation and the way it works. ‘Core purpose’ is a succinct and vivid description of the outcome the organisation exists to achieve. Leadership is critical in influencing the organisational values which define the desired culture, in designing systems that recognise and reward behaviours that are consistent with the company’s espoused values, and in developing the organisation’s objectives, strategies and procedures that constitute its ways of working. The authors wrote of ‘cult-like’ cultures¹⁰¹ as being characteristic of successful (or ‘visionary’) companies. In developing these ‘cult-like’ cultures, leaders are encouraged to set challenging goals that seem tantalisingly out of reach unless there is an investment in adaptive thinking, creativity, imagination, and innovation in lifting performance towards the aspirational goals. Leaders were urged to be bold—to create ‘big, hairy, audacious goals’ (or BHAGs) as the envisioned future that would unify the organisation’s energies and effort. President John F. Kennedy’s ambitious goal announced in 1961 of landing American astronauts on the moon and returning them to Earth within a decade is cited as an exemplar of a meaningfully articulated BHAG. Kennedy’s goal drove a massive national effort with enormous benefits accrued in science and technology, new-age materials and metals, engineering, rocketry, communications, project and program management, and much, much more. As President Kennedy said in justifying the massive investment in space:

We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organise and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win...¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 15.

⁹⁸ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 15.

⁹⁹ James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (London: Century, 1996).

¹⁰⁰ James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, "Building your company's vision," *Harvard Business Review* 74, no. 5 (1996): 65.

¹⁰¹ Collins and Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, ch. 6, 115-39.

¹⁰² Address at Rice University in Houston on the Nation's Space Effort. 12 September 1962, John F. Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, 1961-1963*, 3 vols. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1963), 669.vol. 2

Almost thirty years on from its publication, the desirability of ‘cult-like’ cultures is questionable. Cults by their nature are not adept at change nor do they tolerate dissent—cult-like leadership and followership have so often proved disastrously fixed and displaced, fanatical, self-referencing, and self-justifying when the public expectation of leadership is moving in the opposite direction to those characteristics. A strong culture and shared view of purposes, goals, and perspectives may help get things done quickly, but in a crisis may reinforce groupthink and conformity that impedes creative thinking, and blocks understanding problems that require a response that is different from the way the organisation usually does things.¹⁰³

It is a crucial assumption in the progressive view of leadership as a social process, relying as it does on effective relationships and a shared understanding of purpose, that an organisational culture is, or can be, a means of unifying people, and that the dominant coalitions are supportive of those progressive cultural norms. An individual in an organisation is going to be exposed to conflict up and down the hierarchy and amongst peers with multiple shared identities that sometimes overlap and sometimes diverge. These conflicts can threaten the sense of a unified purpose that should lead to greater rather than lesser discretionary effort in the cause, undermine judgement and decision-making in the collective interest, and mobilise the bad follower archetypes. As Griffin argues, good leadership ‘links different constituencies together in a way that makes it extremely difficult for one to do something seriously harmful to the others.’¹⁰⁴ For Griffin, the two most important indicators of effective leadership in an organisation are interrelated: how people work together, and how decisions are made.¹⁰⁵

Schein states that leaders have a suite of primary and secondary mechanisms for embedding the desired culture. The primary mechanisms relate to what leaders pay attention to and not; how they react to incidents and crises; how they manage the allocation of scarce resources in a competitive environment; what they role model; the criteria used to give rewards and status; and the criteria used in promoting people in the organisation and to the top leadership team. The secondary and reinforcing mechanisms relate to decisions on organisation structure, design of systems and procedures, rites and rituals associated with recognising performance and values, the stories and legends about people and events important to the organisation, and formal statements of purpose and philosophy.¹⁰⁶ These mechanisms resonate very strongly with the mechanisms of embedding a leader’s power or the power of the guiding coalition in an organisation. Seminal research by Kotter on the role of leaders in directing

¹⁰³ Pfeffer, "Understanding power in organizations," 41-2.

¹⁰⁴ Desmond J. G. Griffin, "Management and leadership in museums" (Annual Meeting of the Association of Science Museum Directors, Honolulu, HI, 1 February 1990). See also Desmond J. G. Griffin, "Managing in the museum organization II: Conflict, tasks, responsibilities," *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 7, no. 1 (1988).

¹⁰⁵ Griffin, D. J. G., personal communication, 8 June 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 231.

change initiatives emphasised the leader's role in eight practices that were typical of successful change efforts among the many that fail:¹⁰⁷

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering employees for broad-based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Leaders and followers

Contemporary leadership theory proposes that a factor in effective leadership is the degree to which followers are able to influence the leader's agenda, and share in the power needed to get things done. Leadership theory must therefore embrace the concept of 'followership', and an understanding of the way followers and followership relate to each other and to leaders and leadership. Kellerman proposes that leadership is not a person but a system comprising leaders, followers, and contexts.¹⁰⁸ Followers can and do make a difference to the effectiveness of the groups of which they are a part, and the leaders who lead them. Kellerman has proposed a typology of follower traits and behaviours based on their perceived level of engagement by identifying isolates, bystanders, participants, activists, and diehards.¹⁰⁹ Zaleznik¹¹⁰ proposed a typology that sought to balance a follower's tendencies towards dominance or submission over the follower's relative activity or passivity and identified followers as characteristically withdrawn, masochistic, compulsive, or impulsive. Kelley¹¹¹ balanced degrees of independent critical thinking and dependent uncritical thinking with relative activity or passivity as behaviours indicative of followers' motivation on a spectrum from passive, to conformist, to alienated, to pragmatic, and to exemplary (see Appendix 10 for descriptors of the typology of followers). Kelley recognised that the motivations typical of effective followers are similar to those of effective leaders: an ability to self-manage, think for themselves, exercise control and independence, and work without supervision; a strong commitment to organisational goals as well as personal goals; in building competence and mastery in job skills; and in being credible, ethical, and courageous.

¹⁰⁷ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ Barbara Kellerman, "What every leader needs to know about followers," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 12 (2007).

¹⁰⁹ Barbara Kellerman, "Leadership: it's a system, not a person!," *Daedalus* 145, On Political Leadership, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 90.

¹¹⁰ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 296.

¹¹¹ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 297-8.

Rather than evaluating a follower's effectiveness by the degree to which they serve a leader, Chaleff¹¹² relates the effectiveness of followers to their engagement with the common purpose of leaders and followers together in a group or organisation. Effective followers are those most inclined to influence other followers to help them realise their association with the common purpose. The behaviours reflecting the values of an ideal or effective follower include taking responsibility for the common purpose; supporting the leader and organisation while constructively challenging leaders if the common purpose or the group's integrity are threatened; championing the call for change when it is necessary; and taking a moral stand against ethical abuses. Chaleff modelled followership at four different points along two intersecting axes of courage to support the leader in one dimension and courage to challenge the leader on the other to identify followers as a Resource, an Individualist, an Implementer, or a Partner.

Uhl Bien proposes an alternative to trait and behavioural archetypes of followers by considering the contexts in which followers relate to each other and to leadership in two modes: either role-based in which the contribution is based on the follower's formal or informal position in an hierarchical system; or relational-based in which people create meaning in their reality as they interact with each other, that is, that followership is co-created by the leader and follower in a given situation, and tied to interpersonal relations rather than specific roles.¹¹³

Like all schemas of this type, these follower typologies cannot be considered as conclusive. As with leader typologies, the decisions that followers make depend on their perceptions of self- and group-interest, changes within the individual's attitudes or values from time to time, and what the situation or context may demand of them relative to others in the group. However, these typologies reveal the diversity amongst followers that leaders must deal with, and the constantly shifting nature of relationships in complex organisations. These variables point to another difficulty in relying on relational theories to explain leader effectiveness.

A relatively new line of inquiry in leadership research is the effect of identity on perceptions of the leader and the leader's effectiveness. According to that view, leaders who are typical of the group's values and beliefs, who share an understanding of what is important to the group, and demonstrate behaviours and actions appropriate to the group's norms may be considered 'group prototypical'.¹¹⁴ Leaders who have the group's interests internalised, whose decision-making is based on heuristics and strategies that reflect the group's norms, and who reflect other group-defining characteristics, are more likely to be regarded as trustworthy and as effective by the group. Leader-group prototypicality can help overcome anxiety within the group in times of crisis or uncertainty, indeed it may be that 'prototypical

¹¹² Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 298-300.

¹¹³ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 295.

¹¹⁴ Daan van Knippenberg, "Leadership and identity," in *The Nature of Leadership*, ed. John Antonakis and David V. Day (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2018), 303.

group members are more likely to emerge as leaders when task uncertainty is high.¹¹⁵ Prototypical leaders may be seen as agents of continuity even in moments of change and so experience less resistance where the group is relatively homogenous. However, where identity with one group is very strong, it may become a disadvantage for the leader to appeal to groups in which the leader is identified as from an ‘outgroup’ and therefore with low group-prototypicality. An ‘outgroup leader’ can overcome these circumstances by creating association with a superordinate identity—a larger group which has characteristics familiar to the subgroups, for example, a political party, a community, a cultural group, a professional discipline or trade, or a national identity. In these cases, a leader’s effectiveness may be evaluated by how successfully intergroup collaboration is achieved, or in forming a leadership coalition that spans intergroup boundaries.¹¹⁶

What happens when the relationship between leaders and followers is bad or corrupt? Howell and Shamir characterise followers who have low self-concept clarity to guide their behaviour as more likely to seek cues from others who are attractive and powerful, and to form personalised, dependent relationships with the leader. On the other hand, followers with high self-concept clarity will be attracted to leaders who link their goals with their self-concepts, values, and identities in a non-dependent but socialised relationship. Both kinds of relationship are susceptible to being destructive. Leaders who encourage uncritical dependence can lose touch with reality, and be seduced into acting unethically and being self-centred in uses of power. On the other hand, followers who feel empowered by their relationship with the leader may be inclined to see the leader as a means to their selfish ends.¹¹⁷

Kellerman has written persuasively on the characteristics of ‘bad’ leadership as being incompetent, rigid, intemperate, callous, corrupt, insular, and/or evil.¹¹⁸ ‘Bad’ leadership in this sense is a judgement of the leadership’s character made evident by the means the leader employs. It is still possible for ‘bad’ leadership to be effective in working towards its stated goals, even if those goals are exclusively in the interests of the leadership’s direct supporters and beneficiaries. This kind of leadership is bad because it is not working for the collective or public interest. Destructive leadership and its relationship with followers has its archetypes too. Thoroughgood et al. modelled a relationship between bad leaders and bad followers based on the power of the leader and its fit with the psychology of followers.¹¹⁹ Thoroughgood et al. used as their basis the typology of power developed by French and Raven and its six types of power in two modes, the first two based in personal power (referent and expert); and the

¹¹⁵ van Knippenberg, "Leadership and identity," 307.

¹¹⁶ Michael A. Hogg, Daan van Knippenberg, and David E. Rast, "The social identity theory of leadership: Theoretical origins, research findings, and conceptual developments," *European Review of Social Psychology* 23, no. 1 (2012): 290-1.

¹¹⁷ Jane M. Howell and Boas Shamir, "The role of followers in the charismatic leadership process: relationships and their consequences," *The Academy of Management Review* 30, no. 1 (2005): 101-5.

¹¹⁸ Barbara Kellerman, "Bad leaders," *Leadership Excellence* 24, no. 9 (2007); Barbara Kellerman, *Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2004).

¹¹⁹ Christian N. Thoroughgood et al., "The susceptible circle: a taxonomy of followers associated with destructive leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 23, no. 5 (2012).

others in position power (legitimate, reward, coercive, and information). The two categories of followers were Conformers comprising sub-types of Lost Souls, Authoritarians, and Bystanders; and Colluders comprising sub-types of Acolytes and Opportunists (see Appendix 11 for descriptors of the follower archetypes). In each case, the followers are relatively uncritical in their thinking of the leader's agenda or methods provided the highly personalised relationship remains rewarding for them. It is the highly personalised nature of the relationship and its rewards that are destructive. A more socialised relationship would look outside the personal relationship to the larger group and its success.

Padilla et al.¹²⁰ extend the discussion of destructive leadership into a 'toxic triangle' (see Appendix 12) that includes a typology of followers similar to that of Thoroughgood et al. to include destructive leaders and conducive environments. Destructive leaders are characterised by charisma, personalised needs for power, narcissism, negative life history, and an ideology of hate. Two types of followers that support destructive leadership are described as either conformers who passively allow bad leaders to assume power because their unmet needs and immaturity make them vulnerable to such influences, or, colluders who support destructive leaders because they want to promote themselves in an enterprise that is consistent with their worldview. Along with bad followers, the contextual factors include the lack of effective institutions, system instability, and inadequate checks and balances. Once destructive administrations achieve power, they will consolidate their control by replacing constructive institutions with those designed to enhance central control; by eliminating rivals and dissidents; and by manipulating the media and using propaganda to legitimise the process.

In a progressive society, the relationship between leaders and followers works ideally when followers are safe to think critically about the purposes of the group, its leadership and its methods, within a socially responsible context—an outcome that is for the collective good. Destructive leadership is the opposite of that, and depends on the passivity of those who disagree, whether that is driven by the need of a reassuring authority figure, or by favouring personal security and certainty in disrupted contexts, or a need to feel chosen or special in relation to the leader or group, or a fear of ostracism and of being powerless.¹²¹

Kellerman reminds us that leadership is more than the relationship between leaders and followers, it is also about the context in which those relationships occur, and the ends those relationships achieve over time. Kellerman points to the contemporary trend in liberal democracies of leaders having less influence with an increasingly fragmented cohort of followers. The sometimes contradictory implications of that shift are a decline of authority and of uncritical deference to it; the rise of animosity and the dominance of the minority as people in positions of authority are weaker, enabling activist minorities to be stronger by comparison; embattled leaders coping with a growing number of more

¹²⁰ Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser, "The toxic triangle: destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments," 180-6.

¹²¹ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 307-13.

clamouring and critical clients, customers, and constituents; and the importance of becoming more aware of the shifts in society, culture, technology, and politics which trend towards separate identities whilst leaders struggle to find ways of uniting them.¹²² Kanter has also observed the noisy emergence of interest groups that previously had little or no influence in the mainstream social discourse who are increasingly holding leaders to account for what they do not do as well as what they do. Kanter writes that ‘advanced leadership is about the people you don’t control’ who can stop or slow you down unless leaders make the effort ‘to keep making it worthwhile—about building a community of people who all believe in the same thing.’¹²³

Summary

Leadership theory is best understood as a continuum in which the balance of leader-centric and relationship-centric approaches are interwoven, and the appropriate leadership response is contingent on the circumstances being confronted. The progress of leadership theory has undergone several important shifts in emphasis. First, from a leader-centric focus on skills, traits, and behaviours evident in individuals considered effective leaders, to a greater awareness of the role leaders play in shaping organisations to be effective. Second, towards understanding the dynamics of organisations and how they may influence how a leader functions within them. And finally, to the ideas of transformational leadership which involve greater attention to the ways leaders learn and think as well as act; the relationship between a leader’s life experiences, values, and actions; the leader’s role in elevating the imaginations of those they lead to aspire to do things for a higher purpose or for a greater interest than theirs alone; and the nature of followers and the choices that followers make.

In this dissertation, I propose that effective leadership is determined by how closely the outcomes of leadership action align with achieving the stated purposes and goals of the organisation or entity. It is, ultimately, the achievement of agreed goals consistent with the organisation’s purposes for which the leadership is accountable. From a detailed review of the relevant literature, it is clear that the context of leadership must be linked with the leader’s accountabilities, and consequently, to the powers to act for which the leader will be held accountable. The nexus of context and purpose is important because it is the foundation of the power delegated to a leader to get purposeful things done. Leaders without power are constrained to be little more than influencers. Whilst influence is an essential capability in an effective leader, without the power necessary to direct the allocation of resources and prioritise tasks, leaders are likely to lack the means to achieve their objectives.

As a consequence, effective leaders must be good decision-makers; able to create the necessary coalitions of support within the organisations they lead; able to influence others to align with the sense of shared purpose; and use their political skills to resolve conflicts that may emerge between sub-groups

¹²² Barbara Kellerman, "The future of followership," *Strategy & Leadership* 47, no. 5 (2019).

¹²³ Kanter, *Why business leaders should solve problems beyond their companies*.

or competing interests within the organisation. Effective leaders are learners who use information from the operating environment, and from within the organisation, to adapt the organisation's strategy to ensure growth and success, and to identify threats and opportunities that may affect the organisation's survival and sustainability. The most senior leadership positions are responsible for articulating the purpose of the organisation within its sector and the society around it; the overarching strategy of what will be done and how it will be done; and for analysing the organisation's activities and its success relative to its peers and competitors.

The contemporary literature on effective leadership gives an emphasis to relational theories, that is, theories proposing that self-actualisation should be the locus of leadership and organisational life, and that leaders are only as effective as their relationships with those they lead as individuals and collectively. Relational theories are built on a view that leadership is a collaborative function between people holding leadership roles and those they lead. In this context, the leader's power is an enabler of relationships that will lead to the achievement of shared objectives in the group's best interests. Leaders are expected to be able to embody the group's purposes; to influence and shape the relationships that will lead to achievement of the group's (and therefore, the leader's) purposes; and from the unique position the leader has in overseeing the activity of the group, to give direction, allocate resources (tangible and intangible), to give rewards for effort aligned with the group's purposes, and to ensure the leadership and functions of the group continuously improve to ensure the group's success.

At their best, relational theories offer explanations for the ways in which people work together and perceive each other and their leaders; how efficiencies can be achieved through organising people more effectively; improving communication through the organisation; and for understanding and dealing with conflict. Each of these are likely to be factors in organisational culture and efficiency in getting things done, and, consequently, of the leader's effectiveness. But relational theories may be overly internalised and inadequate in explaining leadership effectiveness where power is used arbitrarily, or, where the power in those relationships is ambiguous, or, when power is used to give direction by coercive means. If power is infused through an organisation then it is the leadership that gives it direction and limits. In this context, leadership can indeed be a lonely place, no matter how well developed the social structures around leadership may be.

In complex entities such as states, governments, corporations, the civic institutions of a pluralistic society, businesses, and popular movements, leadership and power are typically layered through an organisation by instruments of delegation. Most leaders in our lives are not elected, but go through a process of appointment. Our political leaders are typically elected by their political parties before they face the people in an election. In these contexts, the distribution of power does not emerge from freely-formed human relationships or by the formal agreement of the group members. Leaders hold power by virtue of the positions they hold in an hierarchical, formal, organised structure of relationships, each with specific powers delegated to them, and limited (or constrained) by the power of others. External

to this structure will be compliance with a framework of laws that further enable or constrain relationships with other entities.

The ideas associated with transformational leadership and those like it orbit closest to the humanities. They emphasise the importance of leaders having a well-developed historical understanding of what is most important to the groups they lead, and why and how those things came to be important. That historical understanding will relate to the group's shared goals and values which are the basis of what Burns and other advocates of transformational leadership identify as purpose—the most important precondition of effective leadership. A clearly articulated purpose that is feasible and appealing is fundamental in leaders being able to unite the plurality of interests, aspirations, histories, and perspectives of the people in the groups they lead. Power is then delegated to leaders to do things that relate to the shared purpose so that they can get things done for the common good, and to negotiate outcomes where conflict emerges or where interests are to some degree divergent.

The mindsets of leaders therefore become crucial because they underpin judgement and decision-making, moral reasoning, using power with restraint, and in communicating ideal outcomes with a view of the future. Consequently, leader mindsets are influential in shaping the culture of an organisation, and culture is increasingly a factor in determining the ways in which people within organisations work together, and how the organisation interacts with its society. Each are critical factors in determining the effectiveness of a leader. Results are no longer enough—how things are done may matter just as much in determining a leader's effectiveness.

Chapter 2: The Bureaucratic Public Interest

[The] good of the many is more godlike than the good of the individual, wherefore the more a virtue regards the good of many, the better it is. Now the common good is always more lovable to the individual than his private good.¹

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

In Chapter 1, I reviewed the literature on leadership theory to understand how leadership functions in groups and organisations. What emerged most clearly was the nexus between group and organisational purposes and the power delegated to leaders to achieve those purposes. In the next two chapters, I explore how leadership purpose and power relate to the concept of the public interest. That will involve a review of the literature to reveal how the public interest is defined, by whom, to what ends, and how it is applied. My aim is to find the relationship between theorising on leadership and on the concept of the public interest to address the gap perceived by critics of leadership development that it fails to engage effectively with the humanities in promoting more public-minded leadership. I will contend that the public interest is best understood in two domains: the bureaucratic and the political, and that the link between leadership theory and the public interest is in understanding the meaning of ‘purpose’.²

Is there such a thing as the ‘public interest’?

Chris Wheeler, a long-serving Deputy Ombudsman in NSW, writes that the ‘public interest is a concept of wide meaning and not readily limited by precise boundaries. Opinions have differed, do differ and doubtless always will differ as to what is or is not in the public interest.’³ Whilst there is not a reliable and useful definition of the public interest, there is a consensus that the concept of the public interest exists. There is also a consensus that in a pluralistic society ‘the’ public interest may comprise several publics or groups with interests that are different, but which may overlap to some degree. Frame uses the word ‘public’ to mean ‘a body of people who are associated (perhaps even united if the association is strong enough) by a common identity [that] can relate to their joint possession of geography, ethnicity,

¹ Richard A. Crofts, "The common good in the political theory of Thomas Aquinas," *Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review* 37, no. 1 (1973): 169.

² The principal concepts being examined—leadership and the public interest—are considered through literature in the Western academic tradition, predominantly influenced by American and European scholarship. The political tradition on which this work is focused is the liberal, democratic, republican (or representative) system which sees individual sovereignty and the rights of the individual as primary. In a political community such as this, the public interest is negotiated from the perspective of individuals endowed equally with rights. It goes without saying that there are numerous forms of collective leadership and reciprocal obligation worthy of study. But these are beyond the scope of my thesis.

³ Chris Wheeler, "The public interest revisited: we know it's important but do we know what it means? (Updated)," *Australian Institute of Administrative Law Forum*, no. 72 (2013): 15.

belief, or language.⁴ Frame references the description by American philosopher, John Dewey (1859-1952), of how ‘a public’ emerges—an especially relevant observation for this study given the importance of politics and political action in determining the public interest—as occurring when ‘people with a common identity recognise they have common concerns and organise themselves to devise shared responses. They are *a public*.’⁵

There is a consensus that the interests of the publics in a political community will change to some degree because of events that influence the attitudes, behaviours, and values of people who are members of those publics. The public interest may therefore be best considered as a concept comprising attitudes and values that may change from time to time with the changing expectations of society. There is also a consensus that the practice of politics is the means by which conflicts between publics are resolved to achieve outcomes that are acceptable, that is, as being for the greater interest and in which all benefit to some greater or lesser degree, and in which cooperation rather than further conflict is generally considered desirable. Consequently, an understanding of the public interest will involve the enduring universal principles that shape how people cooperate with one another, how they resolve conflicts of interest, and the constraints on the uses of power and self-interested behaviours.

Towards defining a concept

Frame proposes that the concept of ‘the public interest’ is a device for framing the public discussion of specific issues of public importance in the current circumstances; changing social attitudes as to what is important and that influences analyses of prevailing law, policy, and standards relating to an issue; and promoting the accountability of public officials for the judgements they make.⁶ Frame emphasises that ‘the public interest’ is not the same as what the public may be interested in (or, rather, fascinated by) and what may be popular at any given time. Wheeler identifies attempts by Australian courts in defining the public interest, including views that it is: the sum of special interests or of all private interests; or the net result of individuals pursuing their self-interests; or the broad shared interests of society; or the shared/collective goals or values of the community; or the views or will of the majority; or the common good.⁷ Frame proposes that it is more appropriate to describe the ‘public’ as everything outside the ‘personal’.⁸

These may seem reasonable and perhaps obvious, but in emphasising a collective view, they neglect to balance what is fair in considering an individual’s rights and private interests. Wheeler says that those

⁴ Tom Frame, "The public interest: the essence of public leadership," in *Who Defines the Public Interest?*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court Publishing, 2018), 74.

⁵ Frame, "The public interest: the essence of public leadership," 74.

⁶ Frame, "Introduction to *Who Defines the Public Interest?*," 2.

⁷ Chris Wheeler, "The public interest: ensuring good public administration and accountability," in *Who Defines the Public Interest?*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court Publishing, 2018), 54.

⁸ Frame, "The public interest: the essence of public leadership," 74.

things that are experienced individually, such as the right to silence, privacy, and procedural fairness, are also in the public or collective interest because they are the shared rights of all citizens.⁹

In a 1991 judgement, the Appeal Division of the Supreme Court of Victoria proposed that the ‘public interest is a term embracing matters, among others, of standards of human conduct and of the functioning of government and government instrumentalities tacitly accepted and acknowledged to be for the good order of society and for the well being of its members.’¹⁰ McMillan refers to the comments made by the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in 1979 on the usefulness of the High Court’s judgement in the *Sankey v Whitlam* case concerning freedom of information requests. The Standing Committee determined that the public interest ‘is a convenient and useful concept for aggregating any number of interests that may bear upon a disputed question that is of general—as opposed to merely private—concern.’ The Committee added that the ‘public interest’ could not and need not be defined but has proved ‘a useful concept because it provides a balancing test, by which any number of relevant interests may be weighed one against another.’¹¹

This search for a balancing test—a methodology for empirically determining the public interest—is typically the basis of decision making in public affairs, especially those involving the expenditure of public monies or in evidence-based policy formulation and implementation. Such a test will look for compliance with the law, policy and procedures, standards relating to relevant professional judgements and practices, and the availability of information about the diversity of public perceptions of an issue, especially from those who may be affected by the outcomes of a decision. Such a test is most useful in ‘directing consideration and action away from private, personal, parochial or partisan interests towards broader, by which is meant more “public”, interests.’¹² McMillan describes a framework for such a test of the public interest concept that ‘distils some of our most fundamental guiding principles’ including that a government will serve the people and not its own interests; public officials will have an obligation to differentiate between communal and self-interest; the public interest and ethical behaviour are intertwined; and transparent governance is essential in ensuring that the public interest is served.¹³

Wheeler makes the crucial observation that public officials have an overarching obligation to act *in* the public interest, but also that their functions exist *because of* the public interest. Wheeler refers to findings in the ‘WA Inc’ Royal Commission (1992) into corruption and illegal or improper conduct by elected and public officials in the government of Western Australia that there was a principle of trust upon which the powers of representative and responsible government must be based. Wheeler quotes

⁹ Wheeler, "The public interest: ensuring good public administration and accountability," 54.

¹⁰ Wheeler, "The public interest revisited: we know it's important but do we know what it means? (Updated)," 36.

¹¹ John McMillan, "The public interest: setting the scene," in *Who Defines the Public Interest?*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court Publishing, 2018), 29.

¹² Wheeler, "The public interest: ensuring good public administration and accountability," 53.

¹³ McMillan, "The public interest: setting the scene," 27.

the Royal Commission's view that 'the institutions of government and the officials and agencies of government exist for the public, to serve the interests of the public [as] the condition upon which power is given to institutions of government, and to officials, elected and appointed alike.'¹⁴

The public interest as process

Wheeler identifies three societal norms or 'impulses' that should guide official decision-making and that are important in this project: a concept of the public interest; ethics; and administrative law. The first impulse in Wheeler's thinking implies that public officials must have some concept of a public interest outcome in mind in making decisions, that is, 'an overriding shared commitment within a society is the importance placed on fairness' in terms of equity, equality, and needs, and that decisions will be built on what is ethical (morally right or wrong) and lawful (legal, fair, and reasonable).¹⁵

Wheeler shares the view of Johnston and Keyzer¹⁶ that the objectives and approach in the decision-making process is just as important to the public interest as the appropriateness of the outcome to be achieved. Wheeler proposes that officials bring four considerations to mind in making decisions: first, outcomes—the merits of decisions and actions; second, inputs—what the decision maker considers in making a decision; third, procedures-processes—acting in accordance with legal requirements, acting impartially and apolitically, acting fairly, reasonably, and with proportionality while being accountable and transparent; and fourth, conduct—they should act in good faith, be unbiased, and respectful.¹⁷ With that mindset established, Wheeler describes a methodology for public officials to identify how the public interest applies in specific situations through three stages. First, identifying the relevant segment of the population (or 'public') whose interest are to be considered in making a decision. Second, identifying what those 'public interests' applicable in the decision analysis may be, including primary sources such as legal or regulatory provisions, secondary sources such as relevant policies or directions, or tertiary sources such as relevant plans, procedures, delegations, or other relevant instruments. Third, assessing and balancing any conflicting or competing 'public interest' using revealed majority opinions, the views of elected representatives, and objective assessment of other relevant interests.¹⁸ According to Wheeler, unfavourable decisions are more likely to be tolerated by the people affected by those decisions if it is perceived that the decision-maker 'has met generally accepted standards of conduct and decision-making.'¹⁹

¹⁴ Wheeler, "The public interest revisited: we know it's important but do we know what it means? (Updated)," 13.

¹⁵ Wheeler, "The public interest: ensuring good public administration and accountability," 55.

¹⁶ Johnston and Keyzer propose that the public interest can be understood in terms of 'processes' and 'goals' compared with Wheeler's categories of 'processes' and 'outcomes'. See Appendix 13

¹⁷ See Appendix 15 for details in each of these dimensions.

¹⁸ Wheeler, "The public interest revisited: we know it's important but do we know what it means? (Updated)," 41-2. See Appendix 16 for details of Wheeler's assessment of the public interest.

¹⁹ Wheeler, "The public interest: ensuring good public administration and accountability," 57.

The public interest as law

As well as these decision-making processes, Wheeler identifies institutional mechanisms in Australia's democratic system that provide necessary oversight to ensure accountability and public trust. Wheeler asserts that the Commonwealth and state parliaments 'are effectively the ultimate determinant of what is in the public interest in any particular matter that is the subject of legislation.'²⁰

But the courts, media scrutiny (relying on journalism that is ethically grounded, well-researched, and accessible), and public sector agencies such as the ombudsman, audit offices, and other anti-corruption agencies, are also part of the institutional checks on self-interest permeating government decisions. Institutional checks include government agencies, professional and disciplinary standards agencies, churches, prominent NGOs involved in public services, sporting and cultural peak bodies and agencies, and others with the power or capacity to impose behavioural guidelines and sanctions. All can exercise 'a powerful influence on perpetuating values in constituent groups and society generally.'²¹

The influence of institutions in arguing public interest matters can be categorised as regulative or legal, guided by threat of coercion or legal sanction; normative or social, guided by standard procedures, occupational standards, curricula, social obligation and professionalisation, or moral and ethical obligations to conform; and cognitive or cultural, embodying cultural values and frameworks that guide an understanding of how meaning is developed and is to be interpreted. Institutions are at their best in arguing the public interest when they reflect the longer-term movements in the perceptions, attitudes, norms, and practices of the society they serve. At their worst, they may take positions that are associated with enhancing their influence relative to others; use conflict to unify the group around its espoused values and its leadership; and impose a self-referencing educative process in asserting the group's espoused values for its own like-minded stakeholders. Institutions that are perceived to be caught in these traps are acting in their self-interest, and become barriers to resolving public interest conflicts in which others take ideological positions that make negotiation and compromise difficult to achieve when the law is ambiguous or inadequate.²²

Former NSW Chief Justice, Thomas Bathurst, has observed that the body of laws under which people live defines what the 'public interest' is, and the limits of the power available to executive decision makers in government and the private sector. Those laws are an expression of the will of the people who elect the legislators who make the laws under which they live.²³ The statute, according to Bathurst, is crucial in understanding 'the scope of the power...and thus, the limits on what the public

²⁰ Wheeler, "The public interest: ensuring good public administration and accountability," 59.

²¹ Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni *et al.*, "Barriers to resolution in ideologically based negotiations: the role of values and institutions," *The Academy of Management Review* 27, no. 1 (2002): 42.

²² Wade-Benzoni *et al.*, "Barriers to resolution in ideologically based negotiations: the role of values and institutions," 42-6.

²³ Thomas Bathurst, "Defining the public interest: where lawyers fear to tread?," in *Getting Practical About the Public Interest*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court, 2019), 17-8.

requires must be discerned according to the text, context, and purpose of the relevant statutory provision.’ Interpreting a statute may highlight the ‘different interests which are at stake and the considerations which are relevant, but not how they are to be weighed and balanced.’²⁴ But that is unsatisfying in that not all that might be considered as in the public interest will be covered in legislation, and institutions may be too slow in responding to circumstances in which social expectations are in flux. A legalistic approach in a strict reading of a statute may ignore the pressing and complex realities of life, and outcomes involving compromise and negotiated outside the legal processes that may be more attuned to the public interest. In these circumstances, public officials and executives have to make a value judgement in considering the interests involved and what might be a fair outcome in the public interest.

The public interest by societal influence

Whilst the laws are made by parliaments that comprise the representatives of the people, the people acting as individuals or in groups with a shared interest can influence the views of lawmakers and other leaders who have power outside the parliament or the civil service. Uhr and t’Hart assert that as a consequence, leadership in the public interest must embrace at least three domains: the political, the administrative (or bureaucratic), and the civic—the latter being ‘societal leadership’ and the informal influence of individuals, community-based groups, NGOs, cultural organisations, churches, or privately-owned organisations with an audience or constituency.²⁵ Frame includes as ‘societal leaders’ in the civic domain the influence of ‘populist leaders’ such as celebrities with a public profile in the media or social media platforms including artists, sportspeople, performers, commentators, etc., who might have an insight into an issue and who can rally support or opposition to proposals made in the other domains. Frame asserts that the ‘values that determine the ebbs and flows of popular culture have a direct bearing on demands for public policy and on what might and what can be done by public officials’ and can bring clarity to what is emerging as the public interest in a community.²⁶ Whilst the influence of leaders in the civic domain described by Uhr and t’Hart are important and may be anchored in their leadership of civic and social institutions, I contend that the processes of public leadership in the civic domain will be either political or bureaucratic, and so I exclude the civic domain in my approach to working out the public interest. Nor do I include Frame’s ‘populists’ in my concept of leadership because they are typically accountable for nothing other than their opinions and for nobody other than themselves. Whilst their opinions may be thoughtful and sincere, and will from time to time be important in influencing the views of others, I will contend that effective leadership in the public

²⁴ Bathurst, "Defining the public interest: where lawyers fear to tread?," 20.

²⁵ Paul t’Hart and John Uhr, "Understanding public leadership: an introduction," in *Public Leadership: Perspectives and Practices*, ed. Paul t’Hart and John Uhr (Canberra: ANU Press, 2008).

²⁶ Frame, "The public interest: the essence of public leadership," 78.

interest must be accountable for the use of power delegated to it to do things in the public interest and to mitigate harm to any interests affected by leadership decisions.

The public interest and complexity, compromise, context

The interaction of the political and bureaucratic domains with each other and with the multiplicity of interests in society increases the complexity of leading in the public interest. With complexity the likelihood that there must be room for compromise between interests in resolving conflicts increases. ‘Classic compromises’ involve the parties accepting that a disagreement can be resolved through a process of discussion and negotiation, and that an ‘agreement itself demands the sacrifice of some goods that each party believes should be, but are not, shared.’²⁷ An unwillingness to compromise is anchored in an uncompromising mindset with a cluster of attitudes and arguments that encourage standing tenaciously on principle and in mutual mistrust. A compromising mindset is one of principled prudence in adapting principles and mutual respect.²⁸ Principled moderation and acceptable outcomes (if not perfect ones) are often characteristic of outcomes achieved by negotiation. It is in dealing with a diversity of interests in a pluralistic democracy that the practice of politics becomes fundamental in understanding what constitutes the public interest in any crisis, and how it is negotiated. Whilst the rational, empirical, almost audit-like process of the bureaucratic approach enables public officials to demonstrate a relationship between decisions and a fair-minded, impartial, and disinterested decision-making process, the societal norms and expectations on which those processes depend are not stable nor always rational. Consequently, political scientist and former Premier of Western Australia, Geoff Gallop, says that ‘complexity, not simplicity should be our working principle when it comes to finding the public interest within the public sector.’²⁹

The complexity that Gallop sees is based in three conditions. First, that the public sector is not one entity—it is many functions, each with its own logic. Second, that no nation, region, or locality is ever completely homogeneous—what works in one place or for one community may not work in another because of history, cultural or social factors, the individuals involved, or external factors that influence priorities. Third, in a representative democracy, citizens have rights and responsibilities with obligations to their fellow citizens in engaging with government and the public sector in a number of modes—as customers, as clients, as contractual partners, as employees, as electors, as critics, and more. With this complexity comes the likelihood of competition for attention, resources, and outcomes in the business of government. Gallop is alert to the potential risks of corruption emerging as complexity increases, requiring a corresponding increase in the capacity of institutional oversight and accountability. Gallop

²⁷ Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, "Valuing compromise for the common good," *Daedalus* 142, American Democracy and the Common Good, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 187.

²⁸ Gutmann and Thompson, "Valuing compromise for the common good," 188.

²⁹ G. Gallop, "Balancing competing public interests within the public sector," in *Who Defines the Public Interest?*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court Publishing, 2018), 135.

proposes that leadership that goes ‘beyond theory into the machinery of government where decisions are made and values and interests intersect’³⁰ is at the heart of effective public sector governance. This kind of leadership involves ‘setting an example, acting ethically, knowing that you are subject to scrutiny, and developing policy on the basis of evidence’ that is characteristic of public leadership.³¹

Political scientist and a former Commonwealth Government minister, David Kemp, adds to Gallop’s perspective in arguing that private and public sector interests will often overlap in a larger view of what is the public interest. It is increasingly common for private entities to undertake the implementation of public policy and government initiatives, and so must be considered as having a part of the public interest.³² For Kemp, embracing complexity in determining what constitutes the public interest provides protections for the plurality of interests in a democracy, because ‘when minorities are protected it reflects the general principle that we may all be in the minority on occasion.’³³ Further protections arise from policies and actions that are within a framework of just laws; respectful debate on how the terms of the public interest may change as societal expectations change; and protection of citizens from arbitrary use of power through institutional checks and balances on those with coercive power:³⁴

Johnston and Keyzer surveyed expert delegates attending UNSW’s 2019 ‘Getting Practical about the Public Interest’ symposium to find the defining elements of the public interest. Through a series of workshops, nine defining elements were identified and ranked (see Appendix 14) which led to the construction of this unwieldy definition:

The public interest is concerned with the common good, or majority interests, while being mindful of minority rights. The public interest requires transparency in a legal, rules-based order. The public interest is often concerned with decisions of a broader nature. The public interest requires concern for sustainability and intergenerational equity, and recognition of the need to protect the environment and maintain a triple bottom line. It is concerned with the consultative achievement of shared values in a decision-making process that is reasonable, has integrity, and is balanced.³⁵

The authors concede that such a broad definition, with so many variables, and each with its own array of dependencies and interpretations, shows the difficulty of trying to form a meaningful, universal definition of the public interest, even with (or especially with) experts immersed in the subject. They concluded that this ‘broadly affirms findings from the literature that, in the absence of an agreed definition, values that reflect social mores and concerns at the time will be used to describe and underpin

³⁰ Gallop, "Balancing competing public interests within the public sector," 137.

³¹ Gallop, "Balancing competing public interests within the public sector," 133.

³² David Kemp, "The public interest: the exclusive preserve of government?," in *Who Defines the Public Interest?*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court Publishing, 2018), 88.

³³ Kemp, "The public interest: the exclusive preserve of government?," 90.

³⁴ Kemp, "The public interest: the exclusive preserve of government?," 100.

³⁵ Jane Johnston and Patrick Keyzer, "Seeking definitional consensus," in *Getting Practical About the Public Interest*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court, 2019), 42-3.

how the concept of the public interest is understood.³⁶ Whilst Frame agrees that determining what is in the public interest is socially contextualised ‘it is difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether the public interest has been promoted or protected without reference to a specific objective being served or a particular principle being advanced by either a policy or a process.’³⁷ It is a crucial point to make because in the discussion of effective leadership in the previous chapter, what emerged was the importance of purpose as the appropriate context to determine what is effective leadership in the public interest. Without a clear sense of purpose, the more empirical tests for accountability in decision-making by public and elected officials and private sector executives become disassociated from the reality of peoples’ lives, and potentially a dangerous and arbitrary intrusion on them. Without this focus, assertions and claims about what is in the public interest are unchallenged and untested and legitimate consensus is not achieved.³⁸ It is at this point that the necessary way of practical reasoning, thinking, and acting becomes the function of political action in what Arendt calls a ‘political community’³⁹—a community that agrees to live according to laws and to negotiate through its institutions, its representatives, and agreements freely entered into in balancing the rights and obligations of individuals to each other.

Business, shareholders, stakeholders, and the public interest

Contemporary research on the character of the relationship between business and the public interest has been focused on the competing theories of shareholder and stakeholder capitalism. Neither are new ideas, but from the latter part of the 20th and into the 21st centuries, in a period of heightened social activism, the argument has reignited. The debate is crucial for what it says about the purpose of the firm in a civic society, how that relates to the public interest, and the implications for effective private sector leadership in the public interest.

American economist and Nobel laureate, Milton Friedman (1912-2006), was a deeply influential advocate for shareholder capitalism and government restraint in interfering with the operation of markets. Friedman’s thought is most often characterised by his statement that professional managers and executives are agents of the shareholders who own the company, and that their responsibilities are ‘to make as much money as possible *while conforming to the basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom.*’⁴⁰ I have italicised the last part of Friedman’s

³⁶ Johnston and Keyzer, "Seeking definitional consensus," 44-5.

³⁷ Tom Frame, "Postscript to Getting Practical About the Public Interest," in *Getting Practical About the Public Interest*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court Publishing, 2019), 179.

³⁸ Frame, "Postscript to Getting Practical About the Public Interest," 180.

³⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, ed. Margaret Canovan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 34-5.

⁴⁰ Milton Friedman, "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits," in *Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance*, ed. Walther Christoph Zimmerli, Markus Holzinger, and Klaus Richter (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2007), 173-4. Friedman’s article was published in *The New York Times* on 13 September 1970 with the sur-heading “A Friedman Doctrine”.

statement because it is a caveat that is often overlooked by critics of Friedman's thinking. Whilst the entrepreneurial and innovative achievements of market economies are lauded for the benefits they bring, Friedman's critics attribute the problems of present and intergenerational inequity to the paradigm of shareholder wealth creation that conflicts with notions of a collective public interest. It is not for firms, argued Friedman, to be social activists and cross the boundaries between corporate, institutional, and governmental responsibilities and functions. That would be counter-productive, inefficient, and likely to cause confusion of purpose and incoherence in public policy that is detrimental to the society and the public interest. Friedman argued that 'elaborate constitutional, parliamentary, and judicial provisions' have been established with 'a system of checks and balances to separate the legislative function of collecting taxes and administering expenditure programs and from the judicial function of mediating disputes and interpreting the law.'⁴¹

For Friedman, the imposition of an activist social agenda on businesses, no matter how public-spirited, will infringe the rights and freedom of choice of the owners of the business—the shareholders who also carry the risks associated with their investment. It is not for executives of firms using the capital of shareholders to make political decisions without benefit of a public process to examine any trade-offs in making choices about priorities. That is properly the domain of a representative legislature and professional governmental administration to make those proposals for the public interest. It is incumbent on companies to then comply with the law and ethical custom which has the power to sanction those who break the law, or, to seek to change the law to improve its public interest outcomes.

Stakeholder capitalism is a concept generally attributed to the American philosopher and professor of business administration, Edward Freeman (b. 1951). A stakeholder is defined as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives.'⁴² The central idea of Freeman's stakeholder capitalism 'is that an organisation's success is dependent on how well it manages the relationships with key groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, communities, financiers, and others that can affect the realisation of its purpose.' It is the task of leadership 'to keep the support of all of these groups, balancing their interests, while making the organisation a place where stakeholder interests can be maximised over time.'⁴³ Freeman's model of capitalism is 'not based solely on private property, self-interest, competition, and free markets' but on 'freedom, rights, and the creation by consent of positive obligations.'⁴⁴ Freeman proposes three conditions as the basis of stakeholder capitalism. First, rather than focusing on individuals in competition over limited resources as in traditional narratives of capitalism, stakeholder capitalism

⁴¹ Friedman, "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits," 175.

⁴² Anant K. Sundaram and Andrew C. Inkpen, "The corporate objective revisited," *Organization Science* 15, no. 3 (2004): 352.

⁴³ R. Edward Freeman and Robert A. Phillips, "Stakeholder Theory: a libertarian defence," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2002): 333.

⁴⁴ R. Edward Freeman, Kirsten Martin, and Bidhan Parmar, "Stakeholder Capitalism," *Journal of Business Ethics* 74, no. 4 (2007): 311.

focuses on individuals voluntarily working together to create sustainable relationships in the pursuit of value creation. Second, individuals have rights protecting them in those agreements. One group's rights do not prima facie dominate the narrative of capitalism. Rather, each stakeholder should be protected within their voluntary agreement. Third, individuals can decide to cooperate and obligate themselves to others through those voluntary agreements. These obligations can take the form of formal written contracts or social contracts with assumed responsibilities. The relationships are sustainable when obligations and responsibilities are upheld.⁴⁵ Six principles are proposed for the agreements to ensure they are fulfilled, including the cooperation and engagement of stakeholders in agreements, stakeholders taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions, a focus on creating value as a basis of profit, and leveraging competition to drive improvement.⁴⁶

In proposing a typology of contemporary approaches to stakeholder capitalism, Paine⁴⁷ identified four main types and their characteristics. First, 'Instrumental' in which managers take into account the interests of non-shareholding stakeholders where they present an opportunity to increase shareholder value, or incur risk for the company, but need not act on them. Second, 'Classic' in which managers consider stakeholder interests that are protected by ethical or legal norms, and that may underpin obligations to stakeholders that contribute to shareholder value. In this context, an awareness of (and engagement with) stakeholder interest is good strategy for business growth, for talent development, and corporate relations as well as meeting social responsibility expectations, however, its challenges are in determining how conflict between competing stakeholder interests and potential trade-offs between them and shareholders are weighed. Third, 'Beneficial' in which entities not only respect stakeholder interests but seek to improve stakeholder wellbeing and economic outcomes, often in circumstances when efforts to improve shareholder value have meant an inequitable distribution of profits and underinvesting in communities to their detriment and to that of the company. Fourth, 'Structural' in which non-shareholding stakeholders are given voting or other powers in determining the entity's investment strategy, and in the distribution of earnings. These models are typical of entrepreneurial cooperatives and non-profit organisations (private and public).

The contemporary business literature is buzzing with almost evangelical zeal in promoting stakeholder capitalism.⁴⁸ Not surprisingly, this aligns with the trajectory of the literature on leadership,

⁴⁵ Freeman, Martin, and Parmar, "Stakeholder Capitalism," 311.

⁴⁶ See Appendix 18.

⁴⁷ Lynn S. Paine, "What does 'stakeholder capitalism' mean to you?," *Harvard Business Review* 101, no. 5 (2023).

⁴⁸ Interesting works include Dominic Barton, "Capitalism for the long-term," *Harvard Business Review* 89, no. 3 (2011); Vivian Hunt, Bruce Simpson, and Yuito Yamada, "The case for stakeholder capitalism," *McKinsey Insights* (November 2020). <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-case-for-stakeholder-capitalism>; Arne Gast *et al.*, "Purpose: shifting from why to how," *McKinsey Quarterly*, no. 2 (April 2020); Vivian Hunt, Robin Nuttall, and Yuito Yamada, "From principle to practice: making stakeholder capitalism work," *McKinsey Insights* (April 2021). <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/from-principle-to-practice-making-stakeholder-capitalism-work>; Sebastian Leape *et al.*, "More than a mission statement: how the 5 Ps

and, with the focus on moral and ethical leadership described in Chapter 1. In the United States, peak businesses forming the Business Roundtable have, since the 1980s, endorsed a statement on the purpose of a corporation that echoes with the activism of stakeholder capitalism. The statement has been largely adopted by big businesses in economically advanced countries. In 1981, the US Business Roundtable proposed that ‘the shareholder must receive a good return but legitimate concerns of other constituencies also must have the appropriate attention.’⁴⁹ By 1999, the Roundtable was proposing that ‘the principal objective of a business enterprise is to generate economic returns for its owners’ which seemed closer in intent to an interpretation of Friedman’s principles.⁵⁰ By 2019, the Roundtable no longer made such concise definitions of the purpose of a company, but rather proposed a manifesto proclaiming that ‘while each of our individual companies serves its own corporate purpose, we share a fundamental commitment to all of our stakeholders.’ Importantly, the manifesto followed a period of high-profile corporate failures of governance and leadership that required redress through government intervention. The manifesto listed six commitments to customers, employees, and suppliers, and to supporting local communities and embracing sustainable practices while ‘generating long-term value for shareholders who provide the capital that allows companies to invest, grow and innovate.’ These clauses were followed by a concluding statement that ‘each of our stakeholders is essential’ and that business commits ‘to deliver value to all of them, for the future success of our companies, our communities and our country.’⁵¹ The implication of these principles is that an appropriate corporate view of the public interest is one that is larger than shareholder interests.

The proceedings of the Supreme Court of NSW’s 2019 Conference on ‘The future of the Corporation: A Blueprint for Reform’ confirmed that there is in place ‘a weighty array of legal precedents [recognising] that directors can and should take into account a variety of factors when

embed purpose to deliver value," *McKinsey Quarterly* (November 2020).

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/more-than-a-mission-statement-how-the-5ps-embed-purpose-to-deliver-value>; Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Shareholders first? Not so fast," *Harvard Business Review* 87, no. 7/8 (2009); Vivian Hunt, Paul Polman, and Diane Brady, "Stakeholder capitalism: a conversation with Vivian Hunt and Paul Polman," *McKinsey Insights* (May 2021).

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/stakeholder-capitalism-a-conversation-with-vivian-hunt-and-paul-polman>; Celia Huber *et al.*, "The board’s role in embedding corporate purpose: Five actions directors can take today," *McKinsey Insights* (November 2020).

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-boards-role-in-embedding-corporate-purpose-five-actions-directors-can-take-today>; Mike Borruso *et al.*, "From there to here: 50 years of thinking on the social responsibility of business," *McKinsey Insights* (September 2020).

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/corporate-purpose/from-there-to-here-50-years-of-thinking-on-the-social-responsibility-of-business>. See Appendix 19 for a model process to embed purpose into all areas of corporate strategy and operations.

⁴⁹ Naina Dhingra, Robin Nuttall, and Matt Stone, "Embedding purpose: fewer slogans, more action," *McKinsey Insights* (28 August 2019). <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-strategy-and-corporate-finance-blog/embedding-purpose-fewer-slogans-more-action>.

⁵⁰ Dhingra, Nuttall, and Stone, "Embedding purpose: fewer slogans, more action."

⁵¹ "Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation," Business Roundtable, updated 19 August, 2019, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/brt.org/May-2022BRTStatementonthePurposeofaCorporationwithSignatures.pdf>.

making decisions⁵² regarding the private interests of shareholders and their protection from misconduct, and, the public responsibilities of corporations (including the public duties of company directors and executives). The conference was timely in occurring soon after publication of the initial findings of the Hayne Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry. The Inquiry had revealed astonishing failures of ethical behaviour by those in governance and executive leadership of some very large private companies, and, of the public regulator which had become ineffective in its oversight whilst the sector consistently reported excellent profit and shareholder returns. The Commission heard stories from victims of the consequences of the reported misconduct that showed how far the misconduct was from normal community expectations and standards of trust (quite apart from its potential illegality).

Daniel Crennan, former Deputy Chair of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission among other highly-credentialed speakers in business law and ethics at the Supreme Court's Conference reaffirmed that 'factoring in the interests of a multitude of stakeholders as well as the company's reputation is arguably consistent with the best interests of the company' and that society's expectations of companies demanded more 'than short-term shareholder returns.' That included 'more emphasis on considerations that can have a long-term [consequence] such as [the] environment, employee rights, and other issues.'⁵³ The public duties of directors are not a matter of discretion but of the law relating to private boards. Kingsford Smith argued that critics of this 'imperialism of the public sphere' considered it to be onerous whilst supporters considered it as a way to 'temper power and protect the interests of those whom private power affects.'⁵⁴ Kingsford Smith identified several indicators of 'publicness' in corporations, including changes in regulation and enforcement to emphasise the accountability and responsibility of decision makers; greater participation of those whose interests are affected by a decision, including greater public disclosure; more intense scrutiny of how benefits are weighed against harm, and the public duty to mitigate that harm; and more demanding requirements of reasonableness and rationality in decision-making, information-seeking, and other steps in defining the interests of the company.⁵⁵ Increasingly, businesses will have to be better at reconciling the private and public duties of directors and boards in maintaining a social licence to operate.⁵⁶ The association of purpose and authority is crucial because the law generally requires people invested with power to exercise their powers for the purposes for which the powers are conferred. It is one of the most important ways in which accountability can be established.

⁵² Jason Harris, "Shareholder primacy in changing times" (Corporate and Commercial Law Conference, Supreme Court of NSW, 2018).

⁵³ Daniel Crennan, "The future of the corporation: the regulator's perspective" (Corporate and Commercial Law Conference, Supreme Court of NSW, 2019).

⁵⁴ Dimity Kingsford Smith, "Australian director's duties: are they public duties?" (Corporate and Commercial Law Conference Supreme Court of NSW, 2018).

⁵⁵ Kingsford Smith, "Short Australian director's duties: are they public duties?" 7-8.

⁵⁶ Justice of the High Court of Australia, James Edelman, "The future of the Australian business corporation: a legal perspective" (Corporate and Commercial Law Conference, Supreme Court of NSW, 2019).

While a focus on shareholders is an important means of achieving accountability in business, it does not mean that external stakeholders are excluded from consideration.⁵⁷ Sundaram et al. observe that the interests of shareholders and stakeholders are not oppositional, and that optimising the value for the shareholders' wealth not only leads to a complementary increase in the value of the company in the public domain, but 'the objective of shareholder value maximisation matters because it is the *only* objective that leads to decisions that enhance outcomes for all stakeholders.'⁵⁸ A shareholder focus gives managers encouragement to take entrepreneurial risks in growing the value of the company and to produce material benefits for society generally; it ensures a clarity of purpose in governance of the company; and in the event of breach of contract or trust, stakeholders have recourse to law for remedies.⁵⁹

The ideological differences between theories of shareholder or stakeholder capitalism are ultimately resolved politically. Businesses are required to comply with the law, and are not made to deliver social policy prescriptions. That is the primary purpose and function of government as the legitimate representative of the political community, uniquely capable of doing that which individuals or even groups of individuals in businesses, cannot do on their own. Only governments are able to provide the cohesive, systematic oversight of managing the public policy domain and law-making that can deliver present-day and inter-generational equity.

Summary

The concept of a bureaucratic or procedural public interest is best understood as a means of testing decisions against prevailing laws, professional standards, codes of practice, and community expectations. These tests are typically bureaucratized in the institutions of government or governing bodies which must operate with transparency and integrity to ensure the public trust in their processes and decisions. These bureaucratic processes provide the public with a degree of assurance that public officials and institutions are working for, and in, their interests; applying consistent approaches to conflict resolution; protecting minority interests from arbitrary power; and acting as a mechanism for adapting the review processes to align with changing community expectations. The process of evaluation will balance individual or sub-group interests and those interests held in common, and the historical or cultural legitimacy of institutional interests in relation to private or sub-group interests. The process at its best is reflective, considered, objective, rational, open to the public view, supported by evidence, balanced in its judgements, contemporary, and open to compromises that produce

⁵⁷ Marc Goedhart, David Wessels, and Tim Koller, "The real business of business," *McKinsey Quarterly* 2015, no. 2 (2015). <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-real-business-of-business>.

⁵⁸ Anant K. Sundaram and Andrew C. Inkpen, "Stakeholder theory and "The Corporate Objective Revisited": a reply," *Organization Science* 15, no. 3 (2004): 370-1.

⁵⁹ Sundaram and Inkpen, "The corporate objective revisited," 353.

outcomes for the common good that are workable if not doctrinally perfect. In a dynamic, pluralistic, and democratic political community, questions of the public interest are complex and continually negotiated and perspectives change. Decisions made by private business entities are increasingly subject to public interest scrutiny for the decisions they make and the consequences of those decisions for others.

What emerges most strongly for this dissertation is that the public interest tests are particularly applied to the purpose or intent of the decision makers, and their use of the power available to them. This is consistent with the findings of what constitutes effective leadership. But the bureaucratic approach does not explain the sources of power the institutions of government and governance have accrued, or, the means by which the public—as individuals alone or collectively—can negotiate changes in the way the institutions set up to protect their interests work. That is the domain of the political public interest.

Chapter 3: The Political Public Interest

The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact liberal majority—that is it! Now you know!¹

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), in “An Enemy of the People”, 1882

In 2002, I participated in a Colloquium at the Cranlana Centre for Ethical Leadership. The Cranlana Centre ‘is dedicated to building better leaders by sharpening critical reasoning and ethical thinking [to] help high-level decision-makers better see the bigger picture on any issue they face.’ It asserts this is important to do because ‘across our nation, it is our leaders—in business, community and government—who set the tone for how society operates and the values we live by.’² The Colloquium was the most profound exploration of leadership in the public interest I have experienced. It was deeply impressive in its reflection on the historical ideas that have shaped the function and structure of a civic society, and its encouragement of leaders to commit to a lifelong reflection of those ideas in their leadership. My own reflections on the Colloquium set the agenda for this chapter.

In previous chapters, I have proposed that effective leaders are those who have the competence to get done what they say they will do, and that leadership theory, especially as it relates to the function of leadership and not leadership style, establishes a crucial relationship between leadership effectiveness and purpose, and the power that is necessary for leaders to get things done. I have argued that the concept of the bureaucratic public interest is an expression of how the public interest is institutionalised and managed to do several things: to resolve conflicts; to protect the public interest from abuses by those with power to make decisions; and to provide a forum for informed consideration of what is in the public interest and how it may be changing from time to time. When there is a conflict between the public’s perception of what is in its interest, and the bureaucracy’s rules for determining what is in the public interest, then a political response is required to ensure that the bureaucracy does not use the powers delegated to it for its own self-interest. It is important in considering what is effective leadership, therefore, to understand the relationship between the institutions of government and the governed, and what each owes to others in a civil society. I contend that relationship is determined by political negotiation between competing interests in a society, and that, therefore, there must be a political public interest as well as a bureaucratic public interest. Frame asserts that because it is the product of negotiation, concession, and compromise, ‘the public interest will always have a political dimension.’³ A community that engages in political processes to resolve conflicts between interests may

¹ Dr Thomas Stockman, Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths, in a coastal town in southern Norway, in Henrik Ibsen, "An Enemy of the People," in *Best of Henrik Ibsen*, ed. William Archer and Edmund Gosse (e-artnow, 2013), 246.

² See <https://cranlana.org.au/about/>

³ Frame, "Introduction to Getting Practical About the Public Interest," xiv.

be considered a political community. Frame believes that a political community must be about more than rights and entitlements: it must be about values and virtues that will underpin a moral community that behaves ethically and is accountable for its actions. Membership of that community ‘infers certain mutual obligations and leadership that exists principally to promote the common good.’ The success of such a community relies on more than compliance with law and administrative standards and tests: it relies on a ‘mindset founded on the conviction that individuals can achieve more and find greater fulfilment working together and collaboratively than striving alone and unaided.’⁴ It is therefore important to explore the ideas on which the terms of social cooperation between governments and the governed—as individuals and collectively—are derived and how they relate to the function of leadership and leadership decision-making in the public interest.

In this chapter, I consider these issues through the lens of political and philosophical thought. As discussed in the Introduction, I will use the work of thinkers included in the Cranlana Colloquium. I acknowledge I am using a highly selective approach, but given that a selection must be made, the Cranlana collection is particularly relevant. It has been made by experts in the appropriate field to provide a comprehensive view of the intellectual milieu in which the ideas of leadership and the public interest merge. I will be looking particularly for those ideas and principles that contextualise the sources, uses, and limits of a leader’s power, and how they relate to the public interest. I am not attempting to construct an historiography of these ideas, but rather to show the diversity of approaches that have been brought to bear on the problem of how a civic society might be governed, and that even after centuries of thought, these matters are not settled.

Hobbes and the Common Wealth

A discussion of the work of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) is an important point of entry in this discussion. Hobbes widely regarded as the founder of thinking on the nature and purpose of the modern state and its coercive powers.⁵ His 1651 masterwork, *Leviathan*, argued that government was an essential mechanism in preventing conflict becoming pervasive in a society. Hobbes believed that individuals in their ‘natural state’ as free and independent individuals would always seek to maximise their self-interest at the expense of common interests, or join together to form an oppressive majority (or a powerful minority) with common interests in the pursuit of their own self-interest. The consequence of these conditions was that people would live in fear of each other—a condition Hobbes

⁴ Frame, "Postscript to Getting Practical About the Public Interest," 187.

⁵ See David Runciman, "Hobbes on the state," in *Confronting Leviathan: A History of Ideas* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2021). Andrew Blythe, "Civitas to pub test," in *Getting Practical About the Public Interest*, ed. Tom Frame (Redland Bay: Connor Court, 2019); Sharon A. Lloyd and Susanne Sreedhar, "Hobbes's moral and political philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University Fall 2020). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/hobbes-moral/>.

called ‘a war, of every one against every one.’⁶ In such a state, no economic, cultural, or social activity dependent upon collaboration between people is possible—there is no society, no shared public interest, only ‘continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.’⁷ The greatest threat in such a state where there is no institutional protection is that there is no law, and therefore ‘notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place.’⁸

Hobbes’s device for achieving peace between people was a social contract, or covenant, in which individuals agree to renounce some part of their rights ‘and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself.’⁹ Hobbes insisted that contracts entered into be honoured because without the certainty of reciprocity amongst people, there could be no stability and no basis for common action.¹⁰ Hobbes called the state that would ensue from such an arrangement a commonwealth,¹¹ and that it would be governed by a parliament comprising the representatives of the people in all their diversity. Parliament’s legitimacy would be derived from the common power given to it by the people to give effect to its decisions, and to negotiate new contracts to resolve conflicts.¹² In Hobbes’s model of the state, coercive power is necessary to enforce the covenants that the people had freely entered into. That coercive power would be embodied in a single person, a mortal god, a monarch, a representative of the unity of the people, which he called the Leviathan:

one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defence. And he that carrieth this person is called SOVEREIGN, and said to have sovereign power, and every one besides, his SUBJECT.¹³

The Leviathan would delegate power to institutions to legislate, adjudicate, enforce the laws, collect taxes, make war and conduct diplomacy, and to otherwise keep the peace amongst people. The Parliament would have sovereign powers to protect it from any arbitrary use of power by the monarch. The risk in Hobbes’s proposal is its gift of so much power to an individual, and requiring a system of checks and balances to constrain any power-centric, opportunistic, and amoral behaviours. In mitigating his greatest fear, anarchy, Hobbes seemed to allow the potential for despotism by a single ruler, or a powerful minority.

⁶ Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan," in *Powerful Ideas: Perspectives on the Good Society*, ed. Jennifer M. Webb (North Armadale, Vic: Cranlana Programme, 2002), 200.

⁷ Hobbes, "Leviathan," 198.

⁸ Hobbes, "Leviathan," 199-200.

⁹ Hobbes, "Leviathan," 201.

¹⁰ Hobbes, "Leviathan," 202.

¹¹ Hobbes, "Leviathan," 205.

¹² Runciman, "Hobbes on the state," 25-6.

¹³ Hobbes, "Leviathan," 205.

John Locke and rights

In the century after Hobbes, the period known as the Age of Reason, there was a ferment of ideas and ideologies characterised by the application of ‘the powers of the human intellect to discover truths about man, society, and the world, and therefore to make concrete progress towards the good of mankind.’¹⁴ Principal among them was the British philosopher John Locke (1632-1704).¹⁵ Locke formed a concept of people in their natural state as being endowed by God—their Maker—with natural rights that exist so that people can fulfil God’s purpose, that is, to preserve oneself and in succeeding, to preserve others. Those natural rights are to life, liberty, and property as the fruits of an individual’s labour. Locke recognised that a form of social contract, entered into freely by individuals consenting to live together under a government that would respect their individual rights and interests, was the best means for a flourishing of liberty and happiness in common and individually. Locke thought that in a ‘state of Nature’, individuals are absolutely free to pursue their self-interest:

yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain and constantly exposed to the invasion of others; for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, and the greater part no strict observers of equity and justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very insecure.¹⁶

Locke envisioned that the protection of those rights would be best secured by ‘men uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government’¹⁷ constituted to resolve conflicts of interest between people; provide an independent and impartial judge to apply the law and its remedies; and use its coercive power to make individuals honour their contracts and agreements. Locke explained the obligation that each individual had to others as follows:

thus every man, by consenting with others to make one body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation to every one of that society to submit to the determination of the majority, and to be concluded by it; or else this original compact, whereby he with others incorporates into one society, would signify nothing, and be no compact if he be left free and under no other ties than he was in before in the state of Nature.¹⁸

¹⁴ A. C. Grayling, *Towards the Light: the Story of the Struggles for Liberty and Rights that Made the Modern West* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 131.

¹⁵ Useful references are Alex Tuckness, "Locke's political philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Winter 2020). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/locke-political/>; William Uzgalis, "John Locke," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Fall 2021). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/locke/>.

¹⁶ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Mark Goldie (London: J. M. Dent, 1993), 178.

¹⁷ Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 178.

¹⁸ Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 163-4.

Locke saw that the obligation to others must be more than passive subjugation and compliance. In a view that foreshadowed the Utilitarians such as Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, Locke wrote that to be a true member of the body politic, individuals must be involved and exercising their rights and duties as ‘the beginning of political societies, and that consent which makes any one a member of any commonwealth.’¹⁹ In Locke’s thinking, citizens are endowed with political power derived from their rights as free individuals. The exercise of that power was to ensure the advancement of the interests each individual held in common with others. Locke gave primacy to the legislature in his scheme of government because, having been freely chosen by the people, it was accountable to the people for acting in the public interest. However, Locke anticipated that there would be times when the political community would move too slowly to respond to crises. In circumstances that the laws had not anticipated, or in which external circumstances were without precedent, or when ‘a strict and rigid observation of the laws might do harm,’ Locke allowed for the executive to exercise decision-making power independently of the other branches of government (the legislature and the judiciary):

This power to act according to discretion for the public good, without the prescription of the law and sometimes even against it, is that which is called prerogative.²⁰

To mitigate the risk of its potential misuse, Locke proposed that the use of executive prerogative would be temporary and for a specific and extraordinary purpose, for the common good, and only for as long as it took the legislature to assemble and review the circumstances and respond for itself.

Montesquieu and the Spirit of Laws

The genius of the French political philosopher, the Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755), was in his imaginative inclusion of cultural, historical, and social influences in the forms of government people preferred, and the character of the laws that were most suitable to them and their collective interests. According to Montesquieu, laws ‘should be adapted in such a manner to the people for whom they are framed.’²¹ Montesquieu included in the contingencies that should influence the framing of laws such things as the climate of each country, the quality of its soil, the principal occupation of the natives, the religion of the inhabitants, their inclinations, riches, numbers, commerce, manners, and customs. The consequence of this customised approach was the greater likelihood that citizens would be involved in law making and more likely to comply with laws that they perceived as reasonable and fair; that were responsive to changes in their lives and interests; and that mitigated the fear of despotism and arbitrariness in their governments. Along with his advocacy of the functional separation of the

¹⁹ Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 177-8.

²⁰ Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 197-8.

²¹ Charles Louis De Secondat Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Thomas Nugent (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001), 23.

executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government from each other, Montesquieu inspired leaders and lawmakers to be pragmatic in considering the public interest and laws that would protect it.

Rousseau and the Social Contract

The work of French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), is important in developing a concept of the public interest and the function of leadership because he sought to reconcile individual liberty and its relationship with the coercive authority of the state. Rousseau expressed the dilemma memorably in declaring that ‘Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains.’²² For Rousseau, each person has one inalienable natural right—freedom, meaning the right to live their lives without interference or constraint by others. But as social beings, people have derived conventions—the ‘chains’—that are the basis of social order and stability and essential to individuals being able to live their lives in freedom. Rousseau’s ideal form of association was a social contract in which individuals contracting together create ‘a moral and collective body...receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will.’²³ Duty and interest are tied together, obliging each individual to help each other and the State, and in return, to receive the advantages derived from acting together to protect each other’s interests.²⁴ Rousseau expected that citizens would ideally involve themselves in a form of direct democracy to elect popular assemblies that would determine the conventions and laws under which people will live. Participation in the political processes was for Rousseau, therefore, a necessary and ‘a constant process of civic education which will encourage virtue, responsibility, and public spirit’ to mitigate corrupting influences and behaviours.²⁵

Kant and a rightful condition

The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), wrote that a social contract must be based on an understanding of ‘freedom’, meaning a state of ‘independence from being constrained by another’s choice, insofar as it can coexist with the freedom of every other.’²⁶ For Kant, any action or law is ‘right’ if it can coexist with the freedom of everyone.²⁷ In being ‘right’ in these terms, action that flows from the law as an obligation is regarded as a duty that has ‘virtue’.²⁸ A virtuous social contract will bring

²² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract," in *Powerful Ideas: Perspectives on the Good Society*, ed. Jennifer M. Webb (North Armadale: Cranlana Programme, 2002), 229.

²³ Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 235.

²⁴ Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 237.

²⁵ Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: the Pursuit of Happiness, 1680-1790* (London: Penguin Books, 2020), 701-2.

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, "The metaphysics of morals (1797)," in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. Mary J. Gregor, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 393.

²⁷ Kant, "The metaphysics of morals (1797)," 387.

²⁸ Kant, "The metaphysics of morals (1797)," 524.

together rights and duties in an expression of our obligations to one another.²⁹ A state structured around these principles would be, in Kant's terms, in a rightful condition.³⁰

Checks and balances

Several common factors emerge from the work of these philosophers. First, that individuals have natural rights that are inalienable, but with the consent of the individual, some part of their sovereignty may be forgone to enable collective action. Second, a form of implied social contract creates the basis for free and independent individuals to join together in order to cooperate. Third, that the ideal form of government is democratically elected and comprises a parliament of representatives elected by the people (although the forms of democracy, the method of election, and the structure of the legislature were not agreed). The period was animated by the need to find a resolution between the potential anarchy that would result from a state of absolute individual freedom, and the fear of arbitrary power in the hands of unconstrained rulers. Each recognised that the power of leaders ought to be constrained by a system of institutional checks to protect the rights of the individual; define the powers that would be given to governments and those that would be retained by the individual; and the structure and operation of the government and of the democratic process. Each in their own ways recognised that there had to be an executive with coercive power to enforce the law and to preserve peace and order for the benefit of all. Locke particularly described the purpose of a leader's prerogative power and the special and limited circumstances in which it would apply. The leader would also be a unifying symbol for the group, the community, or the nation, and to speak on their behalf. All of these are familiar principles in the discussion of effective leadership theory.

Separation of powers requires that the three branches of government—the legislative, executive, and judicial branches—are functionally separate from one another to ensure that no one branch of government can simultaneously hold the power to make laws, execute them, and pass judgement on conflicts of interest relating to them. British High Court Justice, Jonathan Sumption, has said that whilst a civic society must live according to the law, politics and the law may be a check on the weaknesses of each other. The rational, coherent, analytically consistent approach of the law is not always a virtue in determining matters of the public interest which can be messy. The advantage of politics is its capacity to 'accommodate the divergent interest and opinions of citizens,' and whilst politics may 'not always perform that function very well...judges will never be able to perform it.' Judges will be better able to interpret gaps in the law when unanticipated circumstances arise because of their independence

²⁹ Kant, "The metaphysics of morals (1797)," 393-6.

³⁰ A useful background for Kant's thinking is Frederick Rauscher, "Kant's social and political philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (Stanford University, Fall 2022). <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/kant-social-political/>>.

from the political process, and so the common law has developed in parallel with the activity of the legislatures.³¹

The social contract engaged all citizens, not just those fortunate to be in the majority, and so the rights of minorities to be protected from harms was established. The success of a government and political community constructed on these principles depends on its citizens fulfilling their obligations to each other, and that they are politically active in exercising their rights and asserting their interests. The legitimacy of state authority was derived from the state's ability to protect the individual rights of its citizens and that the state's power over them was limited by adherence to the law.³² Citizens had to be able to trust that their governments were demonstrably acting in their interests, and using the powers ceded to them for the collective benefit. As Sumption writes, the legitimacy of the State to exercise the power citizens give it is 'a collective instinct that we owe it to each other to accept the authority of our institutions, even when we don't like what they are doing.' For Sumption, that acceptance is derived from 'common historical attachments, of language, place and culture...of collective identity.'³³

The Utilitarians: Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill

Utilitarianism is a school of thought generally attributed to Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), *inter alia* a prominent English legal theorist.³⁴ Rather than basing political ideas on natural rights (Bentham considered talk of rights as the basis of a good society as 'nonsense on stilts'³⁵), Utilitarianism proposed that political action would have utility if it is 'designed to strengthen individual liberties by helping place all citizens in an initial condition of equality in the struggle of life.'³⁶ Bentham described 'utility' as 'that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness...or to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community; if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual.'³⁷ The public interest, then, may be construed as 'the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.'³⁸ Utilitarianism was

³¹ Jonathan Sumption, *In praise of politics*, podcast audio, The Reith Lectures: Law and the Decline of Politics, accessed 28 May, 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0005f05>.

³² Francis Fukuyama, "The future of History: can liberal democracy survive the decline of the middle class?," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 1 (2012): 54.

³³ Sumption, *In praise of politics*.

³⁴ Useful for background on the Utilitarians are James E. Crimmins, "Jeremy Bentham," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Summer 2020). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/bentham/>; David Brink, "Mill's moral and political philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (Stanford University, Fall 2018). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/mill-moral-political/>.

³⁵ Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846*, ed. J. M. Roberts, New Oxford History of England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 330.

³⁶ K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886*, ed. J. M. Roberts, The New Oxford History of England, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 94.

³⁷ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Mew's Gate: A. Payne, 1789), ii.

³⁸ Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 4.

(and remains) an appealing concept because it is so apparently simple, and rather than speaking to esoteric principles such as natural rights, it described how government would function in the daily lives of the people. Bentham's Utilitarianism proposed a radical program of political and legal reforms to make government and its administration more professional, responsible, and accountable for delivering on policies for the common good.³⁹

Bentham and his circle were often referred to as philosophic radicals. One of the most important of those was Bentham's closest friend James Mill, himself author of important and influential works. His son, John Stuart Mill, also made an enduring contribution to philosophical radicalism. The arguments he advanced in one of his most important essays, *Utilitarianism*, published in 1861, are important in the relationship between leadership and the public interest. Mill wrote that the 'ideal perfection of utilitarian morality' would be construed as being 'to do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbour as yourself.'⁴⁰ To achieve this ideal outcome, Mill argued, in a famous paragraph that:

utility would enjoin, first, that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or (as speaking practically it may be called) the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole; and second, that education and opinion, which have so vast a power over human character, should so use that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association between his own happiness and the good of the whole.⁴¹

Although Mill was a committed philosophical radical, he diverged from Benthamite Utilitarianism on several grounds. Mill thought that the entirely rational, secular reasoning of Utilitarianism did not properly reflect the importance of historical, social, and cultural norms that had influenced the distinctive attitudes and behaviours of communities. Consequently, the conception of action that was good, or, had utility, would vary from place to place. Mill thought it impractical to expect that all people agree (or disagree) on all things to the same degree. For him, political actions are rarely entirely good or bad for all people at any point in time. There are degrees of good and bad in difficult or contested decisions, and people can differentiate the extent to which the outcomes of an action for an individual or group are bad (but tolerable) because they are outweighed by the good an action achieves. Whilst utility was a useful characteristic amongst others in considering action in the public interest, a strict rendering of utility risked creating a society that was little more than a bureaucratically endorsed expression of a predominantly empirical, rational, functionality that could exclude any higher-order or aspirational expression of what it meant to be a free-thinking, creative, spiritual, human being capable

³⁹ Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*, ed. W. N. Medlicott, A History of England, (London: Longman, 1959), 178.

⁴⁰ John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism," in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Alfred Gray, Oxford World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 148.

⁴¹ Mill, "Utilitarianism," 148-9.

of learning and of change. Citizens would have to maintain an involvement in civic and political action to ensure their interests were protected, otherwise a utilitarian authoritarianism might emerge by default.

If Utilitarianism provided the most comprehensive view of the public interest as a moral and political code for society, Mill considered that the form of government most appropriate to realise it is one in which:

sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government, by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general.⁴²

Mill believed that a government would only be legitimate if it reflected the popular will of the people, and was constituted to be representative of them. The test of whether a government is a good one would rest upon two principles: first, 'that the rights and interests of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able, and habitually disposed, to stand up for them'; and second, 'that the general prosperity attains a greater height, and is more widely diffused, in proportion to the amount and variety of the personal energies enlisted in promoting it.'⁴³ The public interest is, therefore, best served when citizens are prepared to stand up for it and to act in ways that promote their interests. A Utilitarian government should serve a supremely higher purpose in promoting an active, educated, politically aware citizenry, capable of understanding its own and the public interests, and acting responsibly towards advancing human progress and civilisation. Mill's fear was that a passive citizenry would enable the return of despotism—the worst form of government because its focus must shift from the common good to the preservation of the government itself and its sovereign ruler; it is an affront to the equality of all citizens; and because it enfeebles the people and undermines the Utilitarian ideal of active citizenship.⁴⁴

Max Weber and the profession of politics

One of the primary characteristics of a political community is its resolution of conflict or negotiating action in the public interest through political processes. In his influential book on the role of politics in society, Bernard Crick wrote that politics 'can prevent the vast cruelties and deceits of ideological rule.' If the methods of politics 'are often rough and imperfect, the result is always preferable to autocratic or to totalitarian rule.'⁴⁵ In democratic assemblies, a 'winner takes all' approach cannot be a sustainable

⁴² Mill, "Considerations on representative government," 244.

⁴³ Mill, "Considerations on representative government," 245.

⁴⁴ Mill, "Considerations on representative government," 239.

⁴⁵ Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, ed. J. A. Pitt-Rivers and Ernest Gellner, *The Nature of Human Society*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 135-6.

or equitable view of the public interest in pluralistic communities in which many people will have much in common with others, and yet diverge on other matters. Political parties comprising broadly-based coalitions of interests are a means of facilitating political participation by like-minded people in advocating policy platforms that will have broad appeal and help to resolve conflicts of interest through negotiation based on the party's principles. Parties are also a means of institutionalising leadership by binding the leader to the policy platform to maintain the support of the party membership and the party's power brokers. In doing so, political parties can be powerful advocates for the public interest within the democratically elected assemblies. Effective party leaders therefore will have to be as involved in shaping their parties as well as persuading the electorate.⁴⁶

In his essay on 'Politics as a Vocation', German political scientist Max Weber (1864-1920) describes the professionalisation of politics as the basis of the modern state. It is through politics, asserts Weber, that the legitimacy of the state to use its coercive power is established, and so politics is the means by which the state's ends are achieved. For Weber, a professional politician who lives for politics either 'enjoys the naked possession of the power he exerts, or he nourishes his inner balance and self-feeling by the consciousness that his life has meaning in the service of a cause.'⁴⁷ Weber believed that it is the machinery of political parties and their parliamentary delegates that create cohesion in the political processes in achieving goals in the shared cause. The primary task of political leaders is to maintain that cohesion. Danger emerges when a leader's purpose shifts from the shared interest to self-interest: when the leader's 'striving for power ceases to be objective and becomes purely personal self-intoxication, instead of exclusively entering the service of the cause.'⁴⁸ Weber thought that there are two deadly sins in the field of politics: first, 'lack of objectivity and—often but not always identical with it—irresponsibility,' and second, 'vanity, the need personally to stand in the foreground as clearly as possible, strongly tempts the politician to commit one or both of these sins.'⁴⁹ Should this loss of contact with the cause or purpose that ought to animate a leader's goals and actions, then leaders become despotic or demagogic and their power is dangerous to the public interest. In these circumstances, 'there is no more harmful distortion of political force than the parvenu-like braggart with power, and the vain self-reflection in the feeling of power, and in general every worship of power *per se*.'⁵⁰

Weber cautioned against seeing the influence of parties as necessarily and universally positive. He noted that the emergence of political parties saw the emergence of professional politicians and their party apparatchiks who shifted political discussion to party forums outside the parliaments and

⁴⁶ After his failed attempt to be the Democratic Party's nominee for vice-president in 1956, John F. Kennedy said to his staff 'I've learned that you don't get far in politics until you become a total politician. That means you've got to deal with the party leaders as well as with the voters.' See Fredrik Logevall, *JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 2020), 210.

⁴⁷ Max Weber, "Politics as a vocation," in *Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 84.

⁴⁸ Weber, "Politics as a vocation," 116.

⁴⁹ Weber, "Politics as a vocation," 116.

⁵⁰ Weber, "Politics as a vocation," 116.

representative chambers. Weber warned that party machines could become subject to the self-interest of office-seekers and others pursuing vested self-interests through the party machine, and supersede the parliamentary party in determining the program and selecting candidates.⁵¹ This circumstance could see representatives forced to act in accordance with the party's instructions, and shift the emphasis in selecting leaders and determining what is in the public interest towards what is in the party's interests. Burns echoed Weber's warning about the impact of political parties, and therefore their leadership and interests, by asserting that it is wise to ask whether the party is 'merely the reflection of more fundamental forces operating outside it, the passive receptacle for such forces, or a prime cause itself of purposeful, transforming social change...and where in the party...power is exerted.'⁵² Burns and Weber both point to the importance of understanding the formation and action of political parties and their leadership in light of the circumstances, needs, and aspirations of the societies creating them, and the forms of government in place.

Hannah Arendt and 'representation'

Hannah Arendt (1906-75) described Weber's condition of 'vanity' as 'hubris'—when a leader's action becomes disassociated from the public interest. For Arendt, an active political community is a necessary condition of people in all their diversity of interests living together peacefully. Arendt argued that the public realm comprises 'everything that appears in public [that] can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity.'⁵³ Its scope is as wide as 'the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it.'⁵⁴ Anything that is not made public remains the private realm of the individual. In a pluralist society, comprising people with separate interests that may overlap or diverge from the interests of their fellows, developing a conception of the public interest will involve people in political action to negotiate agreements. Whether that is done directly or through civic institutions, Arendt proposes that the vital principle in resolving conflicts of interest is that leaders must bring to mind the interests of others. Arendt asserts that achieving that awareness requires an understanding that 'Political thought is representative. I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them.'⁵⁵ 'Representing' another's interests is more than merely empathising with the other person's condition as if one could be someone else. Representing means turning empathy into thoughtful action by thinking through a problem from the perspectives of others. Arendt writes that 'the more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger

⁵¹ Weber, "Politics as a vocation," 102-3.

⁵² Burns, *Leadership*, 338.

⁵³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 50.

⁵⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 52.

⁵⁵ Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics," in *Truth: Engagement Across Philosophical Traditions*, ed. David Wood and José Medina (Ames, Iowa, USA: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 303.

will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions.’⁵⁶ Representation is crucial in a political community as it requires citizens to use their powers of reasoning, ‘to develop their capacities for judgement, and to attain by concerted action some measure of political efficacy.’⁵⁷ The power a political community creates by coming together to do things in the public interest, ‘needs no justification, being inherent in the very existence of political communities; what it does need is legitimacy.’⁵⁸ Legitimacy comes from a shared understanding of the community’s purposes in protecting its interests and the rights of the individuals that comprise the community. Arendt wrote that the legitimacy of the state’s use of power is expressed by the consent of the people:

It is the people’s support that lends power to the institutions of a country, and this support is but the continuation of the consent that brought the laws into existence to begin with...All political institutions are manifestations and materialisations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them.⁵⁹

Arendt’s idea of representation is crucial in this dissertation because in contemporary society, the consequences (whether intentional or unintentional) of actions by corporations and political groups are robustly scrutinised for their morality as well as their legality. Active citizenship is therefore a necessary protection of the public interest because, as Arendt writes, the ‘limitations of the law are never entirely reliable safeguards against action from within the body politic, just as the boundaries of the territory are never entirely reliable safeguards against action from without.’⁶⁰ It seems clear, then, that effective leadership in the public interest must be capable of bringing to mind—or ‘representing’ in Arendt’s terms—the interests of those outside the groups they lead. That means more than mere compliance with what is legal: it requires a deeper level of critical thinking in decision-making that will lead to thoughtful action.

There is an important caveat on using the term ‘representation’ (as in electing people to political office) given the cautions of Weber and Burns (above) on the influence of party machines on political representation. The dilemma of ‘representation’ was famously expressed by Edmund Burke (1729-97) in a speech to his Bristol electorate in 1774 explaining his duty to them. Burke said that the wishes of an MP’s constituents ‘ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention.’ Burke spoke of the duty of an MP to ‘above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own.’ But, Burke argued, voters elect an MP to the Parliament—‘a deliberative

⁵⁶ Arendt, "Truth and Politics," 303.

⁵⁷ Maurizio Passerin d’Entreves, "Hannah Arendt," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Fall 2019). <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/arendt/>>.

⁵⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics, Civil Disobedience, On Violence, Thoughts on Politics and Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 151.

⁵⁹ Arendt, *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics, Civil Disobedience, On Violence, Thoughts on Politics and Revolution*, 140.

⁶⁰ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190-1.

assembly of one nation with one interest—that of the whole...the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole.’ It is the duty of MPs to attend not just to the local interests of their electorates, but to the national interest, even when that may be at odds with some interests in the local constituency. That higher order interest is ‘a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which [the MP] is deeply answerable.’ Burke concluded with the memorable observation that:

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving, you if he sacrifices it to your opinion...[G]overnment and legislation are matters of reason and judgement, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion? In which one set of men deliberate, and another decide?⁶¹

The contest between representation as a mandate determined by a party machine and as a trust in the judgement of the person elected to the legislature is as relevant today as it was for Burke in 1774. Burns argues that MPs exercising independent judgement are an essential voice for the powerless and ‘for the unheard voices of the unorganised, inarticulate groups’ in a community.⁶² MPs must be able to exercise their judgement in determining from time to time what is most important in the multiple interests and concerns of their constituents. Indeed, many of the people most celebrated in political history are those who took the risk of standing up for their independent judgement.⁶³

Equality and equity: Rawls and Nozick

American philosophers John Rawls (1921-2002) and Robert Nozick (1938-2002), colleagues at Harvard University, developed their very different but equally influential ideas on equity, equality, and justice in a time of extraordinary political activism for social and civic reform in the United States.⁶⁴

John Rawls proposed a prescription of the public interest as a system of ‘fair social cooperation’ between ‘free and equal persons’. Rawls defines the elements of fair cooperation as, first, publicly recognised and accepted rules and procedures; second, reciprocity or mutuality such that all who are engaged will benefit in some appropriate way; and third, an idea of what is each participant’s rational advantage or good and what they are trying to achieve.⁶⁵ Fundamental to achieving agreements as the basis of cooperation is the negotiation between free and equal persons ‘who can take part in, or who

⁶¹ *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, ed. Brian MacArthur (London: Penguin Publishing, 1996), 115-6.

⁶² Burns, *Leadership*, 305.

⁶³ John F. Kennedy, one of the figures portrayed in a movie that is a subject of this dissertation, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1957 for his book on such representatives in the US Congress. It was called *Profiles in Courage*.

⁶⁴ Useful references are Eric Mack, "Robert Nozick's political philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University Summer 2022).

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/nozick-political/>; Leif Wenar, "John Rawls," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Summer 2021).

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/rawls/>.

⁶⁵ John Rawls, "Justice as fairness: political not metaphysical," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1985): 232.

can play a role in, social life, and hence exercise and respect its various rights and duties.’ In other words, a citizen who is ‘a fully cooperating member of society over a complete life.’⁶⁶

Rather than arguing a position from the basis of rights, Rawls argues that the public interest is constantly negotiated through the political processes. Consequently, a thoughtful mechanism is needed that removes the effects of institutionalised bargaining advantages such as tradition, precedent, and practice, or, where an imbalance of power exists, to ensure the terms of agreement are fair. Rawls proposes a device he called ‘the original position’—popularly known as ‘the veil of ignorance’—behind which all people are equal, and leaders must assume that the principles negotiated in a decision could apply to themselves and their own interest as much as they could apply to others.⁶⁷

Rawls thought the outcome of his design would be a recognition of the uniqueness of individuals in their diversity of interests and needs, and to change the thinking about the public interest from the utilitarian concept of a public good to what is just and fair in relation to each individual’s needs. Rawls observed that the equality of all people was fundamental in a political democracy, but equality did not always produce fairness. Hence his ‘difference principle’ asserting that decisions on matters of the public interest ought to be made to favour the least advantaged in society.

Robert Nozick believed that the need for an intervention such as that envisioned by Rawls was unfounded. For Nozick, such an intervention would require governments (politicians and bureaucrats) to be constantly involved in the lives of people to determine what they deserved, and, in manipulating economic and market activity to achieve a redistribution of wealth that in turn would be a disincentive for individuals to make a greater discretionary effort to create wealth. Nozick believed that the government intervention required to ensure fairness in Rawls’s scheme was illiberal because it would become coercive and intrude upon the rights of the individual in making choices about how to use the fruits of their own labour. The opening sentences of Nozick’s most important work clearly state the problem:

Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them without violating their rights. So strong and far-reaching are these rights that they raise the question of what, if anything, the state and its officials may do. How much room do individual rights leave for the state?⁶⁸

Nozick concluded that a state is necessary to provide individuals with protection of their rights from the actions of others, and that the state should be as minimal to achieve that effect as is feasible. As an alternative to Rawls’s model of distributive justice, Nozick’s solution was ‘entitlement theory’ built on three principles that ensured the justice of an individual’s entitlements: 1) that there is justice in the

⁶⁶ Rawls, "Justice as fairness: political not metaphysical," 233.

⁶⁷ Rawls, "Justice as fairness: political not metaphysical," 235.

⁶⁸ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), ix.

processes that led to someone acquiring their holdings; 2) that there was justice in the process of transferring holdings; and 3) the rectification of injustice in holdings if a past injustice has shaped those holdings. In other words, what ought to be done to rectify these injustices, and, what obligations do the performers of injustice have towards those whose position is worse than it would have been had those injustices not been done?⁶⁹ The proper means of addressing the consequences of an injustice in holdings, or, in imposing constraints on the liberty of others, is the principle of compensation to those who are disadvantaged by an acquisition or action.⁷⁰

Rawls and Nozick each rejected the Benthamite conception of Utilitarianism. Rawls because reducing the needs of an individual to an aggregated outcome assumed to be representative of the common good did not address, but rather worsened, the outcome for the least advantaged in society. Nozick rejected Utilitarianism as an infringement on the principle of the separate existences of individuals with lives of their own that are meaningful to them. That is why Nozick believed that the veil of ignorance or the Rawlsian ‘original position’ was inadequate—it removed from consideration all of those historical, cultural, and other factors that made each individual separate and distinct.⁷¹ Rawls and Nozick are important in this study for what they offer to the discussion of how the interests of people affected by leadership decisions ought to be weighed relative to other interests, and to a larger public interest.

Summary

In Chapters 2 and 3, I have characterised the public interest as existing in two interrelated domains: the bureaucratic and the political. The bureaucratic applies institutionalised, objective tests to decision-making by leaders in governmental and corporate entities to hold them accountable for their decisions and the consequences of their decisions. These institutional processes are essential tests in scrutinising leadership actions, and in giving the public assurance that its continued trust in leadership as acting in the public interest is justified. Without that trust, the legitimacy of leadership and its use of power is compromised. The bureaucratic processes may also provide an assurance of justice in ensuring the tests are objective, and are (ideally) free from institutionalised biases that produce unfair outcomes that are not in the public interest. The most important consideration emerging from the bureaucratic test of the public interest is the primacy of the decision-makers’ purpose—their intent and their consideration of the consequences for others in making their decisions.

But compliance with law and convention alone is not enough to protect the public interest. There are many areas of life in which the law is inadequate or vague, or in which its development lags the pace of social change, or in which its administration and implementation is complacent or corrupt. In these

⁶⁹ Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, 153.

⁷⁰ Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, 82-3.

⁷¹ Aeon J. Skoble, *The Essential Robert Nozick* (Fraser Institute, 2020).

situations, protection of the public interest will depend on a higher order of principle and the obligations people living together in a community owe to each other. The political public interest emerges from the actions of people forming a political community to resolve conflicts of interest peacefully and to advance the common good. The political public interest is institutionalised in the structure of governments, in constitutions that provide consistency and stability in the way that laws are made and power is used, and in the mechanisms to protect the interests of free and equal individuals living together from the arbitrary power of leaders or powerful majorities. The review of ideas by some of the important philosophers in the Western political tradition shows some of the thinking that has inspired the political institutions and processes of liberal, representative, democratic governments, and why they are necessary in a politically literate and engaged citizenry.

Principal among them for the purposes of this dissertation is Arendt's concept of representation. It serves two functions: first, it underpins the function of democratic governments making laws through popularly elected assemblies of the representatives of the whole people; and second, in bringing to mind the interests of others in making decisions—representing them and their interests in decision making to ensure that no harm is done without adequate mitigation, or, when warranted, compensation. Leaders must ask to what extent should a person's freedom of action be constrained by considering what obligation is owed by others to us, and what obligation do we owe to others?

It is clear that what can be regarded as effective leadership and government in the public interest must look beyond narrow self- or group-interests, and be motivated by a purpose to act in the public interest and for which the public gives its consent. From that purpose and consent comes the legitimacy and the power to do things. That nexus of purpose, popular consent, and legitimate use of power defines that for which leaders must be accountable. In using the power of their positions, leaders must be aware that, first, their power is derived from the consent of the citizenry. Second, that the proper uses of that power must be demonstrably for advancing the common good and to achieve the shared purposes. Third, that there are institutionalised limits on that power, and acting beyond that for which the people have given consent is not legitimate and is consequently unethical and immoral. It is my contention that the theory of effective leadership and a concept of the public interest are drawn closer together by an understanding of that nexus.

However, there are times when the leader's prerogative is an essential means to achieving peace when the institutions of the slower moving bureaucratic processes of accountability and governance are too slow to meet unexpected challenges or crises. In these times of instability, the use of a leader's prerogative and the power that comes with it will be a searching examination of the leader's values, ethical frameworks, courage, and decision-making. That's what is considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Hero's Journey

If the deeds of an actual historical figure proclaim him to have been a hero, the builders of the legend will invent for him appropriate adventures in depth. These will be pictured as journeys into miraculous realms, to be interpreted as symbolic on one hand and on the other aspects of man's destiny made manifest.¹

Joseph Campbell

In this chapter, I shift the focus from a generalised view of leaders to a view of leaders as individuals. My aim is to reflect on the personal experience of leadership, particularly the influence of cathartic moments as transformative personal experiences in shaping a leader's character, values, ethical and moral frameworks, and their capacity for good judgement in decision making. These factors are all the more important when leaders—and those to whom they are accountable—are under pressure in times of crisis when the usual ways of decision-making are disrupted or inadequate in adapting to changed circumstances. The experience gained through crisis is often the basis of stories individuals and communities tell to define their identity, their values, and what is important to them. For this dissertation, understanding how stories help influence the relationship between leadership and the public interest is a particular focus. Consequently, this chapter will encompass: using storytelling as a leadership strategy and for learning about leadership; the leader's role as a storyteller; the influence of the leader's own story in the development and exercise of leadership, particularly the leader's judgement, ethical frameworks, and moral imagination in decision making; the exercise of moral courage; the structure and use of stories of apotheosis for interpreting leadership in crisis; and the validity of using historical and biographical movies to reflect on the experience of leadership.

Storytelling as leadership strategy

There is a vast body of history, biography, and leadership studies reflecting on the personal experiences of leaders². Telling stories of leadership seeks to make the experience of leadership meaningful to others. Storytelling is important as a means of teaching and learning about leadership, and for leaders

¹ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008), 276.

² Some important contemporary works referred to for this work include: Ikujiro and Hirotaka, "The wise leader."; Goleman, "What makes a leader?."; Peter Guber, "The four truths of the storyteller," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 12 (2007); Jamie L. Callahan, J. Kori Whitener, and Jennifer A. Sandlin, "The art of creating leaders: popular culture artifacts as pathways for development," *Advances in developing human resources* 9, no. 2 (2016); Boas Shamir and Galit Eilam, "'What's your story?' A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development," *The Leadership Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (2005); Barry Gustafson, "History, biography and leadership: grasping public lives," in *Public Leadership: Perspectives and Practices*, ed. Paul t'Hart and John Uhr (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008); Paul Atkins, "Leadership as response not reaction: wisdom and mindfulness in public sector leadership," in *Public Leadership: Perspectives and Practices*, ed. Paul t'Hart and John Uhr (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008).

in communicating with the groups or entities they lead. Stories can help to clarify how the group and its functions fit in the wider world, and to make strategy comprehensible throughout the organisation. Leaders must be able to create narratives that explain the nature and the scope of change confronting the entities they lead and how to deal with it. As Young and Annisette write, stories help us make sense of our past, and to 'look backward over our lives to reflect and try to understand our actions, motives, thoughts' as well as in 'guiding and exploring possible futures.'³

Howard Gardner asserts that 'the principal vehicle of leadership is the story: the leader affects individual behaviour, thought, and feelings through the stories that [the leader] tells.'⁴ Gardner explains that stories can be used by leaders to 'create a compelling narrative in which they, their groups, their institutions have clear goals; various obstacles and opportunities emerge; the leaders and their groups work together to [achieve] those goals; and if they are fortunate, their stories have happy endings.'⁵ Gardner emphasises that effective leaders must connect new stories to those pre-existing ones that are important to the groups they lead—stories that Gardner calls 'the *counterstories*',⁶ that is, the new story must relate to the already established histories of the group (including its sub-groups and diversity of interests), and explain why a shift is necessary. That may satisfy the cognitive needs of followers and how they rationalise their changing situation. But to be really effective, the story must be affective, that is, it will engage the emotions and the intrinsic values and beliefs of the receiver. In achieving this, Gardner writes that 'one of the most powerful weapons of leader-storytellers is the lives they lead.' Where the leader's story exemplifies something of the life experiences or expectations of those they lead, the stories can help increase the leader's legitimacy and authority in the group. Conversely, 'if a leader comes to be seen as a hypocrite, the leader will cease to be effective.'⁷

According to Gardner, stories that are likely to improve the effectiveness of a leader in influencing others have four constant elements. First, a leading story or narrative that relates to the identity of the group and its history, and explains 'who we are, what we aspire to, and how we might get there.' Second, the extent to which the issues being treated in the story relate to the leader's own life story and experiences. Third, the presence of an audience that could be influenced and inspired by the leader's story. Fourth, the organisation or institution within which leadership is occurring and which can support the realisation of the story, otherwise 'the effects of leadership are likely to be evanescent.'⁸

In a study involving undergraduate students reading short stories about charismatic leaders, Watts et al. found that followers are influenced to behave ethically or not by their perception of the leader's

³ Joni J. Young and Marcia Annisette, "Cultivating imagination: ethics, education and literature," *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 20, no. 1 (2009): 101.

⁴ Howard Gardner, "The vehicle and the vehicles of leadership," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 6 (1999): 1010.

⁵ Gardner, "The vehicle and the vehicles of leadership," 1010.

⁶ Gardner, "The vehicle and the vehicles of leadership," 1010.

⁷ Gardner, "The vehicle and the vehicles of leadership," 1010-11.

⁸ Gardner, "The vehicle and the vehicles of leadership," 1014-15.

ethical conduct⁹. Watts et al. further found that stories provide a structure for the transmission of vision (or purpose), of group self-knowledge, of the group's social values and rules, and a means for making sense of change by aligning the follower's self concept with the leader's self- or group-concept. Shamir et al. propose that leader biographies or life stories may be important in the leadership process because they may demonstrate a leader's competence and experience, and so build the leader's referent power with followers and their perceptions of the leader. Additionally, leader biographies can help to fill information gaps about the leader's prior actions and therefore create expectations of the leader's future behaviour. Leader biographies can help leaders management their messaging and make it meaningful in relation to the group's, the leader's, and the individual's self-concept, and, give coherence to the strands of thought and action in decision-making and provide a sense of self-justification and motivation for future action.¹⁰

Leadership stories are important according to Shamir et al. for what the life experience of leaders may reveal of how they have developed as leaders, and how their life experiences have shaped their perception of themselves and the groups they seek to lead. Stories may serve as proof of an individual's capacity to lead through their natural talents regardless of any other contingency or situation—that leadership was always going to be a part of their lives. That attitude may be enriched by the leader's story of struggle or disadvantage, and of coping with difficulty or tragedy in developing their self-belief, self-reliance, motivation, and drive. Each of these elements may resonate with the experiences of those who follow or with a collective story of struggle and identity. Stories may also reveal a commitment to learning from experience, and especially for political leaders, in finding a political or ideological outlook in a movement or a cause, often as a prototypical member of a group that gives legitimacy and authority to a leader in representing others.¹¹

The effect of these assumptions is that group members will follow leaders who express something of the followers' identities (expressed in their attitudes, values, beliefs, and aspirations), and that what the leaders are offering will help followers achieve their aspirations for the group and themselves. In this context, leaders can arouse the intrinsic motivation of followers by making their cause meaningful through symbolism and the promise of a better future. That will mean leaders showing followers how the goals being proposed relate to the collective past and a view of the collective future. It will emphasise the collective and the collective identity with fewer references to the individual self-interest while encouraging followers to see their worth and efficacy as individuals in contributing to the collective good. Charismatic leaders will particularly emphasise their similarity to, and identification

⁹ Logan L. Watts *et al.*, "Learning from stories of leadership: how reading about personalized and socialized politicians impacts performance on an ethical decision-making simulation," *The Leadership Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2018): 276-7.

¹⁰ Boas Shamir, Hava Dayan-Horesh, and Dalya Adler, "Leading by biography: towards a life-story approach to the study of leadership," *Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2005): 14-15.

¹¹ Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, and Adler, "Leading by biography: towards a life-story approach to the study of leadership," 20-23.

with, their followers. Rather than subject their messages to examination in the hurly-burly of short-term fluctuations in fortune and circumstances, they will speak in terms of values, moral justifications, and future goals instilling faith and hope, and emphasise that personal sacrifices and costs will pay off.¹²

Making it personal

In saying that it is a CEO's job to motivate the people they lead to achieve shared goals, renowned American screenwriter Robert McKee identifies two modes of storytelling that a CEO might use to persuade people: first, through conventional rhetoric in building a case in an intellectual, rational, cognitive process; or second, uniting an idea with a compelling story that engages the emotions and energy of those who receive it.¹³ For McKee a story expresses how and why life changes. Life is in balance until an inciting event disrupts the balance, and the protagonist's expectations crash into an uncooperative reality. McKee says that 'a good storyteller describes what it's like to deal with these opposing forces, calling on the protagonist to dig deeper, work with scarce resources, make difficult decisions, take action despite risks, and ultimately discover the truth.'¹⁴

McKee writes that most of the leaders he has met are great at making the cognitive arguments. They come to see him to learn how to inspire people to go beyond what is rationally justifiable by using 'vivid insight and storytelling skill to present an idea that packs enough emotional power to be memorable.'¹⁵ For McKee, leaders who understand these principles of storytelling are more likely to persuade and influence the worldviews of those they lead.¹⁶ McKee writes of the great leaders he has met in filmmaking and in business as having had experiences in life that necessitated struggle and a consequent deepening of their self-awareness—an apotheosis that has helped those leaders to 'see the humanity in others and deal with them in a compassionate yet realistic way.'¹⁷ McKee believes that an apotheosis is the product of living with fear or dread that forces the individual to understand what is really important. McKee writes that 'fear is when you don't know what's going to happen' while 'dread is when you know what's going to happen and there is nothing you can do to stop it.'¹⁸

This observation of fear and dread is important for this project because I am using movies to look at existential crises to see what the leaders portrayed in those movies did to be effective in resolving the crisis, and how they coped in managing the potentially debilitating influence of fear and dread in their decision-making.

¹² Boas Shamir, Robert J. House, and Michael B. Arthur, "The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: a self-concept based theory," *Organization Science* 4, no. 4 (1993): 27-9.

¹³ Bronwyn Fryer, "Storytelling that moves people," *Harvard Business Review* 81, no. 6 (2003): 52.

¹⁴ Fryer, "Storytelling that moves people," 52.

¹⁵ Fryer, "Storytelling that moves people," 52.

¹⁶ Fryer, "Storytelling that moves people," 55.

¹⁷ Fryer, "Storytelling that moves people," 55.

¹⁸ Fryer, "Storytelling that moves people," 53.

Political function of stories

Storytelling as an effective leadership strategy is therefore about drawing the stories of the group and its individuals together in a coherent narrative that helps the group make sense of the world and its challenges. Hannah Arendt observed that

The political function of the storyteller—historian or novelist—is to teach acceptance of things as they are. Out of this acceptance which can also be called truthfulness, arises the faculty of judgement.¹⁹

The truthfulness and judgement Arendt refers to is that which arises from her view of representation—an investment in what others believe. Serpell writes that Arendt's view that 'literature's special talent for adopting the viewpoints of others was geared not to ethics but to politics,'²⁰ that is, to the activity of a political community negotiating conflict amongst its plurality of interests. An emotional response alone is not adequate. Leaders in a political community must convert an emotion like empathy into effective political action through a thoughtful, rational, and truthful judgement that encompasses the perspectives of others.

American philosopher Martha Nussbaum wrote of this capacity for truthfulness and judgement to be simulated in art leading to 'the ability to imagine vividly and then to assess judicially another person's pain, to participate in it and then to ask about its significance.'²¹ Nussbaum believes that this capacity writ large in a political community 'promotes habits of mind [that] contribute to the dismantling of the stereotypes that support group hatred.'²² Using stories in this way will help leaders articulate their purposes in the common interest rather than in pursuit of their own self-interest. It means allowing that the public interest is a plurality of stories and interests, which of course is what makes leadership of a political community so complex. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, echoes the concerns of Arendt and Nussbaum in seeing how stories help us see complex issues from the perspectives of others, and should reveal what 'another's moral energy has in common with my own as the condition for intelligent action.'²³ For Williams, useful narratives about what is the public interest 'might dispose us to see our decision-making as a matter of clarifying problems, identifying claims as clearly as possible, and looking for a sustainable way forward.'²⁴ In doing so, decision-makers may find that 'it is harder to see a conflict wholly in terms of absolute victory and

¹⁹ See Ch 6, "Truth and Politics", in Hannah Arendt, *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr, The Viking Portable Library, (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 573.

²⁰ Namwali Serpell, "The banality of empathy," *New York Review of Books Daily* (2 March 2019). <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2019/03/02/the-banality-of-empathy/>.

²¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Poets as judges: judicial rhetoric and the literary imagination," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 62, no. 4 (Fall 1995): 1487-88.

²² Nussbaum, "Poets as judges: judicial rhetoric and the literary imagination," 1488.

²³ Rowan Williams, *Overcoming Political Tribalism: the 3rd P. M. Glynn Lecture on Religion, Law, and Public Life*, (Australian Catholic University P. M. Glynn Institute, 2019), 6.

²⁴ Williams, *Overcoming Political Tribalism: the 3rd P. M. Glynn Lecture on Religion, Law, and Public Life*, 7.

defeat,' and to recognise that 'unsuccessful minorities hold views with at least some roots in common with those of the "winners".'²⁵

In these circumstances, where complex problems present difficult choices, political action will have a moral dimension because sometimes it is in the public interest to make the least bad decision rather than the decision that is most optimal for the leader and the leader's followers. It is possible that in resolving a crisis for the whole political community, leaders may create crises for themselves and their own moral frameworks. In the first chapter, I proposed that it is a characteristic of effective leaders that they are reflective, learn from experience, can adapt their ways of thinking and working to better suit the circumstances in which their leadership occurs, and that their values and worldviews can change as a result of experience. Leaders can tell stories of their own transformational experiences to position themselves with their followers. These stories can encourage those they lead to embrace similar transformations in times of crisis or disruption, and to achieve a new understanding of their common interest and how to achieve it. This approach is the principal characteristic of transformational leadership, especially as espoused by Burns²⁶ and by Bass²⁷ who wrote of the political nature of leadership roles in effecting ethical or moral change in groups. The transition of individuals or groups or nations towards a better version of themselves is best told through narratives that describe the circumstances that necessitated change; the contingent factors that made those circumstances difficult; the emotional and cognitive responses to what was happening; and the consequences of change.

Moral function of stories

Ciulla writes that leadership is 'a process that entails a distinctive kind of moral relationship between leaders and followers based on power, mutual agreements, and reciprocal moral obligations.'²⁸ It makes no sense, therefore, to expect that leaders should live by a higher moral standard than their followers. Ciulla observes that in most cases of moral failure by leaders it is because they have 'not lived up to the standards expected of all of us,' and to say that 'leaders ought to be held to a higher standard means that we accept a lower one for others.'²⁹ The risk in leaders being considered special is that it may create the perception of special abilities or power to control circumstances over which they have no control.³⁰ The greater expectation of leaders is not derived from their intrinsic and superior morality or character, but rather from the power leaders have through their decisions and actions to affect the lives of so many

²⁵ Williams, *Overcoming Political Tribalism: the 3rd P. M. Glynn Lecture on Religion, Law, and Public Life*, 6.

²⁶ Burns, *Leadership*.

²⁷ Bernard M. Bass, "From transactional to transformational leadership: learning to share the vision," *Organizational Dynamics* 18, no. 3 (1990); Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio, "Transformational leadership and organizational culture," *Public Administration Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1993); Bernard M. Bass and Paul Steidlmeier, "Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior," *The Leadership Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1999).

²⁸ Ciulla, "Leadership ethics: mapping the territory," 48.

²⁹ Ciulla, "Leadership ethics: mapping the territory," 48.

³⁰ Ciulla, "Leadership ethics: mapping the territory," 49.

other people.³¹ For Ciulla, the two greatest pitfalls of ethical leadership are first, the humanity and fallibility of leaders with power and influence; and second, when moral action and effectiveness are not aligned and lead to hubris and excess.³²

In teaching leadership students to be ethical and socially responsible, Ciulla asserts that stories are useful pedagogical tools. But to avoid falling into the traps of simplification and of using stories to merely manipulate audiences, it is essential that leaders aspiring to lead in the public interest must develop a moral imagination of their own that enables them to identify the possibilities for action in a situation requiring intervention and how to weigh the consequences of those action options: ‘when we imagine, we look beyond those things that exist in our world’ to see a ‘truth that is presented to us in a new way.’³³

This concept of a moral imagination echoes the approach of Nussbaum and Williams in being able to see outside of ourselves and our interests in resolving problems fairly, and of Arendt’s principle of representation—of bringing to mind the interests of others to understand the consequences of a decision. Coupling a moral imagination with critical thinking and analytical skills helps leaders avoid what Berger describes as five ‘leadership mindtraps’: a desire for simple stories that blind leaders to the complexity of real ones; seeing what one wants to see and closing off other options when uncertainty and complexity are confronting; the need to find agreement to resolve conflict quickly rather than engage with dissent that might lead to better resolutions; trying to maintain control over the variables in a crisis rather than understanding the contingent relationships between them; and conciliating the egos of vested interests rather than addressing the problems.³⁴

Judgement, moral courage, ethical failures, and dirty hands

The linking of moral imagination with critical skills is the basis of a vital attribute in effective leadership: judgement. In their influential work on leaders and judgement, Tichy and Bennis assert that judgment is the essence of leadership because the primary function of leadership is to make decisions. Tichy and Bennis see judgement as ‘a contextually informed decision making process’ that is learned over time through reflection on life experiences that can transform the leader’s self-perception, values,

³¹ I refer to this as *the* context of leadership because it is that for which leaders are accountable. In this, I depart from the leadership literature which generally characterises the leadership context as situationally located, that is, a leadership response to the prevailing problem or conditions that demand leadership action from time to time.

³² Ciulla, "Leadership ethics: mapping the territory," 52.

³³ Joanne B. Ciulla, "Ethics and critical thinking in leadership education," *Journal of Leadership Studies* 3, no. 3 (1996): 114.

³⁴ Jennifer Garvey Berger, *Unlocking Leadership Mindtraps: How to Thrive in Complexity* (Stanford, California: Stanford Briefs, 2019), 17-20.

and worldview in making decisions. Judgement can also be socially mediated and relevant to the values and attitudes of the group (or groups) from which the leaders emerge.³⁵

Tichy and Bennis propose a model for making tough decisions that links moral imagination and critical thinking with structures and processes in an organisation. They emphasise that preparation to make decisions under pressure in times of crisis is a crucial dependency in a leader's effectiveness. A critical pre-condition for effective leadership in a crisis is a supporting team of competent people whose values are known and align with the leader's, and in whom the leader can trust when all are under pressure. That trusted team will work as a check and balance in the decision-making process. Effective leaders will mobilise their teams to tackle the problems presented, and to call upon others as needed. Effective leadership of that team will involve clarifying the problem; ensuring that time and effort is focused on what is most important in addressing the problem; and ensuring clarity in the group's mission or purpose in finding solutions that benefit the whole entity. A clear awareness of purpose helps to deal with complexity and the disparate elements that emerge in the stream of events during a crisis. Without clear purpose, alternative decisions and their consequences cannot be properly considered, and without that proper evaluation a chosen action may become counter-productive. Finally, effective leaders are prepared to take personal responsibility for the outcome of decisions made.³⁶

In relation to the leadership team, the role of confidantes in whom the leader can trust, whether part of the leadership team or outside it, adds another dimension to the discussion of a leader's judgement. Confidantes who have a close, personal part in the leader's life story, can provide the leader with a non-judgemental ear to rehearse or test proposals and tactics before they are exposed to the more public forum of the leadership team. Confidantes can serve as confessors for leaders in times of anguish and moral ambiguity. In the movies selected for this dissertation, confidantes play crucial roles in enabling the leader to express their innermost perspectives and attitudes, their assessment of personal and group risk, and in finding that which most matters to them in their leadership.

Given that decisions are sometimes about finding the best from many unpalatable choices, leaders may face a backlash from supporters and critics alike, and will need moral courage to stand by their judgements. O'Boyle and Sandona describe moral courage as 'the willingness to make behaviour conform to the good even when doing so is personally dangerous.'³⁷ Kidder defines morally courageous action as comprising three elements: first, a commitment to moral principles when other options are available; second, an awareness of the danger involved in acting in accordance with those moral principles; and finally, a willingness to endure that danger.³⁸ Humanity's ethical dilemmas, according

³⁵ Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis, *Judgment: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007), Ch 1-3.

³⁶ Tichy and Bennis, *Judgment: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls*, Ch 9-10.

³⁷ Edward J. O'Boyle and Luca Sandona, "Teaching business ethics through popular feature films: an experiential approach," *Journal of Business Ethics* 121, no. 3 (May 2014): 333-4.

³⁸ Rushworth M. Kidder, *Moral Courage* (New York: Harper, 2006), 7.

to Kidder, usually reflect four patterns: truth vs loyalty; individual vs community; short-term vs long-term; and justice vs mercy.³⁹ In making decisions in conditions of moral ambiguity or moral failure, Kidder proposes a process (see Appendix 20) that begins with a clear survey of the risks to the decision-maker and a scan of the values that are contested. The core moral values that characterise Kidder's framework of moral courage are honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion.⁴⁰ Decisions assume a morally courageous character when a leader's intervention has consequences with some moral risk, that is, when one or two of the core moral values are elevated above others.⁴¹ In Kidder's experience, most leaders facing morally courageous decisions will confront having to deal with ambiguity, to being exposed or isolated during the decision making process, and to experiencing some loss.⁴²

Kidder further argues that morally difficult decisions will usually be a contest between three types of outcome: first, a utilitarian outcome when a decision is considered ethical if its consequences benefit the majority; second, a rule-based outcome in which the rules are objectively applied regardless of consequence; and third, a care-based outcome based on assessing the harms that may be caused by a decision.⁴³ In each scenario, a morally courageous decision is one in which the risks and consequences to the decision-maker are known and real, especially when a decision harms the interests of some while others benefit. A decision like this becomes especially difficult when the right decision benefits the decision-maker's group interest. But Kahneman's seminal work on decision-making alerts leaders to the potential for errors caused by bias and noise within the institutional processes upon which leaders rely as much as it may be an individual's moral judgement.⁴⁴ Bias is a pattern of errors that are repeated and tightly clustered together reflecting particular systemic assumptions in a decision-maker's mindset. Noise is a pattern of error with a greater variability, indicating that decisions are likely to be affected by a great number of factors other than an individual's mindset. Overcoming bias, especially when the bias reflects the assumptions of the decision-makers peers, may require leaders to exercise the combination of moral imagination and critical thinking with a preparedness to make a morally courageous decision.

O'Boyle and Sandona propose a schema for ethical decision-making that characterises decisions as ethical in terms of the end sought by the person who is acting, the means used to attain that end, and the consequences or situational factors.⁴⁵ From these principles, they describe six capabilities that would characterise the moral resolve and critical thinking necessary in ethical decision-making by a leader:

³⁹ Kidder, *Moral Courage*, 89.

⁴⁰ Kidder, *Moral Courage*, 10-11.

⁴¹ Kidder, *Moral Courage*, 106-7.

⁴² Kidder, *Moral Courage*, 173-4.

⁴³ Kidder, *Moral Courage*, 93.

⁴⁴ Daniel Kahneman *et al.*, "Noise: how to overcome the high, hidden cost of inconsistent decision making," *Harvard Business Review* 94, no. 10 (2016).

⁴⁵ O'Boyle and Sandona, "Teaching business ethics through popular feature films: an experiential approach," 329-30.

first, the awareness to see that an ethical problem exists and that requires a response; second, stating the problem and its complexity clearly; third, getting to a position on the problem that is personally defensible; fourth, assessing the options available and the degree of freedom to choose action from amongst those options; fifth, the decisiveness and knowledge of one's duties to make a moral decision and to act personally in the matter; and sixth, the willingness to follow one's intellect and to act according to that which is moral or good in all the circumstances. Underpinning these six skills are a number of principles that characterise the awareness needed of ethical decision makers (and which resonate with the ideas discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation). First, of justice in three dimensions: commutative (the obligation of the buyer and seller in a marketplace); distributive (the obligation of the person with superior responsibilities to subordinates); and contributive (the obligation of the individual to the group). Second, of the right of persons to their private property and what they create with it. Third, of people associating together and cooperating to moderate self-interest and to accomplish tasks in working with others. Fourth, of the common good—that the end that matters ethically encompasses everyone who is affected by the means employed whether the consequences are negative or positive. Fifth, of the 'double effect' in which an action that is ambiguous in having negative and positive effects must meet four conditions: that the good effect is greater than the bad effect; that the bad effect is not intended; that the good effect is not the consequence of the bad effect; and that the means itself is ethically good per se. Sixth, of free choice and the recognition that if one is not free to act, one cannot be held responsible when the action has morally bad effects. Seventh, of proportionality in force to protect oneself. And finally, the sanctity of life.⁴⁶ As a set of guiding principles that might serve as a tool to evaluate the outcomes of decisions by leaders, this set is particularly good and relevant to this study and its assumptions. A shortcoming is that there is no principle requiring mitigation or compensation for any harms occurring as a result of those conditions cited under the 'double effect'.

In proposing a 'new' model of ethical leadership, Bazerman and Tenbrunsel revisit Utilitarian principles in asserting that ethical behaviour is that which maximises 'utility' which they define as 'creating value in society.'⁴⁷ They see this maxim as a means for shifting the focus of leadership decision-making away from narrow self-interest to a wider public or societal interest. However, this view of Utilitarianism does not address its potential perversion into a justification for unintended or undervalued consequences that are detrimental to the interests of others on the basis that 'the end justifies the means'. It has been a particular concern of mine in this dissertation that the public interest test of leadership actions must consider the intended as well as the unintended consequences of leadership those actions, and that limiting harm to some in creating a benefit for others is a weak

⁴⁶ O'Boyle and Sandonà, "Teaching business ethics through popular feature films: an experiential approach," 335-7.

⁴⁷ Max H. Bazerman, "A new model for ethical leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 98, no. 5 (2020): 93.

justification for that action. The harm done to some is absolute to them even though it may be considered by those making decisions to be relative to the greater good.

These models say little or nothing about scenarios in which a less desired outcome is all that can be achieved and the ends are as ultimately unsatisfying as the means to achieve those ends. Leaders in that situation are probably facing the most difficult outcome of all. Ciulla calls these ambiguous scenarios as the ‘dirty hands problem’ in which leaders who are expected to get results are forced to confront a reality in which they use unethical means to achieve their goals.⁴⁸ These moral paradoxes are a reality in political life. Ciulla comes to terms with the ‘dirty hands problem’ by hoping that leaders will feel a sense of guilt and moral disgust, ‘otherwise they may find it difficult to resist the temptation to take short cuts and rationalise bad behaviour in the name of expedience or the greatest good.’⁴⁹

I contend that we are entitled to ask of those decision makers the extent to which they were conscious of those for whom the consequences were detrimental, whether intended or unintended. In Arendt’s terms, to ask how well were they and their interests were represented or brought to mind by the decision makers and how those interests were valued or weighed relative to others. An unethical decision would be one in which the decision-maker knew of indirect or unintended consequences and did nothing to mitigate them, or in Nozick’s terms, compensate those injured for injustice imposed on them. In resolving that ethical dilemma lies the most beguiling problem for effective public interest leadership.

Stories of crisis, apotheosis, and transformation

One of the most often referred to aspects of storytelling as a leadership strategy is the importance of personal stories of profound change during times of intense personal challenge and that leave lasting emotional and cognitive effects on the emerging leader. Those experiences are characterised as deep learning moments when a leader’s worldview and attitudes may be tested and changed to align with new perspectives, and in which new capabilities, insights, and knowledge are acquired that enrich a leader’s judgement. Stories of apotheosis have a familiar structure because of their presence in literature and popular culture. In the movies selected for analysis in this dissertation, by their nature in dealing with crisis, the narrative drive is towards the moments of apotheosis and transformation when the crisis is resolved by the actions of the main characters in leadership roles and they are elevated in the eyes of those around them.

In his best known work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, American professor of literature, Joseph Campbell, examined the structure and social function of fables and myths from many cultures around the world to understand the elements they had in common; and why they were so enduring in their

⁴⁸ Joanne B. Ciulla, "The moral pitfalls of leadership," in *Leadership in Organisations: Current Issues and Key Trends*, ed. John Storey (New York: Routledge, 2016), 51.

⁴⁹ Ciulla, "The moral pitfalls of leadership," 51.

cultures of origin.⁵⁰ Campbell concluded that the primary function of mythology and rite is to organise the symbols that are culturally important for a people and to contextualise or explain them in ways that have meaning in their lives.⁵¹ Campbell observed that these stories posed an existential and frighteningly multi-faceted threat for the community, and the emergence of a hero to fight and overcome the threat. The threats were not only temporal in origin, but also engaged the world of the gods with its own set of rules that could only be comprehended by an individual with extraordinary insight and capacity to endure suffering. The transformation of the ordinary individuals to pre-destined heroes begins with their agreeing to undertake a highly dangerous journey away from their communities and homelands to confront the threat. On the way, the heroes face awful challenges and combats that stretch them beyond what they previously considered to be their limitations. Campbell characterised the transformation of heroes as a realisation that where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the centre of our own existence; and where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.⁵²

At their most basic, these stories of personal transformation are about learning from experience. The hero is personally transformed by enduring the sequence of tests and trials that threaten to overwhelm, and by coming to an understanding of the world, the hero is better able to survive and to thrive in the post-crisis world. Campbell describes this personal apotheosis as ‘the state the hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance.’⁵³ The benefit for the hero’s community is the gift of that experience back to the community—a ‘boon’ that enables the community to come to a similar apotheosis and be better able to regenerate, or, to adapt to new circumstances with a shared understanding of what is truly important to the whole community.⁵⁴

Campbell was not alone in his search to understand the patterns of folklore and myth. The Russian anthropologist and folklorist, Vladimir Propp, researched 100 Russian folk tales looking for a morphology of common elements.⁵⁵ For Propp, the term ‘function’ is vital ‘as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action.’⁵⁶ As with Campbell’s model, Propp’s schema involves a breach of tradition or custom by a villain that does harm to the community or group and its shared interests. A hero emerges to do battle with the villain through a series of temporal and supernatural tests that define the hero’s character as a representative of the community and its best interests. Along the way, the hero meets archetypal characters who either help, hinder, or, intercede in progressing the hero’s journey. The outcomes are a transformation of the hero

⁵⁰ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

⁵¹ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 7.

⁵² Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 18.

⁵³ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 134-5.

⁵⁴ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 148-67.

⁵⁵ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 24.

⁵⁶ Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 21.

and the hero's standing in the community, rewards for the hero and the community, and punishment for the villain.

Propp found that folklore is a 'reflection of a people's moral principles' and that the ideological and emotional content of Russian folklore could be 'reduced not to a concept of good but to a category of strength of spirit.' Propp proposed a complex schema of 31 events (or story functions) in sequence that people confront or experience, and that are common in his survey of Russian folk tales. Whilst a tale might not contain all 31 functions, the sequence of those included is inviolable. Once the elements present in each tale are analysed, it can be classified by type and grouped with tales composed of the same structure.⁵⁷ These stories of overcoming crisis become the artefacts of that community in explaining its history and its values to itself, and to others.

Telling leadership stories in the movies

American screenwriter Christopher Vogler has written of how deeply influential Campbell's work to find the patterns of apotheosis and transformation arising from crisis is in the movie-making traditions of the Western world, particularly in Hollywood (see Vogler's adaptation at Appendix 23).⁵⁸ The importance of the examples proposed by Campbell, Propp, and Vogler is that artful storytelling is not random nor accidental. The structure is important because it reveals the process of transformation of the characters in it, and reflects the purpose or function of the story in communicating a message that is meaningful to the people who hear it. The structure of a story is, as anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss described it, reflective of 'the universality of the processes of articulate thought'⁵⁹ by people about themselves and their condition.⁶⁰

The transformation of the hero has been a foundation of so many popular and inspirational movies about catharsis, change, and transformation. Historical and biographical movies in presenting narratives full of imagery, action, symbolism, and evocation of people and their times, can be rich devices for stimulating cognitive (thoughtful) and affective (emotional) responses. For more than three decades, American historian Robert Rosenstone has challenged the history profession to appreciate the value of history on film for what it contributes uniquely to historical understanding. Rosenstone believes that movies must be situated 'within the larger discourse of history' because they present 'an argument about and interpretation of the historical moments and events' they portray in delivering 'to us a world in narrative, a story of people, events, moments or movements of the past, in an effort to make them

⁵⁷ For detailed description of the functions Propp identified, see Ch 3 of Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 26-65.

⁵⁸ Christopher Vogler, "Joseph Campbell goes to the movies: the influence of the hero's journey in film narrative," *Journal of Genius and Eminence* 2, no. 2 (Winter 2017): 10.

⁵⁹ K. O. L. Burridge, "Levi-Strauss and myth," in *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*, ed. Edmund Leach (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 100.

⁶⁰ Burridge, "Levi-Strauss and myth," 92.

meaningful to us in the present.’⁶¹ In identifying the profession’s mistrust of film because of the ‘inventions’ used by filmmakers to create a work of dramatic art in telling a coherent and interesting story, Rosenstone asks that historians try to understand the function of those inventions. I think Rosenstone’s ‘inventions’ should be more properly called artistic ‘devices’ because they relate to the art of filmmaking more than they do to the logic of the history being portrayed. Critical in achieving that accommodation of artistic devices is recognising the filmmaker as an artist who is working with historical material. History on film as a construction of the past, Rosenstone writes, must be ‘a narrative prefigured by the consciousness of the historian/filmmaker.’⁶² Movies will communicate a moral message that is nearly always progressive, that is, one that leads us to reflect on the continuity of our lives with the past, and on the issues that the filmmaker thinks ought to matter to us.⁶³ Movies succeed in making this connection because ‘our presence in a past created by words never seems as immediate as our presence in a past created on the screen.’⁶⁴ This is the unique way in which film engages audiences in history that text cannot because ‘image, sound, human gesture and expression...combine to make us share anger, pain, desire, pleasure, fear and love, universal feelings to be sure, but feelings that are triggered in specific cultural circumstances by specific historical events.’⁶⁵ In doing so, historical movies make a powerful contribution to increasing historical understanding.

Rosenstone’s thinking moves incrementally to perhaps his most important finding: from justifying history in movies from *within* the practice of History, to looking at them from *without*, that is, by looking at their effectiveness as art in leading us ‘to be inspired into ethical or aesthetic contemplation of the human condition.’⁶⁶ Rather than judge a film by standards relevant to written forms, the filmmaker’s devices should be seen as ‘a necessary part of the fictional structure that allows a film to put the world of the past on the screen in the form that has made sense...ever since the time of Herodotus.’⁶⁷

Rosenstone’s provocation to the discipline of history inspired others who have taken the argument further. Landsberg acknowledges that in creating art—just as in creating written works of history—artists may be saying something important and that might disrupt prevailing assumptions. A good historical movie makes an argument and takes seriously a ‘fidelity to the larger truth of the events depicted’ because ‘the historical film can touch, shock, provoke viewers in a tactile, palpable way, it

⁶¹ Robert A. Rosenstone, "October as history," *Rethinking History* 5, no. 2 (2001): 256.

⁶² Rosenstone, "October as history," 258.

⁶³ Robert A. Rosenstone, "The historical film: looking at the past in a postliterate age," in *Learning History in America*, ed. Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and William L. Barney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 147-9.

⁶⁴ Rosenstone, "The historical film: looking at the past in a postliterate age," 146.

⁶⁵ Robert A. Rosenstone, "Revisioning history: contemporary filmmakers and the construction of the past," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 4 (1990): 59.

⁶⁶ Robert A. Rosenstone, "The visual media and historical knowledge," in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, ed. Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza (Malden, Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 2002), 479.

⁶⁷ Robert A. Rosenstone, "The history film as a mode of historical thought," in *A Companion to the Historical Film*, ed. Robert Rosenstone and Constantin Parvulescu (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 84-5.

can communicate as a written monograph cannot. This is particularly true of historical films that are overtly political, addressing or speaking to viewers, compelling them to listen. To make the injustices of the past visible, audible, palpable can be a crucial step toward raising political consciousness.⁶⁸ As Post has observed, ‘artistic authority is...experienced as universal because art purports to speak to all persons in the public realm about all aspects of human experience.’⁶⁹ American filmmaker Stephen Spielberg has said that his principal motivations in choosing stories are people struggling for freedom, the effect of the rule of law, and of principled, ethical people who proceed to do the right thing even against the opposition of others.⁷⁰ After his experience of making movies in combat areas in the Second World War, director William Wyler reflected that he was interested only in making movies that reflected his deeper understanding of human yearning and vulnerability and that without a sense of serious struggle, filmmaking was pointless.⁷¹

Summary

This chapter shifts the view of leadership from a more general or institutional one to a more personal one. It is an important shift in this dissertation because the movies selected for analysis focus on the stories of leaders exercising power and bearing the burden of the decisions they had to make in times of crisis, notwithstanding the institutional constraints on their options for action.

What emerges as most important from this chapter are three interrelated functions. First, the methodological bases for making ethical and moral decisions. Even with the institutional checks and balances on the power available to leaders, there are times when objective analysis cannot resolve conflicts and subjective judgement is required. In evaluating those decisions, leaders acting in the public interest test will ‘represent’—bring to mind—the interests of all who will be affected by the decision and the consequences of action for them. At times, the best solution is the least bad of several sub-optimal choices, sometimes conflicting with the leader’s best interests. In these circumstances, the method of determining what is owed to others and weighing the consequences of decisions will depend on the leader’s ethical framework and moral courage. Second, we must consider the events and influences that have shaped the leader’s values, attitudes, and moral framework, and how they define the leader’s identity relative to those who follow. This can be achieved by considering the stories of the leader and the community in leading them to the point of crisis in decision-making. Sometimes, the catharsis of a crisis leads to an apotheosis of the leader. At the same time, the society achieves a new understanding of what is important to it, and what is passed on to subsequent generations. Third, that

⁶⁸ Alison Landsberg, "Politics and the historical film," in *A Companion to the Historical Film*, ed. Robert Rosenstone and Constantin Parvulescu (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 12.

⁶⁹ Robert Post, "Debating disciplinarity," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 760-1.

⁷⁰ Susan Lacy, "Spielberg," (USA: HBO, 2018), Documentary.

⁷¹ Mark Harris, *Five Came Back: a Story of Hollywood and the Second World War* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 437-8.

movies as the means of storytelling provide rich material for analysis of leadership, especially as executive and political leadership for most people is lived vicariously as a citizen or interested observer. In the way that great art can illustrate a truth or a new perspective on a problem, movies can be invaluable artefacts for critical examination of leadership behaviours from which we might learn and find the right questions to ask of leadership.

In scrutinising the selected movies for the decisions leaders in the past have made, the key question to ask is the realistic one: was the leadership action effective in resolving the crisis? Flowing from that are principles (embedded in questions) that are derived from the findings of each of the preceding chapters to reveal how the leaders connected their use of power with the purpose of advancing the public interest in times of crisis, specifically:

1. how the issues in a crisis were identified, framed, and strategy explained by the leadership to get necessary support for the leadership action;
2. how the public interest was represented in making those important decisions;
3. how options for action and necessary trade-offs were determined, weighed, and negotiated;
4. how well the leaders negotiated the institutional and bureaucratic limits on their power, and where the use of the leader's prerogative was necessary, whether it was legitimate;
5. whether the use of coercive power was consistent with the public interest;
6. what the decision-making process tells us about the leader's critical thinking, moral imagination, values, and identity in relation to those they lead;
7. whether the decisions worked to resolve the crisis: were they realistic (reasonable and practical), and idealistically appropriate (considered right, fair, and just) in making a better adjusted society; and
8. the effect on the leaders of an experience of catharsis and apotheosis.

Part Two: Leadership, Movies, and the Moral Imagination

Probably no one who does not have to bear the specific and direct responsibility of making the final decision as to what to do can understand the intensity of those burdens.¹

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force, 3 June 1944

In depicting leadership, film is especially intriguing in that as viewers we are often invited to identify with the leader, but by virtue of our role as spectators, we are put in the position of followers; we are led, so to speak, by the camera eye throughout the film...thus enabling us to see events as both the leaders and followers in the film see them.²

Nicholas Warner

In chapters 5-8, I review a selection of well-known movies about historical crises of leadership relating to the US Presidency to illustrate my argument of what constitutes effective leadership in the public interest in times of crisis. The guide proposed at the end of Part 1 embeds in eight questions the principles of effective leadership in the public interest that I have derived from Chapters 1-4. It is not intended as a checklist because the behaviours indicative of those principles will be present to varying degrees in each of the movies, especially as each chapter deals with a different kind of leadership power. It is rather a set of lenses through which to view the complex and dynamic scenarios that the leaders in the selected movies are dealing with; how each of the leaders is responding in thought, word, and deed as the scenarios take shape; and a guide to analyse each movie as a text in looking for behaviours in the rich context that a movie provides and that are indicative of the principles of effective leadership in the public interest proposed in this dissertation.

The functions of leadership and leadership decision-making as described in Chapters 1 and 4 particularly are constants in the background to my analysis of the movies, as are the institutional mechanisms that characterise the public interest as described in Chapters 2 and 3. It is not my intention to situate the selected movies or my use of them in the wider field of film history, or of the historiography of the themes and subjects portrayed. The selected movies have been chosen for their richness in interpreting leadership in times of existential crisis in four different contexts that are directly relevant to this dissertation: leadership and institutional authority in *Lincoln* (2012); the use of executive

¹ John F. Wukovits, *Eisenhower*, ed. Wesley K. Clark, Great Generals Series, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 116.

² Nicholas Warner, "Screening leadership through Shakespeare: paradoxes of leader-follower relations in Henry V on film," *The Leadership Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (2007): 2.

or prerogative power in *The Missiles of October* (1974); corporate leadership in confronting an adverse political leadership in *The Post* (2018); and leadership of a popular movement in *Selma* (2015). Each of the movies had a wide distribution and audience, and were acclaimed within the film industry as outstanding examples of filmmaking craft. Each was nominated for Best Picture in the Academy Awards in its year of release, apart from *The Missiles of October* which was released for TV and had eight Emmy Award nominations. The latter is an important selection because of its excellent and unusual for the time portrayal of the leaders on both sides of the crisis. That each is an American production dealing with events around the US presidency is a pragmatic one. The US presidency is such a crucible for leadership decision-making and such a rich subject of movies reaching large audiences and dealing with subjects that are immediately relevant to studying leadership effectiveness in the public interest.

Chapter 5: Lincoln and Institutional Leadership

Abraham Lincoln (1809-65) has been well served by filmmakers who have told parts of the Lincoln story. The principal subject of this analysis will be Steven Spielberg's movie *Lincoln*³, which deals with Lincoln as President of the United States during the last year of the Civil War (1861-65). I will draw on John Ford's⁴ life of Lincoln before he emerged as a leading figure in national politics, and John Cromwell's⁵ life of Lincoln as a leader in national politics in the 1850s to complement the biographical picture of Lincoln's progress as an effective leader.

Ford's *Young Mr Lincoln* (1939)

Ford's *Young Mr Lincoln* opens with Lincoln (played by Henry Fonda) as a shopkeeper in a small frontier town, introducing himself as a candidate for the state legislature to a small crowd as 'I'm plain Abraham Lincoln.' Eschewing grandiose rhetoric for humility, he plainly states his political principles and offers himself to the judgement of the electors. He is shown studying law books he received as a payment-in-kind and muttering about the law, rights, protection of property and concludes with the insight 'That's all there is to it: right and wrong.' His conversation with Ann Rutledge, the young woman he loves and who dies early in the movie, reveals his commitment to self-learning—Shakespeare, literature, history...and the law. Over the grave of Ann Rutledge, Lincoln commits to making the law his profession, and is next shown riding into the state capital, Springfield, not on a horse, but on a donkey. The 4 July celebrations of the Declaration of Independence show Springfield's civic life as a picaresque expression of democracy, with the common people indulging in a shambolic parade of veterans, in rail splitting contests (which Abe wins), pie judging (Abe eating them), tug-of-war (in which Abe cheats so his side will win), and barrel burning. All of them conducted by the people as one in a constant uproar of cheering, urging, gaming, folk music, and dancing. It is a view of all the people in common, ordinary in their pleasures, and bonded by homely rituals that are familiar to all. Lincoln moves through these vignettes as participant and as observer. Lincoln is shown meeting his future wife, Mary Todd, a member of a well-to-do Kentucky family, and his future political rival for high office, the cultivated lawyer Stephen A. Douglas. The good humour of the day turns nasty when evening brings a murder and two brothers are arrested and gaoled. The happy crowds turn into a lynch mob intent on hanging the two brothers. Lincoln, who appoints himself lawyer for the brothers in sympathy for their distraught mother, steps forth and asks the mob not to deny him his chance of making a case for his first clients. He reassures them that he will lose and they will have their hanging, but pleads that it should be done with some pomp and ceremony. He is using his self-deprecating humour to defuse the crowd and then introduces the homily:

³ Steven Spielberg, "Lincoln," (USA: 20th Century Fox, 2012), Feature.

⁴ John Ford, "Young Mr. Lincoln," (USA: Fox Home Entertainment, 1939), Feature.

⁵ John Cromwell, "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," (USA: Warner Home Video, 1940), Feature.

LINCOLN: When men start taking the law into their own hands...[before long] we are hanging one another just for fun... We seem to lose our heads in times like this. We do things together we'd be mighty ashamed to do by ourselves.

Lincoln implores the chastened and quietened mob to go home and to remember that 'blessed are the merciful.' Lincoln advocates the rule of law, and reminds those in the mob that their only protection against such behaviour being turned against themselves is lawful restraint and justice. The court proceedings that follow continue in a picaresque vein as justice is seen to be delivered not by a close following of arcane court procedure or rules of evidence, but in the knowledge that evil will be revealed by people who share an identity and values as citizens who are committed to justice and the truth. Lincoln's clients are acquitted and the guilty party identified. Lincoln's victory is a triumph over his own self doubt and the tragedy of losing Ann, a vindication of his graveside commitment to the law and the insights into human nature he has learned from hard experience. In securing justice for his powerless clients, Lincoln is thus elevated in the eyes of his community.

Cromwell's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1940)

Cromwell's biography is more solemn and elegiac than Ford's, and takes Lincoln's life up to his election as President in 1860 and his departure from Springfield to Washington DC in February 1861. The movie is an important study because it reveals much about the development of Lincoln's political thought that inspires his leadership as President. Our first sight of Cromwell's Lincoln (played by Raymond Massey) is of a young man reading Shakespeare by the fire in a rough log cabin to the bewilderment of his labourer father, and doted on by his mother who expresses her faith in the potential of her son. The story shifts to Lincoln's time as a river boatman moving livestock, and his meeting with Ann Rutledge in the little town of New Salem where he becomes a shopkeeper and postmaster. He earns the trust of the locals (who take advantage of Lincoln's loose policy on credit), is appointed a Captain of the local militia in the Black Hawk War (1832), and a rapt participant in discussions about the political issues of the day in an energetic frontier town in a nation rapidly expanding to the west. Lincoln's urgers encourage him to run for the state legislature: he does and loses. He considers himself a failure and admits his fear—not of losing, but of being killed in public life. Just as Ann and Lincoln seem at last to have a chance for the relationship Lincoln longs for, Ann swoons whilst dancing and dies. A distraught Lincoln's closest friends urge him to come out of his introspection and again run for the legislature. He does and wins. Scenes of Lincoln speaking in the chamber and of news reports of bills passed flash across the screen, indicating a generally successful and exciting period as a state legislator. From the trials of this early period of Lincoln's life, Cromwell is revealing Lincoln's identity within his community, his self-deprecating humour and humility of character, his courage in the face of adversity, his evenness of temper, his persistence and generosity, his gift as an orator using the words and symbols that are important and familiar, and the intelligence and creative thought that his closest friends see as exceptional in him as their representative.

In the meantime, Lincoln moves to the Illinois state capital, Springfield, to build his law practice (a legislator's job is part-time). In Springfield, Lincoln is shown building alliances amongst political operatives who see great promise in him despite Lincoln's self-doubt. Amongst them is Mary Todd (played by Ruth Gordon), who is seen in the company of Stephen A. Douglas who will become Lincoln's great political adversary, and, it seems, a rival for the affections of Mary Todd. Mary is ambitious and decides that she will marry Lincoln for 'a chance to shape a new life for myself and my husband.' Mary realises that Lincoln's diffidence and her family's belief that she can do better than hitch herself to Lincoln is her immediate challenge:

MARY LINCOLN: I admit he has no conception of his own power, or if he has, he's afraid to face it, but I'm not afraid. I am ready to fight to make him fulfil his destiny. Even if you and all your world despise me for it.

Mary and Lincoln become engaged although Lincoln's self-doubt makes him fearful of Mary's ambition and that he will only bring her pain:

LINCOLN: I have to tell her I have hatred for her infernal ambition. That I don't want to be ridden and driven onward and upward through life with her whip lashing me and her spurs digging into me. If her poor little soul craves importance in life let her marry Stephen Douglas. He is ambitious too. I want only to be left alone.

Lincoln's young law partner, Billy Herndon, is one who sees Lincoln's promise and accuses Lincoln of squibbing it—of using Mary as a 'living sacrifice' for Lincoln 'to gain forgiveness for your failure to do your own great duty.' A frustrated Lincoln replies 'My own great duty? Everyone feels called upon to remind me of it, but no one can tell me what it is!' Herndon feelingly reminds Lincoln of his duty in terms he knows Lincoln will understand—in the words of the Declaration of Independence that Lincoln so admires:

HERNDON: I can tell you what it is of every man who calls himself an American. It is to perpetuate those truths that were once held to be self-evident—that all men are created equal and endowed with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

Lincoln pleads 'Are those rights denied to me?' Herndon dismisses Lincoln's self-pity and exhorts him to ask:

HERNDON: Could you enjoy them while two million of your fellow beings in this country are slaves? When you look at that [US national] flag do you see that ten of those stars are states that would destroy the Union rather than give up their property rights in those slaves? Don't dare tell me that anyone in this world knows that better than you do, Mr Lincoln!

Herndon's efforts are unavailing. Lincoln leaves the office saying he must break the engagement with Mary Todd, and that he is going away for a while. Walking his horse through the place he felt happiest—the now abandoned New Salem—Lincoln hears his mother's voice quoting a familiar text to her son: 'the world passeth, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.' Lincoln realises that he has a destiny—a duty—and that Mary Todd's ambition for him will be the essential strength he will need to achieve it. Lincoln emerges from this trial of self-doubt and returns to Springfield transformed and with a refreshed determination. Offering her his deep contrition, Lincoln asks Mary to reconsider him. Mary agrees and in turn apologises:

MARY LINCOLN: I was blinded by my own self-confidence. I loved you. I believed I could make you love me. I believed that the fire of my ambition would burn in you. You would become a man, a leader of men, but, you did not want that.

Lincoln explains to Mary what he has learned and how he has changed: 'I believe now that our destinies are together, for better or for worse.' In asking Mary to marry him and to bear the humiliation that may entail, Lincoln says:

LINCOLN: If you will have me, I will dedicate myself for the rest of my life to trying to do what is right, as God gives me power to see what is right.

Mary agrees and commits herself to Lincoln's task: 'Then I shall be your wife. I shall fight by your side until death do us part.' From the catharsis of doubting his ability and avoiding the destiny that others see for him, Lincoln emerges with a new resolve and political ambition. The focus of the movie then shifts to Lincoln's rise in national politics amid scenes of intense economic activity, of a people rushing westward, of headlines of conflict spinning across the screen—all relating to the future of slavery: the bloodshed and violence in Kansas in 1854 as its people argue whether to enter the Union as a free soil or slave state; the 1857 Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court in which it was ruled that enslaved people who run away whilst travelling in free states are property and must be returned to their enslavers; and the panic around the failed insurrection by radical abolitionist, John Brown, who seized a Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry in Virginia, just outside Washington DC, in 1859. The effect is to create the sense of crisis that is enveloping the nation.

Cromwell brings the viewer to the critical moment when Lincoln and Douglas are engaged in one of their famous debate series during the 1858 Illinois Senate campaign. Cromwell uses the debate as a platform for Lincoln to make an eloquent expression of his political principles in the great national crisis: the future integrity of the nation as it wrestled with the problem of race-based slavery. Standing before a nighttime gathering of encouraging and good humoured electors, each speaker takes a turn in making an argument and then sitting respectfully and listening to the other. Correspondents sit at a table noting the arguments for their newspapers. The overall impression is of a momentous exercise in democracy and it is the people listening across the nation who will decide the outcome.

Douglas's argument reflects the national platform of the Democratic Party that has dominated the Presidency during the 1850s—a decade in which national politics has become polarised and compromise so difficult given the precarious balance between slave and free states in the Congress. Douglas asserts that the problem of slavery is for those states whose problem it is to resolve, and that it would be wrong for a national government to interfere with it. Douglas thinks that a greater problem for the people of Illinois is the state of the labouring poor, some of whom, he claims, live in circumstances worse than that of enslaved people. Douglas further asserts that radical politicians seeking the abolition of slavery would enforce integration of the freed slaves in all aspects of life.

Lincoln's response to Douglas expresses the national platform of the new Republican party in its opposition to the spread of slavery, but goes further in articulating the principles that would characterise Lincoln's campaign for the presidency in 1860. Lincoln reframes the issues at the heart of the national crisis using the terms of the Declaration of Independence and his belief that justice is about fairness and treating others as we would like to be treated. He begins by rejecting Douglas's assertions that electors will be coerced into integration in their private lives and against their will:

LINCOLN: Now, you've heard the Judge [Douglas] make illusion to those who advocate voting and eating and marrying and sleeping with negroes. Whether he meant me specifically I do not know. If he did, I can only say that just because I do not want a coloured woman for a slave, I do not necessarily want her for a wife. I do not need to have her for either. I can just leave her alone. In some respects, she is certainly not my equal, any more than I am the Judge's equal in some respects. But in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of somebody else, she is my equal and the equal of all others.

Lincoln then deals with Douglas's claim that freed slaves would endanger the conditions of wage labourers. In acknowledging the problem of poverty amongst sections of free, waged labourers, Lincoln reminds the crowd that they each and together have the power to change that whilst the enslaved labourer does not:

LINCOLN: Now, you heard the Judge speak about our own labour conditions. As an American, I cannot be proud that such conditions exist. But as an American I can ask, would any of the striking workers in the North elect to change places with the slaves in the South? Will they not rather say the remedy is in our hands?

Lincoln reminds them that the people together can exercise their power to change the government if it is not attending to their interests:

LINCOLN: I am not preaching rebellion. I don't have to. This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending

it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. If the founding fathers gave us anything they gave us that.

Lincoln then dismantles the argument that free people ought to focus on the advancement of their own conditions and not be distracted by arguments for freeing enslaved labourers in states other than their own. Lincoln draws on the deep tradition and language of political rights that inspired the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and that guarantees every citizen equality before the law and in their treatment by the governments they elect. Lincoln's language is simple and clear. He uses anecdote to make his point, he references contemporary political issues, and he anchors his argument in the familiar words of an iconic, foundational document for all his listeners—the sacred Declaration of Independence that inspired his view of American exceptionalism:

LINCOLN: As a nation, we began by declaring “all men are created equal”. There was no mention of any exception to that rule in the Declaration of Independence. But we now practically read it “all men are created equal except Negroes”. If we are to accept this doctrine of race or class discrimination, what is to stop us in future from decreeing “all men are created equal except Negroes, foreigners, Catholics, Jews” or just “poor people”? That is a conclusion towards which the advocates of slavery are driving us. “Let each State mind its own business”, says Judge Douglas. “Why stir up trouble”?

Lincoln then elevates his argument to explain why it is necessary—a duty—to intervene and to make trouble to transform the nation's politics:

LINCOLN: This is the complacent policy of indifference to evil, and that policy I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our Republic of its just influence in the world, enables the enemies of free institutions everywhere to taunt us as hypocrites, causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many good men among ourselves into an open war with the very fundamentals of civil liberty: denying the good faith of the Declaration of Independence and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self interest.

Having argued for the principles of liberty and equality ahead of self-interest, Lincoln closes by foreshadowing that which each individual and the nation might lose unless all citizens take responsibility for their own decisions, and for the part each plays in the fate of others. He warns that they face an existential crisis for the nation and its peculiar democratic principles and vision:

LINCOLN: In his final words tonight, the Judge said that we can be “the terror of the world”. I don't think we want to be that. I think we would prefer to be the encouragement of the world: the proof that at last man is worthy to be free. But we

shall provide no such encouragement unless we can establish our ability as a nation to live and grow, and we shall surely do neither if these States fail to remain united. There can be no distinction in the definition of liberty as between one section and another, one class and another, one race and another. A house divided against itself cannot stand. This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free.

Lincoln's advocacy sees him emerge as the Republican Party candidate for president in the 1860 election. Cromwell takes us into a meeting in which Republican Party officials see Lincoln as a vote winner, and a political naif who will serve their purposes. As the leader of the delegation come to assess Lincoln, Mr Crimmins, says:

CRIMMINS: The voters will love him because he is just as common as they are. A plain, homespun, American. Why his very name is ragged. Honest Old Abe...He'll go on playing the game with us all the way to the White House...he'll do just what we tell him.

In observing Lincoln's diffidence about the office he seeks, Crimmins underestimates Lincoln's political skill, especially his skill in keeping options open whilst articulating principle. It is Mary Lincoln who best understands her husband's torment whilst seeking high office when she explains it to Joshua Speed, Lincoln's friend and campaign manager:

MARY LINCOLN: He's always had some obsession of some future doom. And for 18 years, I've been trying and trying to stir him out of it. But all my efforts have been like so many waves dashing against the rock of ages. And now the greatest opportunity is coming to him, here, right into his own house. He must take it. He must see that this is what he was meant to be. But I can't persuade him of it. I thought that I could help to shape him as I knew he should be. And I've succeeded in nothing but breaking myself.

During the wait to get the final result on election night, Mary's frustration explodes upon those around Lincoln who seem not to understand her depth of ambition for him. She accuses them of never having understood her, of despising her because of her ambition, of dragging Lincoln down whilst she sought to elevate him. Lincoln asks his supporters to leave and angrily rebukes Mary for the outburst:

LINCOLN: Why do you take every opportunity you can to make a public fool out of me and yourself? It's bad enough when you behave like that in the privacy of our own home but here in front of people. You are not to do that again do you hear? You are not to do that again.

As she turns to leave the room, Mary stops and says to Lincoln:

MARY LINCOLN: This is the night I dreamed of when I was a child. When I was an excited young girl and all the gay young gentlemen of Springfield were courting me. And I fell in love with the least likely of them. This is the night I am waiting to hear my husband has become President of the United States. And even if he does, it is ruined for me. It's too late.

That exchange is a glimpse into the cost of ambition and duty for both of them. Outside in the tally room, Crimmins asks if it is possible that the candidate does not want to win? 'Yes,' replies Speed. Herndon gives a beseeching voice to the crisis around them and the anxiety that weighs so heavily upon Lincoln as the new President:

HERNDON: Would you want to become president of the United States at this time? Haven't you been reading the newspapers lately? Don't you realise they've raised 10 000 volunteers in South Carolina? They're arming them. The governor has issued a proclamation saying that if Mr Lincoln is elected it will secede tomorrow. And every state south of the Mason Dixon line will go with it. Can you see what that means? War! Civil War! And he'll have the whole terrible responsibility for it. A man who has never wanted anything in his life except to be let alone.

The denouement of the movie sees Lincoln making a farewell address from the train taking him from Springfield to Washington DC on 11 February 1861. Lincoln's apotheosis is complete: he realises that his political values, his sense of duty, and his ambition must merge in seeking high political office—the Presidency. And in achieving it, he must now bring some benefit to the nation. That is his inescapable duty, as terrible and awesome as it seems to him:

LINCOLN: No-one not in my situation can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of you people I owe everything. I leave not knowing when or wherever I may return. It is a grave duty that I must face. In preparing for it, I have tried to inquire what principle or ideal it is which has kept this Union so long together. And I believe it was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the mother land. But that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty to the people of this country, and hope to the world. We gained democracy and there is now doubt whether it is fit to survive. I have heard of an Eastern monarch who once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence that would be true and appropriate at all times and in all situations. They presented him with the words "And this too shall pass away". That's a comforting thought in times of affliction... Yet let us believe that it is not true. Let us live to prove that we can cultivate the natural world around us, and the intellectual and the moral world within us so that we may secure an individual, social, and political

prosperity whose course is forward, and which while this earth endures, shall not pass away. I commend you the care of the Almighty, and I hope in your prayers you may remember me. Friends one and all, I must now bid you an affectionate farewell.

The train then slowly pulls away with Lincoln waving to those who have come to say farewell as a choir sings the Battle Hymn of the Republic.⁶

Spielberg's *Lincoln* (2012)

Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln* (with Daniel Day Lewis as Lincoln) takes up the story in the last months of the Civil War in 1865 and the political manoeuvring to pass the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution that would abolish slavery.⁷ The movie opens with introductory text telling us that Civil War has raged for four years, testing the truth of Lincoln's assertion that the nation could not endure half slave and half free. That is followed by scenes of soldiers, Union (North) and Confederate (South), in brutal battle. The camera then moves to a crowded depot where soldiers are mustering for deployment. Two black Union soldiers are talking to a recently re-elected President Abraham Lincoln, one joking, the other eager to push Lincoln in an argument for fair pay and promotion for black soldiers, and who foreshadows the century-long struggle ahead for voting rights. Two white soldiers rush up to say that they heard Lincoln give his Gettysburg Address. Lincoln asks them if they understood what he had said at Gettysburg. They take turns in quoting sections of the speech which pleases Lincoln until they are called to join their units and don't reach Lincoln's peroration. The black soldier who had engaged Lincoln finishes reciting Lincoln's speech:

SOLDIER: That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Spielberg has introduced Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief of a nation at war with itself. Lincoln is comfortable with his soldiers, exchanging stories, and his memorable and simple statement of purpose in fighting the war comes from the mouths of the very soldiers who are doing the fighting.

⁶ A song that would not be written until November 1861, towards the end of the first year of the Civil War that followed Lincoln's election.

⁷ A vital reference for the movie and for this project is Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005). Other important works referenced generally about Lincoln for this research are William Lee Miller, *President Lincoln: Duty of a Statesman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008); William Lee Miller, *Lincoln's Virtues: an Ethical Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002); David S. Reynolds, *Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2020); David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (London: Pimlico, 1996); Ronald C. White, *A. Lincoln: a Biography* (New York: Random House, 2009).

The scene shifts to the White House and Lincoln's wife, Mary (played by Sally Field), is urging him not to waste his power and influence on the effort to pass the Thirteenth Amendment. Mary is concerned for Lincoln's destiny in the post-war world as she believes the Amendment is doomed to fail:

MARY LINCOLN: No one's loved as much as you, no one's ever been loved so much, by the people. You might do anything now. Don't, don't waste that power on an amendment bill that's sure of defeat.

Mary's anxiety is driven, too, by a very pragmatic fear for their economic well-being. The early scenes show that their lives and relationship are burdened by tragedy. Mary is tormented by grief for the son, Willie, they lost three years ago. Mary blames the life of the White House for distracting her from her ill son. Lincoln tries to reassure her that they did not know how ill Willie was. Neither seem comforted. Lincoln finds his youngest son, Tad, asleep on the floor and whilst piggybacking him to bed, Tad says to his father 'I wanna go and see Willie.' Lincoln replies 'Me too, Taddie, but we can't. Willie's gone...three years now. He's gone.'

With these glimpses into Lincoln's personal life and grief, Spielberg leads us to the substantive issue on which the movie will turn—the political negotiations to get the Thirteenth Amendment passed in the House of Representatives. Spielberg introduces us to Lincoln's Secretary of State, William Seward, closeted in a dimly-lit room with Lincoln and his private secretaries, discussing the Amendment. They are clearly confident in each other's trust and talk together as colleagues. Seward is urging Lincoln not to push the Amendment because it is at least 20 votes short of the necessary two-thirds majority in the House and to wait until after the war is won to do it. Seward outlines the state of the house, the seats that shifted in the last election, the likelihood of shifting any Democrats who are opposed, and the challenge of keeping conservative Republicans on board when the war seems close to its end. Lincoln's responses shows that he understands the situation as well as Seward: 'I like our chances now,' he says, and so indicates he is up for the fight to come in the Congress whilst the war rages on the battlefield.

The people's view of the problem is put by a man and woman named Jolly from Jefferson City, Missouri (a Northern state), who are admitted into the office from amongst the crush of petitioners outside the President's door. Seward seeks to show the President that the Amendment does not have popular support. He engages Mrs Jolly:

SEWARD: Madame. Do you know about the proposed Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

MRS. JOLLY: Yes sir, everybody knows of it. The President favours it.

SEWARD: Do you?

MRS. JOLLY: We do.

SEWARD: You know that it abolishes slavery?

MRS. JOLLY: Yes sir. I know it.

SEWARD: And is that why you favour it?

MRS. JOLLY: What I favour's ending the war. Once't we do away with slavery, the rebs'll quit fighting, since slavery's what they're fighting for. Mr. Lincoln, you always says so. With the amendment, slavery's ended and they'll give up. The war can finish then.

SEWARD: If the war finished first, before we end slavery, would...

MRS. JOLLY: President Lincoln says the war won't stop unless we finish slavery.

SEWARD: But if it did. The South is exhausted. If they run out of bullets and men, would you still want your, uh... Who's your representative?

LINCOLN: Jeff City? That's, uh, Congressman Burton?

MRS. JOLLY: 'Beanpole' Burton, I mean, Josiah Burton, yes, sir!

LINCOLN: Republican. Undecided on the question of the amendment, I believe. Perhaps you could call on him and inform him of your enthusiasm.

MRS. JOLLY: Yeah...

SEWARD: Madam? If the rebels surrender next week, would you, at the end of this month, want Congressman Burton to vote for the Thirteenth Amendment?

MRS. JOLLY: If that was how it was, no more war and all, I reckon Mr. Jolly'd much prefer not to have Congress pass the amendment.

SEWARD: And why's that?

MR. JOLLY: Niggers.

MRS. JOLLY: If he don't have to let some Alabama coon come up to Missouri, steal his chickens, and his job, he'd much prefer that.

SEWARD: (to Lincoln, quietly:) The people! I begin to see why you're in such a great hurry to put it through.

This exchange reveals the extent to which Lincoln's advocacy of his government's war aims has been effective in the electorate. It helps to clarify the political problem that Lincoln faces. The Jollys represent a constituency that supports Lincoln, and understands that Lincoln wants the Amendment as a necessary measure to end slavery, and as a result, to end the war. But their reluctance to embrace the implications of a new birth of freedom and equality of all people mirrors the debate in a polarised Congress. Seward offers to help the political process along by engaging a political operative, Mr Bilbo, to leverage government jobs as inducement to members of the House who lost their seats in the last

election to swing their votes to support the Amendment before they vacate. In taking charge of this strategy, Seward says to Lincoln that it will ‘spare you the exposure and liability.’ Lincoln says nothing but understands that what has been proposed is legal, and politically justifiable, but hardly ethical. Lincoln’s trust in Seward is important in Lincoln’s effectiveness as a leader. Seward was one of Lincoln’s Republican Party rivals for president in the election of 1860, but has come to admire Lincoln’s political skills and to share Lincoln’s goals. Seward is steadfast in his trust in Lincoln’s methods, even when it seems risky and ethically questionable, and is prepared to get his hands dirty in making the political deals and patronage to get the Thirteenth Amendment passed. Seward’s conversations with Lincoln are an important device in the movie for revealing Lincoln’s strategy and his motivations.

The political negotiation is further complicated when Lincoln meets with the Blairs, a family of leading conservative Republican Party members who advise Lincoln that the Amendment he wants will only have their support if it is linked to ending the war by negotiations. The elder, Preston Blair, outlines to Lincoln that what he wants in return for his help ‘is to go down to Richmond like [you] said I could, soon as Savannah fell, and talk to Jefferson Davis. Give me terms I can offer to Jefferson Davis to start negotiating for peace. He’ll talk to me!’ Preston’s son, Montgomery Blair, earnestly adds that ‘Conservative members of your party want you to listen to overtures from Richmond. That above all. They’ll vote for this rash and dangerous amendment only if every other possibility is exhausted.’

PRESTON BLAIR: Our Republicans ain’t abolitionists. We can’t tell our people they can vote yes on abolishing slavery unless at the same time we can tell ‘em that you’re seeking a negotiated peace.

Lincoln says nothing but in the next scene, Preston Blair is shown boarding a coach for Richmond to ‘go make peace.’ In agreeing to Blair’s demand, Lincoln has opened a third front to end the war along with the battle front and the fight for the Amendment in Congress. Lincoln explains his objectives in pursuing the Amendment in spite of the opposition to it in a meeting of his War Cabinet as it plans the bombardment of the Confederate port of Wilmington—a battle they hope will end the war militarily. With that prospect, the Secretary of the Interior, John Usher, asks:

USHER: Then why, if I may ask, are we not concentrating the nation’s attention on Wilmington? Why, instead, are we reading in the HERALD that the anti-slavery amendment is being precipitated onto the House floor for debate—because your eagerness, in what seems an unwarranted intrusion of the Executive into Legislative prerogatives, is compelling it to its...to what’s likely to be its premature demise? You signed the Emancipation Proclamation, you’ve done all that can be expected.

Lincoln explains his strategy to his Cabinet. He reminds them of the crisis they faced when the Emancipation Proclamation was made two years before (which freed slaves held in the states in rebellion—areas where Lincoln had no power to act). He explains that the Proclamation did not provide

the guarantee of ending slavery that the Amendment does. In doing so, Lincoln reveals an important understanding of how he has used his prerogative power as a wartime President, but also his respect for its limits and the need for Congress to act and pass the Amendment to definitively end slavery across the nation:

LINCOLN: I don't recall [Attorney General] Bates being any too certain about the legality of my Proclamation, just it wasn't downright criminal...I decided that the Constitution gives me war powers, but no one knows just exactly what those powers are. Some say they don't exist. I don't know. I decided I needed them to exist to uphold my oath to protect the Constitution, which I decided meant that I could take the rebels' slaves from 'em as property confiscated in war. That might recommend to suspicion that I agree with the rebs that their slaves are property in the first place. Of course I don't, never have, I'm glad to see any man free, and if calling a man property, or war contraband, does the trick...Why I caught at the opportunity.

In rejecting the notion of enslaved people being mere property, Lincoln reveals the consistency of his moral purposes as revealed in the Cromwell movie in the debates with Douglas. Lincoln then shows his mastery of the political and ethical twists he has performed to achieve his purpose of ending slavery, and why the Amendment is necessary to overcome the tangle of states rights, and the Constitutional limits on the power of a President to impose on them, even in war:

LINCOLN: Now here's where it gets truly slippery. I use the law allowing for the seizure of property in a war knowing it applies only to the property of governments and citizens of belligerent nations. But the South ain't a nation, that's why I can't negotiate with 'em. So if in fact the Negroes are property according to law, have I the right to take the rebels' property from 'em, if I insist they're rebels only, and not citizens of a belligerent country? And slipperier still: I maintain it ain't our actual Southern states in rebellion, but only the rebels living in those states, the laws of which states remain in force. That means, that since it's states' laws that determine whether Negroes can be sold as slaves, as property, the Federal government doesn't have a say in that, least not yet, then Negroes in those states are slaves, hence property, hence my war powers allow me to confiscate 'em as such. So I confiscated 'em. But if I'm a respecter of states' laws, how then can I legally free 'em with my Proclamation, as I done, unless I'm cancelling states' laws? I felt the war demanded it; my oath demanded it; I felt right with myself; and I hoped it was legal to do it. I'm hoping still.

Lincoln explains that his best—his only—chance of securing the freedom of enslaved peoples is through the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, and that can only happen whilst the slave states

cannot vote against it. He contemplates the awful question of what would happen to those people freed by the Proclamation should the Amendment fail, or if it is determined that Lincoln did not have the power to free them in the first place. Lincoln's purpose is clear in his mind that he must do both things: win the war to restore the Union, and Constitutionally end slavery as the measure that would justify the awful cost of the war that was forced upon his Presidency by the rebellion:

LINCOLN: Two years ago I proclaimed these people emancipated: "then, thenceforward and forever free". But let's say the courts decide I had no authority to do it. They might well decide that. Say there's no amendment abolishing slavery. Say it's after the war, and I can no longer use my war powers to just ignore the courts' decisions, like I sometimes felt I had to do. Might those people I freed be ordered back into slavery? That's why I'd like to get the Thirteenth Amendment through the House, and on its way to ratification by the states, wrap the whole slavery thing up, forever and aye. As soon as I'm able. Now! End of this month. And I'd like you to stand behind me. Like my cabinet's most always done.

JOHN USHER: It seems to me, sir, you're describing precisely the sort of dictator the Democrats have been howling about.

JAMES SPEED [Attorney General]: Dictators aren't susceptible to law.

JOHN USHER: Neither is he! He just said as much! Ignoring the courts? Twisting meanings? What reins him in from, from...

In answering Usher's question, Lincoln shows how clearly he understands that the legitimacy of his purpose and power rests in the consent of the people. That gives him leverage on their representatives in Congress:

LINCOLN: Well, the people do that, I suppose. I signed the Emancipation Proclamation a year and half before my second election. I felt I was within my power to do it; however I also felt that I might be wrong about that; I knew the people would tell me. I gave 'em a year and half to think about it. And they re-elected me. And come February the first, I intend to sign the Thirteenth Amendment.

Lincoln understands that he will be an effective President only if he can somehow weave together a coalition that can at least agree in the awful truth that the war to save the Union will have been for nothing if slavery is not forever abolished by a Constitutional amendment. That moral imperative inspires Lincoln's strategy. But he realises that his tactics must involve some risky trade-offs in holding together support for the Amendment from within his own Republican Party, torn between radical abolitionists seeking the Amendment and racial equality at any cost, the social conservatives who do not want equality as a consequence of abolition, those who see the Amendment solely as a measure to

pressure the South to negotiate an end to the war, and those who see the virtue of Lincoln's logic that only by restoring the Union and abolishing slavery can the war be considered won. A surprising supporter of Lincoln's is the influential Radical Republican and abolitionist, Thaddeus Stevens, who in mediating an argument between representatives of the Republican factions, recognises how Lincoln's political strategy and his tactical nous in keeping options open to achieve his objectives are beguiling them:

THADDEUS STEVENS: Lincoln the inveterate dawdler, Lincoln the Southerner, Lincoln the capitulating compromiser, our adversary—and leader of the godforsaken Republican Party, our party—Abraham Lincoln has asked us to work with him to accomplish the death of slavery in America. Retain, even in opposition, your capacity for astonishment.

The Democratic Party's opposition to the Amendment is consistent with the case argued by Stephen Douglas in his debate with Lincoln in the *Cromwell* movie. The Democrats are trying to persuade the House and the American people that the Amendment is inconsistent with other rights guaranteed in the Constitution, and, that the nation is not prepared for the consequence of setting free two million unskilled, unpropertied, unemployed, and largely uneducated people in the unprotected labour markets of the North. The Democrats claim that Lincoln is using the war to impose a radical agenda of racial equality that Americans do not want. A leading Democrat, Fernando Wood, declared to the House:

WOOD: [Lincoln] claimed, as tyrants do, that the war's emergencies permitted him to turn our army into the unwilling instrument of his monarchical ambitions and radical Republicanism's abolitionist fanaticism! His Emancipation Proclamation has obliterated millions of dollars' worth of personal property rights and "liberated" hundreds of thousands of hopelessly indolent refugees, bred by nature for servility, to settle in squalor in our Northern cities! But all that was not enough for this dictator, who seeks to insinuate his miscegenist pollution into the Constitution itself! We are once again asked—nay, commanded—to consider a proposed Thirteenth Amendment which, if passed, shall set at immediate liberty four million coloureds while manacled the limbs of the white race in America. If it is passed—but it shall not pass! Every member of the House loyal to the Democratic Party and the constituents it serves shall oppose...this amendment, and any legislation that so affronts natural law, insulting to God as to man! Congress must never declare equal those whom God created unequal!

Time is not on Lincoln's side. The war is clearly grinding to a Union victory, and it is likely that support for the Amendment in both parties might collapse if it can no longer be tied to a war aim. Even the loyal Seward begins to question Lincoln's strategy. Preston Blair's mission to Richmond has

resulted in a delegation of senior Confederate politicians arriving at the headquarters of General Grant commanding the Union army in Virginia. Seward fears if word of the delegation gets out, those who oppose the Amendment will be able to undermine the argument that it is an essential war measure. Seward asks Lincoln to explain:

SEWARD: Why wasn't I consulted? I'm Secretary of State! You, you, you informally send a reactionary dottard, to...What will happen, do you imagine, when these peace commissioners arrive?

LINCOLN: We'll hear 'em out.

SEWARD: Oh, splendid! And next the Democrats will invite 'em up to hearings on the Hill, and the newspapers...will ask "why risk enraging the Confederacy over the issue of slavery when they're here to make peace"? We'll lose every Democrat we've got, more than likely conservative Republicans will join 'em, and all our work, all our preparing the ground for the vote, laid waste, for naught.

LINCOLN: The Blairs have promised support for the amendment if we listen to these people...

SEWARD: Oh, the Blairs promise, do they? You think they'll keep their promise once we have heard these delegates and refused them? Which we will have to do, since their proposal most certainly will be predicated on keeping their slaves!

LINCOLN: What hope for any Democratic votes, Willum, if word gets out that I've refused a chance to end the war? You think word won't get out? In Washington?

SEWARD: It's either the amendment or this Confederate peace, you cannot have both.

LINCOLN: "If you can look into the seeds of time, And say which grain will grow and which will not, Speak then to me..."

SEWARD: Oh, disaster. This is a disaster!

LINCOLN: Time is a great thickener of things, Willum.

SEWARD: Yes, I suppose it is. Actually I have no idea what you mean by that.

LINCOLN: Get me thirteen votes. (In a thick Kentucky accent): Them fellers from Richmond ain't here yit.

In the meantime, Lincoln seeks out Thaddeus Stevens to help defuse the argument that the Amendment is a platform for the imposition of racial equality in all areas of life. Stevens is attending a reception at the White House and encounters Mary Lincoln at the head of the receiving line. Stevens is one of the Washington political class that Mary believes despises her and the ambition she has for her

husband's presidency. Mary harangues Stevens for what she perceives as his harassment of her through his investigations of her household spending. Seeing that she has held up the progress of the line, she offers this reproach to Stevens:

MARY LINCOLN: Oh, I'm detaining you, and more important, the people behind you! How the people love my husband, they flock to see him, by their thousands on public days! They will never love you the way they love him. How difficult it must be for you to know that. And yet how important to remember it.

Lincoln overhears it but says nothing as he watches an impassive Stevens bow politely as he moves on. Later in the evening, Lincoln meets Stevens in a White House kitchen where they have retreated to have some time together privately. Lincoln wants to persuade Stevens to lead his faction towards a more moderate position on the Amendment that would help to retain the votes of conservative Republicans and Democrats who despise slavery but fear the implications of racial equality:

LINCOLN: Since we have the floor next in the debate, I thought I'd suggest you might...temper your contributions so as not to frighten our conservative friends?

THADDEUS STEVENS: Ashley insists you're ensuring approval by dispensing patronage to otherwise undeserving Democrats.

LINCOLN: I can't ensure a single damn thing if you scare the whole House with talk of land appropriations and revolutionary tribunals and punitive thisses and thats.

THADDEUS STEVENS: When the war ends, I intend to push for full equality, the Negro vote and much more. Congress shall mandate the seizure of every foot of rebel land and every dollar of their property. We'll use their confiscated wealth to establish hundreds of thousands of free Negro farmers, and at their side soldiers armed to occupy and transform the heritage of traitors. We'll build up a land down there of free men and free women and free children and freedom. The nation needs to know that we have such plans.

LINCOLN: That's the untempered version of reconstruction. It's not exactly what I intend, but we shall oppose one another in the course of time. Now we're working together, and I'm asking you...

THADDEUS STEVENS: For patience, I expect.

LINCOLN: When the people disagree, bringing them together requires going slow till they're ready to make up...

THADDEUS STEVENS: Ah, shit on the people and what they want and what they're ready for! I don't give a goddamn about the people and what they want! This is the face of someone who has fought long and hard for the good of the people without caring much for any of 'em...The people elected me! To represent them! To lead them! And I lead! You ought to try it!

LINCOLN: I admire your zeal, Mr. Stevens, and I have tried to profit from the example of it. But if I'd listened to you, I'd've declared every slave free the minute the first shell struck Fort Sumter; then the border states would've gone over to the confederacy, the war would've been lost and the Union along with it, and instead of abolishing slavery, as we hope to do, in two weeks, we'd be watching helpless as infants as it spread from the American South into South America.

THADDEUS STEVENS: Oh, how you have longed to say that to me. You claim you trust them but you know what the people are. You know that the inner compass that should direct the soul toward justice has ossified in white men and women, north and south, unto utter uselessness through tolerating the evil of slavery. White people cannot bear the thought of sharing this country's infinite abundance with Negroes.

LINCOLN: A compass, I learnt when I was surveying, it'll point you True North from where you're standing, but it's got no advice about the swamps and deserts and chasms that you'll encounter along the way. If in pursuit of your destination you plunge ahead, heedless of obstacles, and achieve nothing more than to sink in a swamp, what's the use of knowing True North?

American writer and essayist, Adam Gopnik, regards Lincoln as indispensable because he has the power to deliver his intentions: 'Stevens and his kind seem to us morally superior, and yet their orations and imprecations, however deeply felt, were also safely impotent.'⁸ For Gopnik, 'Lincoln had to define a common ground, not push out to the edge of a precipice.' Lincoln's insight was in his understanding of 'the great truth of liberal-democratic policies: that it is the job of a political leader, in a time of crisis, to make the unthinkable imaginable, for then it will rapidly become possible, and soon essential.' In other words, 'Lincoln had to see what was coming after what was coming came.'⁹

⁸ Adam Gopnik, "Uncivil wars: did Lincoln really matter? What the Civil War tells us about who has the power to shape history," *The New Yorker* 95, no. 48 (2020). <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/uncivil-wars/docview/2356663652/se-2>.

⁹ Gopnik, "Uncivil wars: did Lincoln really matter? What the Civil War tells us about who has the power to shape history."

The scene shifts to the floor of the House where Stevens is being questioned by senior Democrats trying to goad him into a reckless statement about his ideas on racial equality to scare wavering Democrats and conservative Republicans. Stevens's nemesis, Representative Fernando Wood asks him:

WOOD: Do you or do you not hold that the precept that "all men are created equal" is meant literally?...You have always insisted, Mr. Stevens, that Negroes are the same as white men are.

Stevens looks to the balcony and sees Mary Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley, a young black woman who is Mary's dressmaker and confidante, looking down anxiously as the House awaits his answer. Stevens astonishes them all by answering quietly:

THADDEUS STEVENS: I don't hold with equality in all things only with equality before the law and nothing more.

In the shouts of support and recrimination, Wood and his colleague Pendleton challenge Stevens:

FERNANDO WOOD: That's not so! You believe that Negroes are entirely equal to white men. You've said it a thousand times.

GEORGE PENDLETON: For shame! For shame! Stop prevaricating and answer Representative Wood! After the decades of fervent advocacy on behalf of the coloured race...Your frantic attempt to delude us now is unworthy of a representative. It is, in fact, unworthy of a white man!

THADDEUS STEVENS: [loudly]: I don't hold with equality in all things, only with equality before the law and nothing more. How can I hold that all men are created equal, when here before me [pointing to Pendleton] stands stinking the moral carcass of the gentleman from Ohio, proof that some men are inferior, endowed by their Maker with dim wits impermeable to reason with cold pallid slime in their veins instead of hot red blood! You are more reptile than man, George, so low and flat that the foot of man is incapable of crushing you! Yet even you, Pendleton, who should have been gibbeted for treason long before today, even worthless, unworthy you ought to be treated equally before the law! And so again, sir, and again and again and again I say: I do not hold with equality in all things. Only with equality before the law.

As Stevens leaves the House in uproar, he looks up at a smiling Mary Lincoln who says quietly to Mrs Keckley:

MARY LINCOLN: Who'd ever've guessed that old nightmare capable of such control? He might make a politician someday.

Outside the Chamber, sitting on a pew in an alcove, Stevens is approached by Asa Vintner Litton, one of Stevens's faction, who says to him:

LITTON: Today, Mr. Stevens, I was surprised. You've led the battle for race equality for thirty years! The basis of, of every hope for this country's future life, you denied Negro equality! I'm nauseated. You refused to say that all humans are, well...human! Have you lost your very soul, Mr. Stevens? Is there nothing you won't say?

Stevens replies with disarming honesty:

THADDEUS STEVENS: I'm sorry you're nauseous, Asa, that must be unpleasant. I want the amendment to pass. So that the Constitution's first and only mention of slavery is its absolute prohibition. For this amendment, for which I have worked all of my life and for which countless coloured men and women have fought and died and now hundreds of thousands of soldiers, no, sir, no, it seems there is very nearly nothing I won't say.

Lincoln's apparent success in persuading Stevens to moderate his views to ensure that the Amendment is passed is indicative of Lincoln's combination of interpersonal skills and political competence throughout the movie. In the lead up to the House vote on the Amendment, Lincoln meets with Mr Bilbo and his team who have been badgering the potential swing votes needed to see the Amendment passed. Lincoln asks what he can do to help, and is seen visiting several of the targeted House members to try and persuade them. Lincoln sees for himself the realities of those he seeks to persuade: of their experience of war, their resentment of it, their fears for the future. Lincoln demonstrates his skill in talking with people, his humility, his compassion, and his understanding. He never badgers—he seeks to reveal a truth that he hopes will be meaningful for the other person.

In an important exchange with Mrs Keckley, Lincoln's curiosity about people and their stories that leads him to a richer understanding of them is apparent. Mrs Keckley offers Lincoln thanks for his commitment to the Amendment and her aspirations for its success. Lincoln asks her 'Are you afraid of what lies ahead? For your people? If we succeed?'

ELIZABETH KECKLEY: White people don't want us here.

LINCOLN: Many don't.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY: What about you?

LINCOLN: I..I don't know you, Mrs. Keckley. Any of you. You're familiar to me, as all people are. Unaccommodated, poor, bare, forked creatures such as we all are. You have a right to expect what I expect, and likely our expectations are not

incomprehensible to each other. I assume I'll get used to you. But what you are to the nation, what'll become of you once slavery's day is done, I don't know.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY: What my people are to be, I can't say. Negroes have been fighting and dying for freedom since the first of us was a slave. I never heard any ask what freedom will bring. Freedom's first. As for me: my son died, fighting for the Union, wearing the Union blue. For freedom he died. I'm his mother. That's what I am to the nation, Mr. Lincoln. What else must I be?

But Lincoln's personal turmoil remains unrelieved. He and Mary have a heated argument over their eldest son, Robert, enlisting in the Army. Mary is distraught at the prospect of losing another son even though Lincoln reassures her he will be based at headquarters and not in a combat unit. They reargue the terrible time when Willie died, when Mary's grief was so intense it nearly brought them all undone. They accuse each other of being insensitive to the other's needs. Mary says that Lincoln feels trapped in a marriage 'that's only ever given you grief and caused you regret.' Lincoln asks her to understand:

LINCOLN: I couldn't tolerate you grieving so for Willie because I couldn't permit it in myself, though I wanted to, Mary. I wanted to crawl under the earth, into the vault with his coffin. I still do. Every day I do. Don't... talk to me about grief. I must make my decisions, Bob must make his, you yours. And bear what we must, hold and carry what we must. What I carry within me—you must allow me to do it, alone as I must. And you alone, Mary, you alone may lighten this burden, or render it intolerable.

As the vote approaches and the movie nears its climax, Lincoln makes a profound declaration that goes to the heart of his understanding of his power and the purpose of his leadership when so much is in confusion. As he listens to Seward, the Blairs, and Ashley (the floor manager for the Amendment) argue about the discovery of Southern peace commissioners who might end the war before the Amendment they don't want is passed, Lincoln erupts in rage:

LINCOLN: I can't listen to this anymore! I can't accomplish a goddamned thing of any human meaning or worth until we cure ourselves of slavery and end this pestilential war, and whether any of you or anyone else knows it, I know I need this! This amendment is that cure! We're stepped out upon the world's stage now, now, with the fate of human dignity in our hands! Blood's been spilt to afford us this moment! Now, now, now! And you grousle and heckle and dodge about like pettifogging Tammany Hall hucksters! See what is before you! See the here and now! That's the hardest thing, the only thing that accounts! Abolishing slavery by constitutional provision settles the fate, for all coming time, not only of the millions

now in bondage but of unborn millions to come. Two votes stand in its way, and these votes must be procured.

SEWARD: We need two yeses, three abstentions, or four yeses and one more abstention and the amendment will pass.

LINCOLN: You got a night and a day and a night and several perfectly good hours! Now get the hell out of here and get 'em!

JAMES ASHLEY: Yes but how?

LINCOLN: Buzzards' guts, man. I am the President of the United States of America, clothed in immense power! You will procure me these votes.

Lincoln has made clear the power of his position whilst recognising its limits—in spite of his power as commander-in-chief, as Chief Executive, as leader of the Republican Party, he still needs Congress to pass the Amendment for it to have legitimacy. He makes them reflect on the awful cost of the war and to take the opportunity to seize from it the most important measure to justify the terrible sacrifice. He insists that they see it now!

On the day of the vote, House members are called one by one for their vote. They are watched by a packed gallery including black Americans who are welcomed by the Republican leadership and ignored by the Democrat leadership, by Mr Bilbo and his team keeping an eye on those they have cajoled to vote yes. General Grant's headquarters keeps a tally as the individual votes are telegraphed from the Congress. The Amendment passes to the pealing of bells and cheers outside Lincoln's White House window. The House divides into delirium and despair. Lincoln is seen sitting sedately in a chair with his son who turns the pages of a picture book while sitting on his father's lap.

After the vote, Thaddeus Stevens approaches the clerk of the House and asks for the bill to take home, promising to return it 'creased, but unharmed' in the morning. Stevens folds it lengthwise and puts it in his coat pocket and limps out of the house. He arrives home where he is met familiarly by a black woman, Lydia Smith. Stevens removes the bill from his pocket and hands it to her:

THADDEUS STEVENS: A gift for you. The greatest measure of the nineteenth century. Passed by corruption, aided and abetted by the purest man in America.

The scene transitions to Stevens in bed. Lydia joins him. They kiss. She has the bill in her hand. He asks her to 'read it to me again, my love.'

With the Amendment passed, Lincoln meets the three commissioners from Richmond comprising the Vice President of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens, with John Campbell, and Senator Hunter. They are seeking assurances that if they agree to negotiate a peace, that they can rejoin the Union to overturn the Amendment that had just passed. Lincoln assures them that is not possible:

LINCOLN: Slavery, sir, it's done. If we submit ourselves to law, Alex, even submit to losing freedoms—the freedom to oppress, for instance, we may discover other freedoms previously unknown to us. Had you kept faith with democratic process, as frustrating as that can be...

CAMPBELL: Come sir, spare us at least these pieties. Did you defeat us with ballots?

ALEXANDER STEPHENS: How've you held your Union together? Through democracy? How many hundreds of thousands have died during your administration? Your Union, sir, is bonded in cannon fire and death.

LINCOLN: It may be you're right. But say all we done is show the world that democracy isn't chaos, that there is a great invisible strength in a people's union? Say we've shown that a people can endure awful sacrifice and yet cohere? Mightn't that save at least the idea of democracy, to aspire to? Eventually, to become worthy of? At all rates, whatever may be proven by blood and sacrifice must've been proved by now. Shall we stop this bleeding?

The delegation walks out and the scene shifts to Grant taking Lee's surrender at Appomattox, and then Grant meeting with Lincoln. They reflect on the war and the enormous task still to be done. Their conversation shows the depth of trust and regard they have for each other:

LINCOLN: We've made it possible for one another to do terrible things.

GRANT: And we've won the war. Now you have to lead us out of it.

With the war done, with Robert safe, with the Amendment passed, Mary and Lincoln contemplate their past and their futures whilst enjoying a ride in an open coach:

MARY LINCOLN: All anyone will remember of me is I was crazy and I ruined your happiness.

LINCOLN: Anyone thinks that doesn't understand, Molly.

MARY LINCOLN: When they look at you, at what it cost to live at the heart of this, they'll wonder at it. They'll wonder at you. They should. But they should also look at the wretched woman by your side, if they want to understand what this was truly like. For an ordinary person. For anyone other than you.

LINCOLN: We must try to be happier. We must. Both of us. We've been so miserable for so long.

The denouement of the movie is Lincoln saying goodbye to his friends as he heads out for a night at the theatre. Lincoln is shot dead to the horror of little Tad and Mary who have accompanied him. The movie ends with a refrain of Lincoln's second inaugural address which was his promise for the peace:

LINCOLN: With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

American historian Andrew Delbanco has described the manner of Lincoln's death as 'a completion of the process by which Christian symbolism, even as it was weakening, was transformed into the symbol of a redeemer nation, and thereby into a new symbol of hope.' The second inaugural address was the expression of Lincoln's apotheosis. Lincoln had become 'the central figure in America's historical understanding of itself. He became the key symbol of the idea of universal rights and the most eloquent witness to the tragedy of its betrayal and thereby established himself at the centre of our national story.'¹⁰

Lincoln emerges from Spielberg's *Lincoln* as a highly effective leader in achieving three extraordinary outcomes from an existential crisis for his nation. First, as Commander-in-Chief, he manages a victorious strategy for winning the war; second, Lincoln achieves his primary ambition of restoring the Union; and third, he succeeds in abolishing slavery by Constitutional amendment and linking it as a moral outcome of winning the war and restoring the Union. Lincoln used his prerogative power imaginatively in the Emancipation Proclamation, but recognising the limits of that prerogative power, Lincoln goes to Congress to make the Constitutional change to end slavery once and for all. Lincoln is creative in working with his Cabinet team, his commanding general, Grant, and the Congressional leadership to explore strategy options, evaluate risks, and consider the consequences of the choices that he must make. Lincoln creates unlikely or opportunistic coalitions to achieve his three-pronged strategy by reframing the problem in terms his potential partners will support. He is prepared to accept 'dirty hands' in using patronage to get the outcomes he seeks, but he recognises that he must win the consent of Congress to ensure the legitimacy of his action. Lincoln holds his course in securing all three of his goals even in the face of personal abuse and denigration by his opponents in the Congress, and when short-term advantage is available but at the expense of his ambition to end slavery once and for all.

Lincoln is an exemplar in using stories and storytelling techniques to explain his strategy and to stretch the imaginations of the people he deals with. He is masterful in tailoring his message for his

¹⁰ Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 77-80.

audience, from the delightfully informal interactions with soldiers and citizens showing how they share his goals, to his political mastery in dealing with his Cabinet and the Congressional leadership. Lincoln is shown as a president who has been tested by trials and grief in his personal life and how those trials have shaped in him a compassion and pragmatism that suits the times. He is shown bringing to mind the many interests pressing on him, including the fate of the people he intends to free from enslavement, and the burden of his understanding that the passage of time in war is measured in lives lost.

Lincoln shows real moral courage in recognising that his own life is at risk because of the decisions he makes and yet he accepts that risk as his destiny. In his moment of victory, with the words of the Second Inaugural address giving the period of Reconstruction its moral purpose, Lincoln is assassinated, and leaves the people he freed from slavery as hostages to history. They would not have the right to vote nor guaranteed civil rights for another century after Lincoln's death, and the struggle of another president in another movie.

Chapter 6: Kennedy, Khrushchev, Executive Power, and the *Missiles of October* (1974)

*The Missiles of October*¹ is an intriguing interpretation of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The crisis occurred when the United States found evidence that its geopolitical adversary, the Soviet Union, was covertly installing long-range nuclear missiles on Cuba, just 90 nautical miles from the coast of the United States. This was despite repeated assurances by the Soviet Union that it would not take such provocative action in the American hemisphere. The thirteen days over which the confrontation occurred may have been the most dangerous moment in the Cold War between the two superpowers. A vast literature analysing the crisis and how nuclear war was avoided has in particular focused on the actions of the leaders in each country: President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in the United States, and Chairman Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev in the Soviet Union.²

The Missiles of October is important in this dissertation because leadership is exercised primarily through prerogative power, that is, executive action with minimal engagement of the representative institutions or the public in either the USA or the USSR. *The Missiles of October* is an intriguing interpretation because it includes the voices and perspectives of both sides in portraying the rationales, assumptions, and objectives that underpinned the actions taken by each of the leaders. Such an even-handed interpretation in 1974 was remarkable given the ideological hostility of the Cold War would prevail for at least 15 more years. Apart from the insertion of some historical footage as a window to the world outside, the movie is shot entirely indoors—in small spaces, intimately lit, creating an insider's view of the arguments, intensely focusing on the tension experienced by each of the characters involved, and how they worked together. The film-noire style suits the secrecy in which much of the action occurs as the leaders position themselves and their strategies before making them known to a stunned world.

The movie begins with remarks by Kennedy (played by William Devane) and Khrushchev (played by Howard da Silva) made in the recent past (relative to the action that will unfold in the movie) and positioning the strategic interests of each side. Kennedy signals that the US is aware of the Soviet

¹ Anthony Page, "The Missiles of October," (USA: MPI Home Video, 1974), Feature.

² Important works for background on this subject are Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy J. Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis 1958-64* (London: John Murray, 1997); A. A. Fursenko and Timothy J. Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: the Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 2006); William Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 2003); Stephen F. Knott, *Coming to Terms with John F. Kennedy* (University Press of Kansas, 2022); Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917-1963* (New York: Little Brown & Company, 2003); Robert Dallek, *Camelot's Court: Inside the Kennedy White House* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013); Max Hastings, *Abyss: the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962* (London: William Collins, 2022); Serhii Plokhyy, *Nuclear Folly: a New History of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (London: Allen Lane, 2021); Michael Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-1963* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 1991).

military support for Cuba's defence and that it will not tolerate Cuba becoming the means for Soviet threats to the US:

JFK: All Americans, as well as all our friends in this hemisphere, have been concerned over the recent moves of the Soviet Union to bolster the military power of the Castro regime in Cuba. It continues to be the policy of the United States that Cuba will not be allowed to export its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force. Cuba will be prevented by whatever means may be necessary from taking action against any part of the Western Hemisphere.³

Khrushchev is then shown making a statement refuting the concerns raised by Kennedy and adding an ideological aspiration of his own:

KHRUSHCHEV: The weapons and military equipment sent by the USSR to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes and the President of the United States knows what these means of defence are. How can they threaten the United States? No, you have invented this threat. It is not the weapons you fear, it is the revolutionary spirit.

The statements by the leaders frame their positions—their primary interests—at the opening of the crisis that is to come. Kennedy positions the security of the US in its hemisphere, and the freedom of neighbouring states from super-power interventions as paramount. Khrushchev advocates for the defence of small nations, such as Cuba, threatened by a much larger one, the US. Each leader will position their countries as exemplars in their competing ideologies and the ideal path to human progress: the US giving primacy to the liberty of the individual, democratic representative institutions, and capitalist entrepreneurialism; and the Soviet Union for socialism, collective political identities, and the Leninist idea of sustaining revolutionary zeal.

When Kennedy is presented with photographic evidence of the Soviet missile installations on Cuba by his National Security Assistant, McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy's surprise gives way to speculation on Khrushchev's assumptions and motivations to try and understand the nature of the problem that has emerged. Kennedy says that Khrushchev may be using Cuba as a means of leveraging deals in other Cold War hot spots, such as the divided city of Berlin sitting inside Soviet controlled East Germany. Kennedy begins to assemble the people whose advice he will need in understanding and resolving the problem. That group was to become known as ExCom: the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, and comprised the military in the Joint Chiefs of Staff; some members of Kennedy's Cabinet; the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); representatives of the State Department and national security agencies; and Kennedy's brother and closest confidant through the crisis, the

³ This speech was drawn from a statement issued by the White House on 4 September 1962.

Attorney General, Robert (RFK). Robert will be to Kennedy what Seward was to Lincoln. Kennedy seeks Robert's counsel as a check on how he is personally managing the crisis, on his thinking as it develops, and as a safe, non-judgemental ear for talking through his fears and the risks they all face in the decisions that he alone must make. There is nothing shown of Kennedy's personal life crowding out the space for the political considerations he must make.

Kennedy insists on secrecy to prevent the Soviets taking action to hasten the installation work or to improve the defences around the missile sites while he considered his options, saying 'We're going to have to make it look like nothing unusual is going on around here.' Kennedy is attuned to the domestic political risks and implications of discovering the Soviet activity in Cuba. He refers to the criticism of some members of the US Congress, particularly the Senator from New York, Kenneth Keating, who had chastised the Kennedy Administration for not being active enough in monitoring Cuba and the nature of the Soviet military build-up there. Kennedy's closest political assistant, Ken O'Donnell, had been advising that Cuba was not important nor relevant in the mid-term elections for Congress that were imminent. With the new evidence of the Soviet installations, Kennedy asks O'Donnell 'Do you still think Cuba is unimportant as a campaign issue?'

O'DONNELL: Well, absolutely. It's five weeks to the election. The voters don't give a holler about Cuba. Every time Senators Keating and Capehart squawk about Cuba threatening our security, they put everyone to sleep.

JFK: So Cuba doesn't amount to much?

O'DONNELL: Not as a campaign issue. No, sir.

JFK: (*indicating photographs*) I want you to take a look at these, Ken. You're an old Air Force bombardier. You should be able to tell what they show.

O'DONNELL: I can't believe it.

JFK: You'd better believe it. We've just elected Capehart in Indiana and Ken Keating will probably be the next President.

The first meeting of ExCom gathers with Kennedy chairing and begins outlining the issues, risks, and options for detailed examination. Kennedy listens as each by turn provides an opinion or information on what should be done to address the situation that has been discovered. A timeframe emerges—ten days until the weapons are operational. Kennedy hears recriminations and speculation on what is at stake: that Khrushchev has gambled that the US would do nothing; that it is a ploy to create leverage for a Soviet move in Europe, particularly against West Berlin; or a threat to Greece, to Turkey, or to NATO, the US alliance with its western European partners. Secretary of Defence, Robert S. McNamara is a lone voice arguing that the missiles may not be the threat others are assuming:

MCNAMARA: Just a moment. The missiles in Cuba will have some psychological effect, yes, I grant you that, but I don't see that they profoundly threaten us, or our allies. We have the basic first strike and retaliatory superiority. A few missiles are not going to change the basic balance of power.

McNamara sees little distinction between the effect of a missile fired from within the Soviet Union or from Cuba. General Maxwell Talor, the Head of the Joint Chiefs comprising each branch of the US military (Navy, Army, Marines, and Air Force), replies that there is a very significant threat:

TAYLOR: In fact, our nuclear deterrent is in jeopardy and in range... We have SAC [Strategic Air Command] bombers and missile sites all along our southern underbelly within easy range of Cuba... [The] difference is that our warning time is reduced from fifteen minutes to thirty seconds. Now, nobody knows if they can hit a target at a range of 6000 miles, but they can't miss from Cuba. Mr. President we have to move quickly before the missiles become operational. Now, we have the capability to deploy and hit with quick, accurate air strikes.

Taylor's advice reframes the problem for Kennedy: there is now a pressing time factor, and the realisation that the threat completely changes the balance of power, especially the advantage in first-strike capability. The appeal of air strikes to destroy the missile sites before they become operational is evident to all in ExCom. But Kennedy directs ExCom to continue to examine the problem and the range of responses available to him. Kennedy gives ExCom direction on the outcome he envisions:

JFK: We cannot and we will not accept Soviet missiles in Cuba. We will not repeal the Monroe Doctrine or the Rio Pact.⁴ The Soviets cannot lie to us, shift missiles to our front door, and then come up winners—smelling like roses—not if we ever hope to deal with them again. Not if we hope to survive. I'm going to campaign in Chicago and in Connecticut. I'm going to fulfill my appointments for as long as possible, and so are all of you. Our one advantage now is that the Russians think we believe their lies. You people will formulate recommendations on the best course of action. We're not going to reveal the facts to the American people, or to our allies, or to our enemies until we have determined how we intend to deal with this crisis.

In these early scenes, Kennedy is urging debate and analysis in the mode of what historians Allison and Zelikow called 'analyst-in-chief': pressing his colleagues to 'probe the implications of each option; to explore ways of circumventing seemingly insurmountable obstacles; to face squarely any unpalatable

⁴ The Monroe Doctrine was put to the US Congress in 1823 by President James Monroe. The Doctrine proposed the exclusion of European interference and intervention in the affairs of the Americas, and an end to colonialism in the hemisphere. The Rio Pact of 1947 was the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance that created a commitment by its signatories to mutual protection and defence, and the Organisation of American States as a forum for discussing issues relevant to the security and development of the Americas.

trade-offs; and to stretch their imaginations.⁵ In a corridor conversation with RFK, the President insists that the members of ExCom must come to an agreement around shared interests:

JFK: A policy that the broadest elements in the government and the bureaucracy can support; a consensus that won't tear the country and this administration to pieces; a way to remove those missiles without war, if possible.

The scene then shifts to JFK's protagonist, Chairman Nikita S. Khrushchev, speaking to his Presidium. It is clear that Khrushchev has not consulted within his government in putting nuclear missiles outside Soviet territory for the first time, and in Cuba which is so close to the US. He shares his assumptions about how Kennedy will react:

KHRUSHCHEV: I know President Kennedy. You remember, we spent many hours together in Vienna, just over a year ago. In those hours I told him clearly that while we adhere to the policy of peaceful coexistence we intended to fully defend and pursue our national and socialist interests. How did Kennedy respond? He told me that he was anxious to reach an accommodation. He admitted that the American supported invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs was a mistake, the result of his only recently having taken power. In other words, the result of his inexperience. He suggested that we should stabilise the world order in order to avoid future conflict. A proposal to which I said I would never agree. I was firm with Kennedy in Vienna, as we have been firm in Berlin, where our wall symbolises our determination. We have been firm in resuming our nuclear tests, and our rocket, missiles and space program. We have been firm in our support of the just struggles for national liberation against the capitalist imperialist forces.

Khrushchev says that when the Soviets choose to reveal the installations on Cuba, Kennedy will just have to get used to it. Khrushchev has stated his primary interest is in the protection of Cuba and its revolution from a repeat of the US-inspired invasion of Cuba by anti-Communist Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, just three months after Kennedy's inauguration as President. In protecting Cuba in this way, Khrushchev believes he is pursuing a legitimate goal of the Soviet government to protect socialist revolutions around the world, and shifting the balance of power in the Cold War. His experience with Kennedy when they met in Vienna in June 1961 led him to assume Kennedy is politically weak and inexperienced, and will not threaten the Soviet presence on Cuba. But Kennedy has invited into ExCom two people who know Khrushchev well: the former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Llewellyn Thompson, and Under Secretary of State, George Ball. In the initial ExCom meeting, each expresses surprise at Khrushchev's gamble and his misreading of the US response to a direct and

⁵ Hastings, *Abyss: the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, 406.

immediate threat in Cuba. Kennedy will continue to rely on Thompson and Ball in interpreting Khrushchev's mindset and behaviours.

Vigorous debate in ExCom produces two strategic options: first, pre-emptive air strikes to destroy the missiles, probably requiring a follow up invasion to finish the job; or second, to apply diplomatic pressure backed with military strength to force the Soviets to remove the missiles through negotiation. The military chiefs in ExCom are unanimous in arguing that the only guaranteed way to remove the threat of the missiles is swift and massive destruction in a show of force that will deter Soviet action elsewhere. The risk is that air strikes will kill Soviet personnel as well as Cuban military and civilian personnel, and that strikes are unlikely to be comprehensive—some missiles may already be operational and survive the attacks, and may be fired at targets in the US. Robert Kennedy asks Thompson:

RFK: Tommy, you know Khrushchev better than any of us. How do you think he'd respond if we attacked Cuba by air?

THOMPSON: Khrushchev has a short temper and a Presidium jammed with ambitious people. He's under constant pressure, and he's unpredictable. If we bomb the bases, without warning, he could react impulsively. In my opinion, striking Cuba risks triggering a nuclear world war.

National Security advisor Bundy argues 'that in the end we're going to have to negotiate with the Soviets, either in direct talks or at the United Nations.' Defence Secretary McNamara then proposes an alternative to air strikes and invasion that will buy time for both sides and provide cover for negotiations: a blockade of Cuba by the US Navy. Robert Kennedy is the first to respond in seeing the virtue of a graduated and proportional approach:

RFK: I can see advantages here. A blockade would certainly demonstrate our determination to resist Khrushchev, while stopping short of a sneak attack. In the short term, at least it's a less extreme measure than an airstrike, and it could reduce the danger of an all-out war.

MCNAMARA: Exactly.

DILLON: But that does not of itself remove the missiles, and the missiles are the issue and the missiles are our objective.

Kennedy meets with the US Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Adlai Stevenson, a two-time failed presidential candidate from Kennedy's Democratic Party. Stevenson advocates the importance of the US putting its evidence and case for action to the world through UN:

STEVENSON: I suppose the first impulse is to go in and bomb, but, Mr. President, we have to explore every avenue to a peaceful solution. Sooner or later we'll have to go to the United Nations. It's vitally important that we go with a reasonable case.

Kennedy agrees and the two politicians then talk in political terms, recognising the domestic political risk of not acting in ways that will have the support of the people and the Congress in a period when the mid-term Congressional elections will be under way:

JFK: I had visionary hopes of picking up some seats in the House and the Senate. But that's not going to happen now. Once the truth about Cuba comes out, the Republicans are going to murder us.

STEVENSON: You have Republicans in high positions in your administration.

JFK (*whimsically*): Unfortunately, the voters may come to feel that our Republican friends aren't high enough.

Kennedy's awareness of the political risk is appropriate. He has already established in conversation with ExCom and with his brother that any decisions he makes in resolving the crisis will be hotly contested domestically and internationally once the situation is made public. His choice to maintain secrecy is justifiable in considering military action, but Kennedy's conversation with Stevenson shows that he is already linking diplomatic initiatives to the military options. Given the risks in a nuclear exchange for the people Kennedy is trying to protect, his decision not to involve the Congressional leadership in the formative stages of his decision-making is the most troubling part of Kennedy's leadership in the crisis. It means that Kennedy has taken upon himself the task of representing the interests of all the people. By comparison, Lincoln used his power as commander-in-chief in combination with a deep engagement with Congress to satisfy himself that he was acting legitimately. Kennedy's political assistant, Ken O'Donnell, asks what Kennedy will do if a consensus cannot be achieved in ExCom. Kennedy's answer is interesting for its reflection on Lincoln's dilemma, and how he is justifying his use of executive power and why the ExCom process is so important to his thinking about the proper function of his leadership:

JFK: President Lincoln once put a proposition before his Cabinet. The vote was nine aye, one nay. But the nay was Lincoln's and the proposition was defeated. I'll make this decision alone if I must, but it'll be infinitely better if the Executive departments support me all the way because they've participated in the decision, they understand it, and they believe in it.

In a short scene of a campaign rally, Kennedy gives an insight into his thinking on presidential leadership when he makes a famous observation on presidential decision-making:

JFK: Our major problem, after all, is the survival of our country, the protection of its vital interests—without beginning the third and perhaps the last war. It is ironical that the two strongest countries in the world, the United States and the Soviet Union, are the two countries which live in the greatest danger. As Robert Graves wrote

about matadors: “Bullfight critics row on row, Crowd the enormous plaza de toros.
But only one is there who knows, And he is the one who fights the bull.”

As the debate weighing the merits of military and diplomatic options continues in ExCom, Robert Kennedy challenges the military preference for air strikes that cannot guarantee complete success without a massive military follow-up on land in Cuba. More importantly, he identifies the moral dilemma at the heart of the decision his brother will have to make:

RFK: Gentlemen, this country is supposed to stand for something, it’s supposed to be a symbol of morals and values and fair play. Now, how the hell will bombing a tiny country into submission help establish us as a leader of the free world? What kind of a victory would it be?

ACHESON: Better than a defeat, I would say.

RFK: Yes. And when the smoke clears and the corpses are dragged from the rubble, what do we answer when the world asks: ‘Why? Where is your proof? What gives you the right?’

DILLON: I think we can hit Cuba by air and get away with it. The Russians are not prepared to go to nuclear war with us. But I have to say that your moral arguments have never occurred to me, Bobby, but you’re right. We have to remember who we are. We have to take the risk. And we have to put aside the air attack option at least for now. I’m prepared to go along with the blockade.

As the blockade combined with diplomatic action emerges as ExCom’s preferred option, Kennedy whimsically observes of his military advisers, so assured of their position, that the ‘brass hats have one advantage though: if we do what they want us to do and they’re wrong, there’ll be nobody around later to tell them they made a mistake.’ Kennedy realises that the only acceptable outcome is removal of the missiles—but at any cost? What interest would be served by a strategy that risks destruction because of imperfect knowledge of what the other side wants? Kennedy is struggling to understand why Khrushchev made such a risky gamble. He is sceptical of the assumptions being made about Khrushchev’s motivation and strategy, and the uncertainty fuels the sense of danger and risk. In a meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, planned long before the crisis developed, Kennedy seeks to get an understanding of Soviet intentions and to make sure there is a reciprocal understanding of US resolve:

GROMYKO: Mr. President, I know you enjoy frank talk. Let me speak about the anti-Castro campaign in this country. We believe that your government should stop threatening Cuba and should restrain the attacks on Cuban shipping by exile groups. Cuba, after all, belongs to the Cuban people, not to the United States.

JFK: I do enjoy frank talk, Mr. Gromyko. But it's not the United States, it's the Soviet Union who is creating the conflict. You've been supplying the Castro government with sophisticated weapons. I've received repeated personal assurances from your government that no action is required. I've tried to calm American opinion, but your activities are very serious and you haven't explained them satisfactorily.

GROMYKO: Cuba has a right to the means to defend herself. Sir, we are not paranoid. You did attempt to invade Cuba.

JFK: The Bay of Pigs was not a precedent. This government has no intention of invading Cuba. For your part, Mr. Gromyko, did I understand you to say that the weapons you sent to Cuba are only anti-aircraft weapons incapable of striking at targets in the United States? Is that true?

GROMYKO: Absolutely, Mr. President.

JFK: I want to avoid any misunderstandings here. This government will not tolerate the establishment of a Soviet strategic base in Cuba.

GROMYKO: Mr. President, I assure you the United States need not be concerned. We have given bread to Cuba, yes, some arms, supplies, all defensive; defensive weapons that will never constitute a threat to the United States.

JFK: And I have personally assured the American people that the Soviet assistance programs in Cuba are purely defensive. I have also said, Mr. Gromyko, and I say now, that any change will have the gravest consequences.

Kennedy is now at least assured that he is being lied to by the most senior Soviet diplomat. He must now assume that the Soviets are creating a strategic position in Cuba to radically change the balance of nuclear power in the world—to gain leverage in a variety of Cold War hotspots. Kennedy goes back to ExCom and asks each member one by one to choose. The military chiefs and the CIA Director choose air strikes. The civilian members choose blockade:

JFK: Then it is the consensus of this committee that a naval action is our most appropriate response. I agree. I understand and appreciate the concern of all those who voted for an air strike. And I assure you that if the blockade fails I'll take uncompromising action. My speech to the nation will be on Monday. I'll announce the quarantine at that time.

Meanwhile, in Moscow, an anxious Khrushchev meeting with Gromyko who is reporting on his discussion with Kennedy. Khrushchev is worried that the secrecy on which his strategy of putting missiles in Cuba depends has been blown before the missiles are operational:

GROMYKO: I talked with Kennedy in Washington for over two hours. I can't dismiss the possibility he knew about the situation in Cuba...

KHRUSHCHEV: If so, why haven't we heard his righteous American indignation?

GROMYKO: Withheld, perhaps, for the element of surprise.

KHRUSHCHEV: There's another possibility. He may be withholding the bad news until after the American election, like a bride concealing her blemish until after the ceremony. In Vienna I felt sorry for Kennedy, he so desperately wanted a triumph. All right, let me hear that conversation again in detail.

If there was any relief in ExCom at a decision having been made after days of gruelling analysis, it does not last long. The US Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, raises the complex diplomatic actions that will be necessary for the blockade to succeed, and to justify it to the world:

STEVENSON: Sir, I believe that your speech should incorporate a call for an emergency session of the Security Council. We must get to the UN ahead of the Russians.

JFK: That's very useful. State will work with you on a draft resolution.

STEVENSON: And may I add, sir, that whatever happens at the United Nations is largely contingent on the Organisation of American States supporting our action...May I ask, sir, what we'll do if the OAS doesn't support us? Are we then going to impose the blockade and take our case to the United Nations even without the semblance of legality, without the support of our own hemisphere?

JFK: I'll pay any price to get those missiles out of Cuba.

STEVENSON: Then, sir, I don't see how we can expect the Russians to remove them for nothing. It's going to be difficult for the rest of the world, especially Europe, to understand our fear of the Cuban bases. After all, our European allies have been within easy reach of Soviet missiles for years. The world will ask why Soviet technicians and missiles in Cuba are any more wicked than our own technicians and missiles in Turkey and Italy. And why a Russian base in Cuba is any more wicked than our own American base at Guantanamo.

Stevenson has done an important thing in projecting into ExCom's thinking the reactions of other nations that are likely to be collateral damage in a superpower nuclear exchange. He exposes the flaw in Kennedy's insistence on secrecy within ExCom: it has not been exposed to external scrutiny; and although Kennedy has called its decision a 'consensus', it is fact a majority decision. The military chiefs are unmoved in demanding military action, whilst the civilians in ExCom have deferred it. Stevenson

has appropriately brought the interests of those other nations to the table. He has also raised the option of a trade-off in which the US loses little but gains much if it removes the threat from Cuba. The Director of the CIA, McCone, suggests Stevenson's views smack of appeasement—a stinging criticism with the Second World War so close in the memory of all in ExCom. Kennedy knows, too, that anything that seems like appeasement under Soviet pressure will be politically fatal for him. Kennedy listens and skilfully refocuses ExCom's attention on what he now sees clearly as the primary goal:

JFK: I agree that diplomatic moves are essential, but we're not going to negotiate under the gun. De Gaulle would be quick to say we were selling out the Europeans to protect ourselves. And the Russians would be tempted to try blackmail again, elsewhere. The issue isn't Guantanamo or obsolete Jupiter bases—the issue is missiles, Russian missiles in Cuba, and they must be removed. And they must be removed quickly.

In the corridor after the ExCom meeting, Robert Kennedy expresses frustration at what he sees as Stevenson's lack of resolve after the decision to blockade had been made. President Kennedy rejects his brother's observation and supports Stevenson saying that:

JFK: Adlai showed courage. He gave an argument that needed to be given and took the risk of being called an appeaser...[Foreign] observers will ask why we're entitled to bases in Turkey pointing missiles at Russia's belly...I admire what Stevenson did. He told the truth and presented the diplomatic point of view. And that's his job.

In a meeting separate from ExCom, Kennedy seeks reassurance from his military chiefs about the timing and effectiveness of action if the blockade and diplomacy fail. He asks Air Force General Sweeny:

JFK: [If] you have everything you need can you guarantee that air strikes will take out all of the Soviet bases?

SWEENEY: Mr. President, are you asking me for one hundred percent of the missiles?

JFK: Can the tactical air command take out all of the missiles, yes.

SWEENEY: Sir, I can guarantee that we'd take out ninety percent, not one hundred. Completely surgical strike just is not possible. We cannot be certain of hitting every pad, every launch vehicle. Some might survive. We might miss a few.

JFK: And if we missed ten percent that would leave what—six or seven—operational nuclear weapons, capable of taking out New York and Washington and a few other cities, is that correct?

SWEENEY: Yes, sir. And that's why we'd have to follow up with an invasion.

JFK: Thank you very much, General. I appreciate your candour. We're going ahead with the decision of the consensus. I'll announce the blockade in my speech to the nation tomorrow evening. Admiral Anderson, it's all up to the Navy.

Successive scenes then show frenetic activity around the Oval Office as the President receives multiple briefings on actions taken to implement his orders. The overall impression is of a frightening military buildup and an increasingly worried Kennedy. He still does not know how Khrushchev will respond to the US action, and is mindful that the military does not agree with his strategy. In briefing the Congressional leaders on the crisis and his impending address to the nation, Kennedy discovers a lack of support in his own Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party opposition:

SENATOR 1 (unnamed): I don't want to criticise at this grave hour, Mr. President, but some of us have been warning about Soviet military preparations in Cuba for months and you've consistently denied our charges and refused to take action until now you present us with this...this calamity.

JFK: The charges were neither documented nor proven.

SENATOR 1: Well, now that they are documented and proved, I wonder if your action is adequate to meet the provocation.

SENATOR RUSSELL (Chair, Armed Services Committee. Democratic Party): Mr. President.

JFK: Senator Russell.

RUSSELL: Sir, I must say that I couldn't live with myself if I didn't speak out in the strongest possible terms. It is vitally important that we act with greater strength than you are contemplating.

JFK: Let me say again, I plan to do everything necessary to protect our country.

RUSSELL: With all respect, the blockade is a halfway measure. It will alienate our allies while doing the Communists no tangible harm whatsoever. Mr. President, we have to destroy those bases.

JFK: Senator, it's still possible that we can resolve this matter without a devastating war. And I won't launch such a war lightly, I assure you. Once there's an attack, our enemies could respond with a missile barrage from Cuba alone that would kill eighty million of our people. Eighty million!

SENATOR WILLIAM (BILL) FULBRIGHT (Chair, Foreign Relations Committee, Democratic Party): Mr. President.

JFK: Senator Fulbright...(back to Russell) Your entire constituency could be wiped out in the first thirty seconds.

FULBRIGHT: I won't associate myself with what has been said here. Since it will be necessary to strike Cuba and to invade it, I think we should do so now, quickly, with the overwhelming power which is still ours.

JFK: Let me get this straight. You're for an invasion of Cuba, Bill? You and Senator Russell here? Is that correct?

FULBRIGHT: Regretfully, Mr. President, I think that your plan for an embargo will fail in the end.

Kennedy is fuming with anger after the meeting, but the Congressional leadership is being informed for the first time of a threat sufficient to warrant warlike action, and has not had ExCom's opportunity to consider and weigh what is in the national interest, the options for action, and the risks and consequences involved in each. Now, when he expects Congressional support as he breaks the news of the crisis and his response to the American people, he is uncertain that their representatives will support him. Kennedy's address to the nation is an exemplar of a considered, methodical briefing, and a rationale for the action he is proposing and for which he seeks the support of the American people, and US allies.

JFK: Good evening, my fellow citizens. This government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military build-up on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.⁶

Kennedy reiterates his Constitutional authority to act. In outlining his proposed action, Kennedy covers the diplomatic and military measures necessary to give effect to the blockade and the objective of removing the missiles. Kennedy promises to maintain surveillance of Cuba, turn back ships carrying weapons, to engage the United Nations and the Organisation of American States in diplomatic pressure on the Soviet Union to remove the missiles, and eliminate the unwarranted threat to the peace and collective security of the Americas. Kennedy makes his most direct assurance of using military strength in saying that 'It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear attack launched from Cuba as

⁶ In the address he actually made, Kennedy listed the interactions he had had with the Soviet Ambassador and other Soviet officials who had repeatedly deceived him and the US government by asserting that the weapons were defensive, and that there were no offensive weapons that would threaten the US. Through the movie, we see some of these Soviet assurances offered to Kennedy, even after he has evidence that the assurances are false.

an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States requiring a full retaliatory response.’⁷ Khrushchev is watching the broadcast with anxious Presidium colleagues and says ‘I wonder if Kennedy has gone mad.’

In closing his speech, Kennedy shifts from transactional statements of the actions he is taking to an aspirational statement of outcome:

JFK: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless and provocative threat to world peace and stable relations between our two countries. Our goal is not the victory of might but the vindication of right—not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom here in this hemisphere and we hope around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.

With the crisis now public, the movie shifts to an interplay of scenes switching from Khrushchev in the Kremlin responding to Kennedy’s address, interwoven with Stevenson’s statements to influence world opinion through the United Nations Security Council:

KHRUSHCHEV: President Kennedy of the United States last night announced that he had instructed the United States Navy to intercept all ships proceeding to Cuba...Undertaking such a gamble, the United States is taking a step on the road of unleashing a thermonuclear world war. The United States usurped the right to attack ships of other states on the high seas, that is, to engage in piracy.

STEVENSON: We hope that Chairman Khrushchev has not made a miscalculation, that he has not mistaken forbearance for weakness. We cannot believe he supposes that though we have power we lack nerve; that though we have the weapons, we will not use them.

KHRUSHCHEV: The imperialistic forces of the United States seek to dictate to Cuba what policy she can carry through, what domestic order ought to be, what weapons she should have for defence. But who gave the United States the right to assume the role of master of destiny of other countries and peoples? Why should Cuba settle its internal affairs, not at its own discretion, but so as to please the United States?

⁷ Kennedy explained to the American people in this address that the siting of intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads on Cuba represented a dangerous and unacceptable change to the status quo in the deployment of nuclear weapons by the US and the USSR. Kennedy said ‘We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation’s security to constitute maximum peril. Nuclear weapons are so destructive and ballistic missiles are so swift, that any substantially increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment may well be regarded as a definite threat to peace.’ See Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, 1961-1963*, Vol II: 807.

STEVENSON: We hope, we still pray, that the worst may be avoided—that the Soviet leadership will call an end to this ominous adventure.

KHRUSHCHEV: Cuba belongs to the Cuban people. Only they can be the masters of their destiny. President Kennedy assumes a grave responsibility for the fate of peace. He is recklessly playing with nuclear fire.

Khrushchev meets his officials, including Foreign Minister Gromyko, who reports that the Organisation of American States (OAS) has voted to support the blockade and the removal of the Soviet missiles from the hemisphere. Khrushchev is defiant in defending the missiles as essential to Cuban self-determination:

KHRUSHCHEV: Work will continue around the clock on the Cuban installations. The fact that Kennedy has discovered our activity has no bearing on their legitimacy. International law has not been repealed. Our ships have the right to sail on the high seas. We will protect that right. Diplomatic struggle will go on in the United Nations and around the world. The American blockade [is] illegal. Our efforts to defend Cuba are a justifiable response to American aggression. We will defend our ships.

GROMYKO: Mr. Chairman, in view of the vote of the Organisation of American States...

KHRUSHCHEV: The American blockade is illegal! The governments of Africa and Asia will not be influenced by the opinion of the Latin American puppets of the United States.

GROMYKO: Comrade Chairman, if I may...the thrust of the American argument is that we surreptitiously placed offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba.

KHRUSHCHEV: We did not!

GROMYKO: We deny it?

KHRUSHCHEV: Certainly we deny it. The weapons we've placed there have been for defensive purposes.

GROMYKO: And that is what Zorin [Soviet Ambassador to the UN] is to say at the United Nations?

KHRUSHCHEV: He's to say that the Soviet rockets and missiles are so powerful there's no need to seek a launching site for them outside the territory of the Soviet Union.

In attempting to defend his strategy of placing the missiles in Cuba for defensive purposes, Khrushchev has lied to his own Foreign Minister. The intercontinental ballistic missiles being placed in Cuba are first-strike weapons—not practical weapons to defend Cuba. Even given Kennedy’s sincere assurances that the US would not attack Cuba may be seen as disingenuous, Khrushchev’s strategy begins to look more like a reckless gamble on his assumptions about Kennedy’s vulnerability. In the White House, while conversing with his aides and his brother, Kennedy seeks to understand Khrushchev’s gamble and the danger the two superpowers are facing:

JFK: This crisis has very little to do with the Castro government. The bases are Russian, the technicians are Russian, and the missiles are Russian. This is between Khrushchev and myself. The great danger here is a miscalculation, a mistake in judgment. A few weeks ago, I read *The Guns of August* by Barbara Tuchman. Have you read that? In it she tells of the staggering mistakes that the Europeans made that led up to World War I. The Germans, the Austrians, the Russians, the French and the British, all stumbled into war. Stupidities, personal idiosyncrasies, misunderstandings, prejudices, complexes. The First World War, which seemed so inevitable, was just a stupid mistake.

SORENSEN: Maybe, that’s true of most wars—all wars.

JFK: Someone asked the German Chancellor how the First World War started, and he said, ‘Ah, if we only knew.’ I’d like to send a copy of Tuchman’s book to every officer on every ship in our Navy right now... We don’t want war and I don’t believe the Russians do either. But they took a step and we had to respond. They react. And we respond again. So for reasons of pride or security or face, each response leads to a counter-response and we escalate our way to disaster. We have to control ourselves and try to control events. We must be careful not to miscalculate or to misjudge, or to challenge the Russians needlessly or thoughtlessly into a war neither side wants and neither side can win.

The moment reveals Kennedy’s awareness of the need for careful consideration of strategy, tactics, and calmness in confronting the uncertainty of events as they unfold. His reflection on history and the perils of a cycle of action and reaction leading to disaster is important in Kennedy’s tactical responses. He is showing the imagination to see the consequences of the decisions he and Khrushchev must make.

Khrushchev’s formal response to Kennedy’s address to the nation outlining his strategy does not give much hope for a resolution:

KHRUSCHEV: President Kennedy: The actions of the United States of America with regard to Cuba are outright banditry or, if you like, the folly of degenerate imperialism. The United States is forcing mankind into the abyss of a world missile

nuclear war. The Soviet Union will not instruct captains of Soviet vessels bound on the high seas to Cuba to obey the orders of American naval forces. If any such effort were to be made to interfere with Soviet ships, we would then be forced on our part to take the measures which we deem necessary and adequate to protect our rights. For this, we have all that is necessary.

In discussion with his brother, Kennedy considers Khrushchev's threat, and rather than a bellicose reaction that will only raise the stakes, he opens the possibility of a new channel of direct communication:

JFK: We have to find another way to reach Khrushchev. He's looking back over the past to Vienna, and he's thinking, 'Kennedy didn't commit American power at the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy didn't commit American power at the Berlin wall, so Kennedy won't commit American power now'... I want you to have a private talk with your friend the Russian Ambassador [Dobrynin].

Through his most trusted colleague, his brother, Kennedy is seeking to create a personal line of communication that will mitigate the risk of the leaders misunderstanding each other's language and intent. In doing so, he displays sufficient self-awareness to acknowledge that previous decisions in important moments in the Cold War may have contributed to Khrushchev's believing he could get away with putting missiles in Cuba. Kennedy is taking the other side's perspective and interests into account—he is 'representing' in his own thinking the interests of his antagonist. It is a critical move by a skilled political negotiator.

Robert Kennedy meets Dobrynin and reports back to the President who is dining with the British Ambassador (who is also a family friend), David Ormsby-Gore, that Dobrynin insists that 'there are no offensive missiles in Cuba,' and that 'the blockade is illegal and unwarranted.' Robert advises the President that he reinforced the US determination to have the missiles removed, that he reassured Dobrynin that the President would turn back any ships carrying weapons to Cuba, and take action if the missiles are not removed. He emphasised that time was running out for the Soviets to remove the missiles. Ormsby-Gore urges the President to release the evidence of the weapons on Cuba:

ORMSBY-GORE: Mr. President, without informed public opinion on your side, without the world knowing that those bases and missiles exist, you increase the chances for conflict, you don't diminish them. There mustn't be the slightest suspicion that you're provoking a crisis because there's an election here next month.

Robert Kennedy advises that Dobrynin seems to have been left uninformed by Khrushchev and is frightened that events are moving too quickly and that he is without instructions. Kennedy speculates that Khrushchev is determined to proceed, or, conversely, that may not know how to respond to the US action. Ormsby-Gore says 'that makes the situation even more dangerous' as the ships approach the

blockade line the next day. 'He needs time,' says Ormsby-Gore, and suggests that Kennedy buy time too:

ORMSBY-GORE: You've drawn the quarantine line, what, eight hundred miles from Cuba? You could contract it closer to the island so that all twenty-five ships don't encounter it tomorrow...Give the Kremlin time to digest what's happening and perhaps disengage gracefully.

The President takes the advice and contracts the blockade line closer to Cuba and says that 'the next move is Khrushchev's.' Kennedy's move works. Khrushchev seeks out the insightful Gromyko to understand what happened in Dobrynin's meeting with Robert Kennedy. Gromyko again urges Khrushchev to put aside his assumptions about Kennedy, and to see what is being offered:

GROMYKO: He's moving cautiously to avoid a confrontation at sea.

KHRUSHCHEV: Certainly. He'd like nothing better than to resolve the crisis on his terms: without a war and without negotiating away anything of value.

GROMYKO: Perhaps we can take a cue from the Kennedy initiative and meet informally with the new American Ambassador.

KHRUSHCHEV: No, not a diplomat. I want to meet with somebody of real importance, rooted in the American system—a capitalist. A man of mature judgment, who understands how much he stands to lose.

Whereas Kennedy is endeavouring to be tactically flexible, Khrushchev ignores Gromyko's advice and seeks to engage in an ideological contest with a capitalist, and one not in the US government at that. It does not go well. Mr W. E. Knox, the president of the Westinghouse company, provokes an angry response from Khrushchev as he tries to defend the Soviet position in Cuba:

KHRUSHCHEV (angrily): We have an obligation to defend Cuba, and we will do so! The weapons we have furnished include antiaircraft and ballistic missiles with conventional and thermonuclear warheads. If you want to satisfy yourself on that point, all you have to do is to attack Cuba and Americans will find out very quickly. I'm not interested in the destruction of the world, but if we all want to meet in hell, it's up to you.

Khrushchev has admitted that the weapons are nuclear and offensive in nature, and, it seems, that he is surprised by the strength of America's response once they were discovered. He watches news coverage of the deployment of US naval ships in the blockade line, and the mustering of troops in forward areas preparatory for an invasion. His strategy appears to be unravelling.

Returning to the Cabinet Room in the White House, a signal confirms that Soviet ships are stopping short of the blockade line and others are turning around. Secretary of State Dean Rusk exclaims ‘We’re eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked!’ Robert Kennedy urges the President to make sure the Navy knows what to do in these circumstances. The President responds immediately:

JFK: They’re not to interfere. Order [Admiral] Ward not to do anything. No Soviet ships outside the quarantine line are to be stopped or intercepted. We’re going to give the Russians a chance to turn back without being challenged. Maybe Khrushchev can work his way out of this. Pass the word, quick, before somebody fouls up.

Kennedy’s press secretary, Pierre Salinger, reports that there are demonstrations against US embassies in half a dozen capitals:

SALINGER: People are marching against us in London, Paris, Hong Kong, Tokyo. Not to mention the communist countries, most American cities...The feeling runs deep that we’re not telling the truth. Good people suspect that we’re provoking this crisis, and I think we have an obligation to answer.

Kennedy recognises that he has a moral obligation to justify his actions to the world, and instructs Stevenson to show the evidence to the Security Council of the UN and the world press. Stevenson traps the Soviet Ambassador to the UN, Zorin, into defiantly reiterating that the US has concocted the crisis with no real evidence of weapons, and now seeks to cover up its failure to prove its case. Stevenson produces the aerial photographs showing the installations in preparation and the missiles on Cuba. In reclaiming the US credibility in the debate, Stevenson continues:

STEVENSON: I hope that now we can get down to business and we can stop this sparring. We know the facts, and so do you, sir, and we’re ready to talk about them. Our job here is not to score debating points. Our job, Mr. Zorin, is to save the peace. And if you are ready to try, so are we.

Following the events at sea and in the UN, members of the Soviet Presidium meet with Khrushchev to question him about the Soviet strategy, and appear to be confronting him—urging him to hold to his course:

PRESIDIUM MEMBER 1: Is it your intention, Mr. Chairman, to comply with Kennedy’s demands and dismantle the bases? Or shall we pursue our initiative, order our military establishment to nuclear alert and prepare to respond in Berlin when Kennedy invades Cuba?

KHRUSHCHEV: Those alternatives are unacceptable! Unacceptable! I established the Cuban missile system in order to improve our nuclear capability and to ensure

the survival of the Castro regime. I will not retreat from that position unilaterally because of American threats! Nor did I assume the leadership of the Party and the government in order to throw us into nuclear war over...an incident.

PRESIDIUM MEMBER 1: This 'incident' is the result of your contrivance and your analysis of Kennedy's probable response.

KHRUSHCHEV: I stand by my analysis! I stand by my decisions! The present situation shows the American President has gone to great lengths to avoid a confrontation. His every move in the so-called blockade has been designed to prevent hostilities.

Khrushchev seems to realise the potential of what he has unleashed. He acknowledges that Kennedy has created room and time for negotiation to avoid military confrontation. Khrushchev seems to acknowledge that his strategy has failed and that he needs a way out. Going outside formal channels, he instructs an agent in the Washington embassy, Alexander Fomin, to find an American who can get direct access to Kennedy. Fomin contacts an American journalist, John Scali, and puts a proposal from Khrushchev for Scali to put directly to President Kennedy:

FOMIN: What would you think of a proposition where we'd solve the crisis along the following lines: my government would agree to dismantle and remove the offensive weapons in Cuba, promise never to re-introduce such weapons, and agree to United Nations inspection and verification.

SCALI: And my government?

FOMIN: President Kennedy would undertake a solemn promise that neither the United States nor its allies will invade Cuba now or in the future.

SCALI: A pledge to respect the integrity of the Castro regime.

FOMIN: Yes. Would your government be interested in this formula?

SCALI: I don't know.

FOMIN: You must find out as quickly as possible.

SCALI: How can my government know if this is a serious—a valid proposal?

FOMIN: You may say that if Ambassador Stevenson pursues this approach in the United Nations, our Ambassador Zorin will be most receptive. How long will it take you to get an answer from your contacts?

SCALI: Again, I don't know.

FOMIN: (*writing phone number down*) You can reach me at the Embassy or at the number on this card. Call any time, day or night. But make it soon, please. Soon.

While waiting anxiously with Gromyko a response from Fomin, Khrushchev is advised by an analyst that Americans are now conducting low-level reconnaissance flights:

KHRUSHCHEV: Would you conclude that they're monitoring the operation of our system or preparing to attack?

INTELLIGENCE ANALYST: I would conclude that they are performing both functions.

KHRUSHCHEV: Kennedy plans to attack the moment the weapons system in Cuba is operational.

Khrushchev realises that he must now formally negotiate a resolution. From his demeanour in this scene, it is clear that he has decided to make the most of whatever is to be gained from his failing strategy. He writes Kennedy a conciliatory cable proposing the Soviet terms. He reflects on his own life story and experience of war to stake the moral high ground:

KHRUSHCHEV: Dear Mr. President: The time has come to rise above petty passions and transient things. If indeed war should break out it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war. I've participated in two such wars and I know that it ends only after it has rolled through cities and villages everywhere sowing death and destruction.

Khrushchev offers Kennedy the first indication of reciprocal statesmanship in seeking to reduce the tensions the crisis has generated:

KHRUSHCHEV: Mr. President, you are mistaken to think of the missiles in Cuba as offensive weapons. As a military man you should understand that missiles, like old-fashioned cannon, cannot be offensive or defensive. Be calm in this regard, we are of sound mind, we understand that if we attack you, you will respond. And you understand that then you will receive what you hurl against us. We are normal people, we correctly understand the situation. Only lunatics or suicides who themselves want to die and to destroy the whole world before they die, would undertake what you accuse us of undertaking.

Khrushchev restates his reasons for putting missiles in Cuba in a way that implicates Kennedy personally but suggests there is mutuality in the historical antagonism between the two countries:

KHRUSHCHEV: The reason we shipped missiles to Cuba was because your government attempted to overthrow the Cuban government, just as your

government attempted to overthrow our government after our revolution in 1917. You have admitted as much to me. And I have admitted those mistakes which have occurred during the history of my state, which I have acknowledged and condemned.

Khrushchev then acknowledges the reasons for Kennedy's concern, and that as leaders, they can empathise with the other's position:

KHRUSHCHEV: Mr. President, you have every right, you have every right to be concerned about the peace and welfare of your people. I am no less concerned with mine. Let us join in a statesmanlike approach.

Khrushchev then outlines the conditions on which he will consider his objectives achieved, and which will allow Kennedy to likewise consider the US objectives to be achieved:

KHRUSHCHEV: This is what I propose: my government will not ship any more weapons to Cuba, and those that are there will either be withdrawn or destroyed. You will reciprocate by withdrawing your blockade and agreeing not to invade Cuba.

In making his offer, Khrushchev implies disingenuously that he is the peacemaker and shifts responsibility for what is to happen next to Kennedy:

KHRUSHCHEV: Mr. President, if you have not lost your self-control and understand what this might lead to, then we ought not to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war. Because the more we pull, the tighter the knot will become. And the moment may come when the knot is tied so tightly that even we may not have the strength to untie it. We will have to cut it, and thereby doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war. Let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie the knot.

Kennedy insists on the letter being analysed overnight so that a response can be despatched promptly the next day. But in the meantime, Khrushchev is confronted by his Presidium which insists upon a less conciliatory approach. The Presidium proposes a new letter be sent with a proposal that the US missiles in Turkey be removed as a trade-off for removing the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev is angered by the letter, perhaps because having been to the brink and seeing a viable exit from his flawed strategy, he resents the Presidium refusing to take the step back that he now proposes. Whatever the reasons for his anger, Khrushchev has lost control of the strategy he put in place, and now of the exit strategy.

The second letter embodies one of Kennedy's greatest fears—a trade-off for the missiles in Turkey which would look like weakness in the face of Soviet intimidation. Kennedy is angered and confused by the contradictory Soviet letters, and speculates on a coup in the Soviet leadership to explain it.

JFK: He's taken back half of what he offered yesterday and added the demand—the impossible demand—that we trade Turkey for Cuba. As though I can trade nations like chess men: Turkey for Cuba, British Guiana for Berlin! Why has Khrushchev repudiated his own offer? Who's running the show over there?

THOMPSON (former Ambassador to Soviet Union): There may be a split in the Presidium. They may feel that Khrushchev's been too reasonable and they're upping the ante.

JFK: It's blackmail—and it's damn effective blackmail. It saves Khrushchev's face and it wins for the Soviet Union the automatic support of all those who think that both sides are wrong and everyone should sacrifice something. That idea has all sorts of support, even among our friends...

Kennedy realises that support for his strategy would be undermined by a deal that would look like appeasement. Just when it seems there's a fatal flaw in Kennedy's strategy, and that Khrushchev may have lost control in Moscow, comes news that an unarmed US U-2 high-altitude surveillance aircraft has been shot down over Cuba by a Soviet-supplied surface-to-air missile (SAM) and the pilot killed. The pressure from within ExCom for Kennedy to retaliate militarily mounts. Kennedy angrily resists the pressure to abandon his strategy by reminding ExCom of the risks in an over-reaction:

JFK (anxiously): We're on very hazardous ground here! Now the conventional response—our planned response—would be to attack Cuba now. But if we do and the Russians respond by attacking Turkey, what's our next move? Do we launch our Jupiter missiles there? Do the Russians then respond by launching a missile barrage from Russia or from Cuba? Can I set this chain of events into motion without taking Turkey and NATO into my confidence? Don't they have a right to know what we're doing when our decisions have devastating implications? Am I going to launch an all-out nuclear war because one junior officer in Cuba pushed a button he shouldn't have pushed and killed one pilot?

Kennedy makes some smart tactical moves in response. He exercises his power as Commander-in-Chief to ensure it is understood in the chain of command that he alone has the authority to arm and release nuclear weapons. He directs his staff to get all the information they can about the missiles in Turkey and Italy should they come into play in negotiations. He instructs his Press Secretary, Pierre Salinger, to make it clear to the press that the US is close to invading Cuba. He directs the State Department to acknowledge the receipt of 'two inconsistent and conflicting proposals from Khrushchev' and reiterating 'our position in no uncertain terms.' Finally, he instructs Salinger to brief Scali and send him back to Fomin. Kennedy has held his nerve despite the provocation of the U-2 pilot's

death, and the pressure from the advocates for military action. He has intervened to make sure that events do not spiral out of control.

Scali meets Fomin to make the President's intentions clear, and to advise him of the dangerous confusion that the two letters from Khrushchev have created:

SCALI (*angrily*): This is a dirty, stinking, double-cross and one of the most colossal misjudgements in history. We're going to get those missiles out of Cuba. Your time has run out. You killed one of our men and we think your military has given your people in Cuba new instructions.

FOMIN (*calmly*): There is no double-cross. The idea of trading our base in Cuba for your base in Turkey is not unreasonable. Your own Walter Lippman made the proposal three days ago...

SCALI (*still angry*): I want to make this as clear as I can. I don't give a damn who mentioned what unofficially. You have to understand that the idea of trading bases is completely, totally, and perpetually unacceptable. It was unacceptable yesterday, it's unacceptable today, it will be unacceptable tomorrow, and eternally unacceptable.

Kennedy's tactical response to the second letter is effective. Khrushchev is moved to chastise the Presidium for insisting on the second letter when, as Fomin had advised, the first had all but achieved the resolution both sides now wanted, and events on the sea and in the air over Cuba had almost triggered war:

KHRUSHCHEV: In the time since we dispatched the second letter you so fervently desired, nuclear war has nearly been triggered twice. Once because we cannot control every action of our forces around the world, and once because Kennedy has the same limitation. And why did we take this risk? To force America to remove obsolete weapons under humiliating circumstances? Alexander Fomin has reported to me, personally, that Kennedy will never agree to those conditions. Do you want to further test Kennedy's nerve? Are you prepared for war? Are you prepared for total destruction? (*Hands outstretched to them, beseeching*) Give me an answer!

It is now apparent that Kennedy and Khrushchev have arrived at the same point in seeking a negotiated settlement to the crisis. It is in this moment of high anxiety over how to respond to Khrushchev's confusing communications that Robert Kennedy proposes to ignore the second letter from Khrushchev and accept the terms in the first letter: the removal of the offensive Soviet weapons in Cuba in exchange for an end to the blockade and a guarantee not to invade Cuba. The President

agrees, recognising the political damage from denying future support to exiled Cuban counter-revolutionaries wanting to overthrow the Castro regime. But Kennedy justifies it by saying:

JFK: I'm not just negotiating for the Cuban people. This involves the security of the United States and all of our allies. I'm trying to get out from under a war. Our power is not infinite. We have limits. Let's try it. Bobby, Ted, go write the letter.

The observation that power is not infinite and has limits is the key to understanding Kennedy's apotheosis in this movie. He has seen that the military response presented no guarantee of success and would result in consequences infinitely worse than negotiating a deal. The domestic political reality for Kennedy is that the trade-off in Turkey must be kept secret. Kennedy instructs his brother to deliver the US response directly to Dobrynin with the advice that if no satisfactory response is received then military action would begin in 36 hours. Robert returns from the meeting pessimistic, advising the President that Dobrynin was unsure, frightened, and said that Khrushchev was 'committed' to the Cuban people. 'Well', replied the President, 'it can go either way now.'

The following morning, Khrushchev is shown dictating a message to Kennedy that effectively ends the crisis:

KHRUSHCHEV: (*Defiantly*) Dear Mr. President...(*then conciliatory*) Dear Mr. President. I regard with great understanding your concern and the concern of the people of the United States that the weapons you described as offensive are formidable weapons indeed. Both you and we understand what kind of weapons these are. In order to eliminate as rapidly as possible the conflict which endangers the cause of peace, my government, in addition to earlier instructions, has issued a new order to dismantle the weapons which you described as offensive and to crate and return them to the Soviet Union. I regard with respect and trust the statement made in your message that there would be no attack, no invasion of Cuba. Then the motives which induced us to render assistance of such a kind to Cuba disappear. We are confident that all people will understand, Mr. President, we are not threatening. Our people have achieved tremendous success since the October Revolution and have created powerful material, spiritual and cultural values. We want to continue to achieve and to develop on the path of social progress and the road to peace.

The movie ends with a relieved Kennedy being congratulated by ExCom and others for his leadership in the crisis, and then delivering his June 1963 speech at the American University in which he offered a view of how threats to world peace might be resolved in the best interests of all nations:

JFK: Our problems are man made; therefore they can be solved by men. Across the gulfs and barriers that now divide us, we must remember that there are no permanent enemies. Let each nation choose its own future, so long as that choice does not

interfere with the choice of others. If we cannot end our differences, at least we can make the world safe for diversity. For in the final analysis, our most basic, common link is the fact that we all inhabit this planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children's future, and we are all mortal.

Historian Tony Judt, in analysing Kennedy's virtues as a decision maker during the crisis, remarked upon Kennedy's 'coolness', and his 'willingness and capacity to listen, question, absorb, weigh, and adjudicate in extraordinary circumstances. At each turn in the proceedings, Kennedy showed extraordinary moral courage in choosing the most moderate option available, often against the specialised advice pressing in upon him.'⁸ Kennedy's method bought time for US and Soviet diplomacy to prevail. American economist, Jeffrey Sachs, saw the virtue in Kennedy's leadership being the understanding that peace is best negotiated from each side's interests, not from fixed positions. That involves recognition that there is more to gain from equitable cooperation than zero-sum fights between competing ideologies, and the importance of presidential leadership in rethinking the assumptions of the past.⁹ In the American University speech, Kennedy also described his perspective on one of the most important functions of leadership: 'By defining our goal more clearly, by making it seem more manageable and less remote, we can help all people to see it, to draw hope from it, and to move irresistibly towards it.'¹⁰

One of the many virtues of *The Missiles of October* is its portrayal of these leadership attributes as well as the apotheosis of both leaders, Kennedy and Khrushchev. By the end of the movie, each had come to a realisation of something in themselves that abhorred war, and especially a nuclear war. Each had been pushed by the other to see the limits of their power and the responsible uses of it, and pulled back from the brink of irreversible and catastrophic military action.

⁸ Tony Judt, "The crisis: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Cuba," in *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century* (London: Vintage, 2009), 336-7.

⁹ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *To Move the World: JFK's Quest for Peace* (Westminster: Random House Publishing Group, 2013), 41-8.

¹⁰ Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, 1961-1963*, Vol III: 461.

Chapter 7: Corporate Leadership in the Political Domain and *The Post* (2018)

*The Post*¹ is the story of how a secret study of US decision-making in the conduct of the war in Vietnam came to be published in 1971 and the crisis it created for the newspapers that published it. Commissioned by US Secretary of Defence, Robert S. McNamara, in 1967 the study that became known as the Pentagon Papers² was intended by McNamara to provide an historical analysis of the political and military assumptions that led to an escalating US involvement in the Vietnam war. By 1967, McNamara had become sceptical of victory; of the ways in which information was being gathered, selected, and interpreted when making decisions; and, the displacement of US goals from protecting the government of South Vietnam from being overrun by communist North Vietnam to ensuring that US military power and prestige was protected from defeat.

The opening scenes of the movie show Daniel Ellsberg, a former Marine officer and now a State Department analyst deployed with US combat troops, observing and reporting on the progress of the war in the provinces of Vietnam. Ellsberg is subsequently shown on a plane returning from Vietnam to the US and invited to contribute in an exchange between McNamara and national security advisor, Robert Komer:

MCNAMARA: Dan, you know Mr. Komer. He's been discussing the war with the President and, well, his sense is that we've made real progress over the past year. But I've been doing my own review, and it seems to me that things have gotten worse. But neither of us have been in the field. You have, you're the one who knows. So, what do you say? Are things better or worse?

ELLSBERG: Well, Mr. Secretary, what I'm most impressed by is how much things are the same.

MCNAMARA: (to Komer) You see, that's exactly what I'm saying. We put another hundred thousand troops into the field, things are no better. To me, that means things are actually worse. Thank you, Dan.

But when the plane lands, and McNamara is offering the gathered reporters a different opinion:

MCNAMARA: Today, I can tell you that military progress over the past 12 months, has exceeded our expectations. We're very encouraged by what we're seeing in Vietnam. In every respect, we're making progress. And I'm especially pleased to

¹ Steven Spielberg, "The Post," (Entertainment One, 2018), Feature.

² The study's official title was *The History of U.S. Decision-Making in Vietnam, 1945–1968*

have had Bob Komer along for the trip. So he could see for himself that we've been showing great improvement...in every dimension of the war effort.

Ellsberg's dismay in overhearing McNamara's remarks to the press is apparent, and he is next seen as an employee of the influential think-tank, the RAND Corporation, stealing and copying the study that McNamara had commissioned. The conflict between secrecy and the truth is established.

Spielberg then introduces the two most important characters in the movie: Katharine Graham (played by Meryl Streep), the publisher of the newspaper *The Washington Post* (hereafter 'the *Post*' to differentiate the newspaper from the movie), and the executive editor, Ben Bradlee (played by Tom Hanks). Katharine Graham is in a meeting with the president of the board of the *Post*, Fritz Beebe. Beebe is coaching Graham through the questions likely to be asked by institutional investors as the *Post* seeks to make its first public stock issue. Graham is seeking, and receives, reassurance from Beebe that she is prepared for the task. Graham knows the gravity of the stock issue as she explains to her son who has been watching that 'It seems we are cash poor. You know, barely solvent.' He observes that such is the state of the newspaper business. Graham replies:

GRAHAM: That's *our* newspaper business! And we need the public offering to stay in business and to continue to grow. That's what Fritz says. And he also says that the family can maintain control if we...Anyway, I'm just not sure your grandfather would have wanted us to give up any control at all.

This brief exchange reveals much about Graham. The business is teetering and Graham has taken advice on the right course of action to sustain it. Graham is relying on that advice, apparently mechanistically as she learns answers to questions that may or may not be asked as if it is an exam, and on the support and advice of her board president, Beebe. Graham and Beebe clearly trust each other and Graham appears to rely heavily on Beebe's advice. The degree of Graham's diffidence and her reliance on Beebe is cruelly exposed in the meeting with the investors when the rehearsed questions are actually asked. Beebe waits for Graham to answer the questions, but she is seen frozen in the moment, unable to speak. Beebe answers the questions just as they have been rehearsed with Graham. It is not unnoticed. In Graham's office immediately after the meeting, a fictional executive character, Arthur Parsons, is used to highlight the concerns the business community has about Graham's relative inexperience in such a big decision as a public stock issue:

(We see Graham apart from the others, smiling wistfully at a photo of her late husband, Phil Graham, while the others talk)

PARSONS: Fritz, Kay throws a great party, but her father gave the paper to her husband. The only reason she's running things is because he...because Phil died. Don't get me wrong, I think she is a lovely woman. But she got rid of Al Friendly and brought in a pirate who does nothing but bleed our margins. I mean, you can't

be surprised that the buyers are concerned that she doesn't have the resolve to turn a serious profit. (*To Graham*) Kay, it's your decision, but in my opinion, if you want this to be more than a little family paper, it has to be more than a little family business.

GRAHAM: Thank you, Arthur, for your frankness.

The others depart except for Beebe and Graham. Their conversation reveals more of Graham's back story (alluded to by Parsons's reference to her husband's death) and her dependence on Beebe in this anxious situation of the stock issue. Graham is acutely aware of the consequences for her company if the stock issue is cancelled or fails to raise the capital expected. She understands that people are concerned about her capacity to manage through it:

GRAHAM: Accident. It wasn't an accident, Phil's suicide. I don't know why people insist on calling it an accident. Is it to make them feel better? Or do they think they're being kind?

BEEBE: I don't know, I don't know.

GRAHAM: So, do you think I should give up more seats on the board?

BEEBE: Of course not. We're going to be fine.

GRAHAM: Hmm. This passage in the prospectus, I read it earlier today. Oh, yes. "In the unlikely instance of disaster or catastrophic event in the week following the initial public offering, Lazard Frères and Company retains full right to cancel the issue."

BEEBE: It's boilerplate, Kay. It's standard contractual language.

GRAHAM: But, so, the bankers could pull out.

BEEBE: Only if there's a true disaster. Ben gets hit by a truck. The world runs outta newspaper ink. The truck goes around the block and hits Ben again. (*Both laugh*) You think one of those is possible?

GRAHAM: No, I don't, but, you know, the Nixon White House is nothing if not vindictive. Just this morning they barred us from covering Tricia Nixon's wedding.

BEEBE: Somehow, I doubt that will rise to the level of catastrophe.

GRAHAM: I know. Probably not. Although, when Ben sets his mind to plunder, it's not hard to imagine something more serious. Catastrophic events do occur, you know.

Graham then meets with Bradlee, revealed as an experienced, confident, executive editor with deep political connections in Washington, but one prone to risk-taking in aggressively pursuing news stories. Graham and Bradlee meet for breakfast in a restaurant—a regular meeting initiated by Bradlee. But the relationship is more edgy than Graham’s with Beebe. Bradlee acknowledges that Graham as the publisher of the *Post* is his boss, but has a low threshold for interference in his role as executive editor and how the paper reports the news. Three important things emerge from our first encounter with Graham and Bradlee together. First, Bradlee is less aware than might be expected of Graham’s schedule that day in relation to the stock issue, and careless of Graham’s anxiety in his remarks about it:

BRADLEE: Well, what’s with the suitcase?

GRAHAM: Ben, I told you, this is the day. We’re meeting with the bankers today.

BRADLEE: Oh, yes. Right, right.

GRAHAM: You know this.

BRADLEE: I bet you every dollar in my wallet that you are the only person in that boardroom who’s read through all that nonsense.

GRAHAM: I’m probably the only one who needs to.

Second, that Bradlee is laser-like in his focus on the reporting of news in Washington. He tells Graham that he has not seen reporting of late from Neil Sheehan, the star reporter on the Vietnam War with *The New York Times* (hereafter ‘the *Times*’). Bradlee foreshadows that something big must be coming from him, and that being beaten to a story worries him. Third, Bradlee reveals his combative instincts when Graham reveals that she had a call from President Nixon’s Chief of Staff, Bob Haldeman, advising her that a particular reporter from *The Washington Post* had been banned from covering the White House wedding of the President’s daughter. Graham puts to Bradlee that the reporter’s coverage of the President’s family has been sharp, and asks if they should not send another reporter to cover the story:

GRAHAM: You know, I just think there might be another way...that we could cool it with the White House. Maybe we could just send somebody else, you know...

BRADLEE: Nope, nope. Nope. I’m not gonna send another reporter.

GRAHAM: Because it’s not hard news, Ben. It’s just a wedding.

BRADLEE: It’s not just a wedding. It’s a wedding of the daughter of the President of the United States.

GRAHAM: Why not let that girl have her day?

BRADLEE: And we can’t have an administration dictating to us our coverage just because they don’t like what we print about them in our newspaper.

Despite the edginess of their meeting, they share a joke and laugh together. It's an important exchange because it crystalises three factors that will be crucial in the crisis that will develop around them: the enmity of the Nixon White House towards the *Post*; Bradlee's perspective on the independence of news reporting; and Graham's engagement with the editorial function of her paper.

The crisis begins to unfold in a particularly low-key way at a dinner party in Graham's house when McNamara takes Graham aside and advises her as a friend that there will be a story in *The New York Times* the next day that will not be flattering. Graham, alert to Bradlee's worry about Neil Sheehan's absence of late from the *Times*, calls Bradlee to relay the conversation with McNamara. The story published the next day in the *Times* is Sheehan's first instalment of the Pentagon Papers from Ellsberg. Bradlee recognises how big a story this will be and is distraught at having to follow the *Times* and report its coverage. This is the beginning of the crisis for Bradlee: the leak of the Pentagon Papers challenges his ego and his drive to be first to the big stories. When one of Bradlee's staff tries to reassure him, Bradlee explains the magnitude of what the *Post* is now up against in being relevant in reporting on Washington news in the shadow of the *Times* story:

REPORTER: Ben, come on, it's one story.

BRADLEE: No, it's 7 000 pages detailing how the White House has been lying about the Vietnam War for 30 years. It's Truman and Eisenhower and Jack [Kennedy] and LBJ lying. Lying about Vietnam. And you think that's one story? Let's do our jobs. Find those pages!

The Nixon White House reacts too. Viewers never see anybody from the White House through the course of the movie: Nixon and White House staff are always presented only as voices talking on telephones as if they have been recorded. That is significant because the movie characterises the Nixon White House and administration as secretive and sinister. On the day the *Times* story is published, Nixon is heard in voiceover talking with the Deputy National Security Advisor, General Alexander Haig, about the day's events in Vietnam when Nixon asks if anything else of interest has happened:

HAIG: Yes, sir. Very significant. This goddamn *New York Times* exposé of the most highly classified documents of the war.

NIXON: You mean that was leaked out of the Pentagon?

HAIG: The whole study that was done for McNamara. This is a devastating, uh, security breach of the greatest magnitude of anything I've ever seen.

NIXON: Well, what's being done about it then? Did we know this was coming out?

HAIG: No, we did not, sir.

(*Another voice interrupts*) I have Doctor Kissinger.

NIXON: Henry, the thing to me is just unconscionable. This is treasonable action on the part of the bastards that put it out.

KISSINGER: I'm absolutely certain that this violates all sorts of security laws.

NIXON: People have gotta be put to the torch for this sort of thing.

At home, Katharine Graham and her daughter, Lally, are reading the *Times* story. Graham says it is hard to read but Lally retorts 'harder for you I imagine.' Graham, taken aback listens to her daughter reveal how close Graham and her late husband were to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, including Graham's visit to the Johnson ranch in Texas after her husband's death, flying on the President's plane Air Force One, boating, swimming, and enjoying their companionship. Graham abashed says 'It's hard to say "no" to the President of the United States.'

Bradlee arrives and interrupts their conversation and asks Graham if she has seen the *Times* story and then makes a bold request of Graham:

GRAHAM: Hmm. The study, the one they are working off of that was commissioned by Robert McNamara.

BRADLEE: Yeah. And if he commissioned it, he might have a copy. I don't need to tell you that finding a source is like finding a needle in a haystack...I need a copy of that study, Kay.

The conversation that follows Bradlee's request is again edgy as they probe each other's vulnerabilities and biases. Graham is staunch in not wanting to expose a friend; Bradlee is persistent in suggesting McNamara is using Graham because she owns the *Post*.

GRAHAM: That's not true. No, that is not why.

BRADLEE: Because he wants you to bail him out. Because he wants you on his side.

GRAHAM: No, there's no ulterior... No! Ben, that's not my role. You know that. I wouldn't presume to tell you how to write about him. Just as I wouldn't take it upon myself to tell him he should hand over a classified study which would be a crime, by the way, just so he can serve as your source.

BRADLEE: Our source, Katharine.

GRAHAM: No. Uh, no. I'm not. I'm not going to ask Bob for the study.

BRADLEE: All right. I get it. You have a relationship with Bob McNamara. But don't you think you have an obligation as well to the paper and to the public?

GRAHAM: Let me ask you something. Was that how you felt when you were palling around with Jack Kennedy? Where was your sense of duty then? I don't recall you pushing him particularly hard on anything.

BRADLEE: I pushed Jack when I had to. I never pulled any punches.

GRAHAM: Is that right? 'Cause you used to dine at the White House once a week. All the trips to Camp David. Oh, and that drunken birthday cruise on the *Sequoia* you told me about. Hard to believe you would have gotten all those invitations if you didn't pull a few punches.

Each has a vulnerability in their close relationships with former Democratic Party presidents. That does not help their relationship with the current incumbent Nixon—a Republican. Bradlee's determination to pursue the story offends Graham's commitment to her friendship with McNamara. Her thinking begins to change as the articles by Sheehan in the *Times* reveal the gap between what the public has been told by their governments about US strategy and operations in the Vietnam war, and the reality of covert operations and untruthful reporting of progress. Protestors in the street are expressing their anger at the deception, and reporters in the *Post* newsroom debating the *Times* stories and expressing their dismay at how they have been duped.

Meanwhile, one of Bradlee's team, the reporter Ben Bagdikian, tells Bradlee that he may have a lead on the source of the leaked Pentagon papers: someone Bagdikian met at RAND Corporation which held two copies of the McNamara study for safekeeping. Bagdikian phones a contact at RAND, and aware of the likelihood of phones being bugged, Bagdikian puts to his contact:

BAGDIKIAN: Look, in my experience guys who want stuff like this out there and have the guts to do it, they're a particular type. They've got conscience and conviction but they've also got ego. Now, there's a guy that we both know, okay? He was there the same time as I was. He left right after. You know who I'm talking about, right? Isn't he the first guy you thought of when you saw the article in the *Times*?

Bagdikian is talking of Ellsberg.

Nixon then intervenes to unwittingly change the game for the *Post*. Nixon in voiceover is heard with an advisor and describing Sheehan as 'a bastard for years,' and saying about the *Times* 'Hell, my view is to prosecute the goddamn pricks that gave it [the leaked Pentagon Papers] to 'em...I mean could the *Times* be prosecuted? Hell they're our enemies. I think we just oughta do it.' Nixon's wish is implemented when during a dinner with Graham, Abe Rosenthal [the Managing Editor of the *Times*] and his wife are interrupted by a *Times* staffer and told that Nixon's Attorney General is seeking an

injunction to stop the *Times* from publishing stories using the Pentagon Papers. Graham calls Bradlee to tell him the news:

BRADLEE: No, shit! This means that we're in the goddamn ballgame. Because if the *Times* gets shut down...

GRAHAM: If they get shut down, there is no ballgame. Ballgame's over.

BRADLEE: Now, Katharine, anybody would kill to have a crack at this.

GRAHAM: Well, sure, but not if it means breaking the law. If a federal judge stops the *Times* from publishing, well, I don't see how we could publish even if we could get hold of a copy. Ben? You have something?

BRADLEE: No.

GRAHAM: Okay, so then there's nothing to talk about really.

BRADLEE: No, nothing to talk about at all but thank you for the tip, Mrs. Graham.

Bradlee has not been honest with Graham. Bradlee could have told Graham that he may have a source for the Papers, but given Graham's deference to any court orders that might be applied to the *Times* decides not to tell her. Graham may still be thinking of the public stock issue which had just been completed that day but was still vulnerable.

The action then moves to the *Post* editorial office where the staff are toasting the success of the stock issue. Their attention is drawn to the TV news that the White House is taking the *Times* to court to prevent further publication:

CRONKITE: Good evening. *The New York Times* late today was barred, at least until Saturday, from publishing any more classified documents dealing with the cause and conduct of the Vietnam War. The Times, true to its word, said it would abide by the decision of Federal Judge Murray Gurfein but will resist a permanent injunction at a hearing Friday. The Nixon administration have [sic] charged that the final two parts of the *Times*'s series would result in irreparable injury to the national defence.

GREENFIELD (reporter): Hell, why bother fighting the communists?

SIMONS (editor): Think Jefferson just rolled over in his grave.

GEYELIN (editor): Have the courts ever stopped a paper from publishing before?

BEEBE: Not in the history of the republic.

PARSONS: Good thing we're not part of this mess.

BRADLEE: I'd give my left one to be in this mess. There's our front page lead tomorrow.

Graham, hand to her mouth, is looking anxiously at the TV, perhaps realising that events are now moving fast and she is on the cusp of crisis. Bagdikian finds Ellsberg in a motel room in Boston, piles of the Pentagon Papers laid out on every surface in the room. Ellsberg explains his motivation to Bagdikian and his awareness of the risks for him, and now, for Bagdikian:

ELLSBERG: The study had 47 volumes. I slipped out a couple at a time. Took me months to copy it all.

BAGDIKIAN (*seeing the piles*): What the hell?

ELLSBERG: Well, we were all former government guys. Top clearance, all of that. McNamara wanted academics to have the chance to examine what had happened. He would say to us, "Let the chips fall where they may".

BAGDIKIAN: Brave man.

ELLSBERG: Well, I think guilt was a bigger motivator than courage. McNamara didn't lie as well as the rest but I don't think he saw what was coming, what we'd find. But it didn't take him long to figure out, well for us all to figure out, if the public ever saw these papers they would turn against the war. Covert ops, guaranteed debt, rigged elections. It's all in there. Ike, Kennedy, Johnson. They violated the Geneva Convention. They lied to Congress and they lied to the public. They knew we couldn't win and still sent boys to die.

BAGDIKIAN: What about Nixon?

ELLSBERG: He's just carrying on like all the others. Too afraid to be the one who loses the war on his watch. Someone said this at some point about why we stayed when we knew we were losing. 10% was to help the South Vietnamese. 20% was to hold back the commies. 70% was to avoid the humiliation of an American defeat. 70% of those boys just to avoid being humiliated? That stuck with me.

BAGDIKIAN: They're gonna come after you, you know. And I gotta be honest the breadcrumbs weren't too hard to follow.

ELLSBERG: I know.

BAGDIKIAN: They're gonna lock you up, Dan.

ELLSBERG: Wouldn't you go to prison to stop this war?

BAGDIKIAN: Theoretically, sure.

ELLSBERG: You are gonna publish these documents?

BAGDIKIAN: Yeah.

ELLSBERG: Even with the injunction?

BAGDIKIAN: Yes.

ELLSBERG: Well, then it's not so theoretical then, is it?

The most important elements of the crisis are now in place: a contest of what is—and what is in—the public interest during a time of war; Graham, a diffident publisher; Bradlee, a gung-ho executive editor; a risk averse board; a financially vulnerable newspaper; a whistleblower and reporters prepared to go to gaol for their stories; an agitated and angry public; and an enormously powerful and vindictive government determined to stop the publishing of the stolen papers.

Bradlee realises he has to tell Graham that the *Post* has a source for the Papers and to convince her to allow the *Post* to take up where the *Times* left and publish them. He crashes Graham's birthday party to tell her. Graham is concerned because publishing despite an injunction preventing a rival doing what Bradlee wants to do may threaten the stock issue. Bradlee is dismissive of that: 'Yeah, I know that the bankers can change their mind. And I know what is at stake', but he homes in on their last conversation, reflecting on the easy days of publishers and editors having access to politicians:

BRADLEE: You know, the only couple I knew that both Kennedy and LBJ wanted to socialise with was you and your husband and you owned the damn paper. Of course that's the way things worked. Politicians and the press, they trusted each other so they could go to the same dinner party and drink cocktails and tell jokes while there was a war waging in Vietnam.

GRAHAM: Ben, I don't know what we're talking about. I'm not protecting Lyndon.

BRADLEE: No, you got his former Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara, the man who commissioned this study. He's one of about a dozen party guests out on your patio.

GRAHAM: I'm not protecting him. I'm not protecting any of them. I'm protecting the paper.

Bradlee is still prickly over the suggestion that he compromised his journalistic integrity to keep company with Kennedy as a friend rather than as a source. He has reached a kind of epiphany as he reflects on what that friendship meant, and its implications having now read the scale of deception documented in the Pentagon Papers:

BRADLEE: And that was my mistake. And it was something that Jack knew all along. We can't be both. We have to choose. And that's the point. The days of us

all smoking cigars together down on Pennsylvania Avenue are over. Your friend McNamara's study proves that. The way they lied. The way they lied. Those days have to be over. We have to be the check on their power. If we don't hold them accountable, I mean, my God, who will?

Graham reminds Bradlee she has 'no problem holding Lyndon or Jack or Bob or any of them accountable. But we can't hold them accountable if we don't have a newspaper.' Having resolved his own moral conflict, Bradlee now puts the moral choice Graham will have to make: 'When I get my hands on that study, what are you going to do, Mrs. Graham?'

The egotistical pursuit of the story has transformed into something more outwardly purposeful. Bradlee arranges for his editorial and reporting team to work out of his home in a massive effort to draw the threads of the disorganised piles of Ellsberg's material together to write important stories for the newspaper. He energises his frantic editorial team by telling them:

BRADLEE: For the last six years we've been playin' catch-up and now thanks to the President of the United States who, by the way, is taking a shit all over the First Amendment we have the goods.³ And we don't have any competition. There's dozens of stories in here. The Times has barely scratched the surface. We have ten hours 'til the [printing] deadline so we dig in.

As they work, the reporters are angry about what they are learning about the conduct of the Vietnam War. Bradlee, meanwhile, is confronted by the *Post*'s lawyers who are coming to grips with the legal issues for the *Post* in deciding whether to publish or not, and the risks of choosing to publish:

ANTHONY (a lawyer): Okay. Ben, look, we know your reporters are talented. But *The New York Times* spent three months going over these documents. You've got, what, seven hours now until the paper goes to press? Can you honestly tell me that that is enough time to make sure not a single military plan, not a single US soldier, not a single American life will be put in harm's way? That this will do no damage to the United States if you publish?

BRADLEE: Yes.

CLARK: You're sure about that?

BRADLEE: No! That's why I've called you guys.

³ The First Amendment states that: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. See "Constitution Annotated: Analysis and Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States, First Amendment," Cong. Rsch. Serv., accessed 9 January 2024, <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>.

Graham visits her friend McNamara, who commissioned the study, to find out his thinking and how he squared what was done with the public interest. She is testing her own assumptions as well as she decides how to answer Bradlee's question about what she will decide—whether to publish or not:

MCNAMARA: I guess you've read everything now.

GRAHAM: Yes, I have. I have, yes. And I went over it again this morning. All of it. And I just...Forgive me, Bob, I know you're dealing with so much but it's just so hard to try to make sense of why. Of how you could have done all these things. How you could just lie to us all.

MCNAMARA: Well, it's easy for the papers to characterise us as liars. We were just trying to push back...

GRAHAM: No, but you let it go on and on and on. My son is home now and safe, thank God. But you watched him go. You knew we couldn't win over there for years and years and years, and yet you let me—you let so many of our friends send our boys off.

MCNAMARA: Kay, we were doing the best we could. It was domino theory, containment, and eventually we felt that military pressure was the only thing that was gonna drive Ho Chi Minh to the table. Our decision-making process was...

GRAHAM (*interrupting*): Flawed. It was flawed. That's what your study said.

MCNAMARA: Yes.

Graham has made a personal connection through her son's service in Vietnam to the issue that so many others will be confronting about the war and its costs to them. She is beginning to see the consequences of the betrayal of public trust that has so animated Bradlee. Having discovered the truth that was denied the American people at the time, is it ethical to deny them the truth again? In asking Graham to delay publishing the study, McNamara explains that 'the study was for posterity':

MCNAMARA: It was written for academics in the future and right now we're still in the middle of the war. The papers can't be objective. And I suppose the public has a right to know but I would prefer that the study not be made widely available until it can be read with some perspective. You understand.

GRAHAM: Mmm. We've been through a lot, haven't we? You and Marg were there for me at the lowest point of my life. You helped me, you selected my entire board you're my most trusted advisor, my dear friend. But my feelings about that and about you can't be part of this decision to publish or not. I'm here asking your advice, Bob not your permission.

McNamara then warns Graham of what she will be up against if she decides to publish in spite of Nixon's determination to stop it:

MCNAMARA: Well, then as one of your most trusted advisors and someone who knows how much you care about this company I'm worried, Kay. I worked in Washington for ten years, I've seen these people up close. Bobby and Lyndon, they were tough customers, but Nixon is different. He's got some real bad people around him. And if you publish he'll get the very worst of them. The Colsons and the Ehrlichmans, and he'll crush you.

GRAHAM: I know he's just awful, but I...

MCNAMARA (*aggressively*): Nixon's a son of a bitch! He hates you. He hates Ben. He's wanted to ruin the paper for years and you will not get a second chance, Kay. The Richard Nixon I know will muster the full power of the presidency and if there's a way to destroy your paper, by God, he'll find it.

But Graham's thinking has shifted. Instead of thinking about the risks to her company if she does agree to publish, she is thinking about the function of the paper to serve the public interest. She has skilfully distanced the past between herself and McNamara, and steeled her resolve to make a decision. Bradlee meanwhile is in combat with the lawyers when Fritz Beebe (President of the Board) walks in to offer his perspective:

BEEBE: This is about the future of the company and ensuring there is one.

BRADLEE: That's a little melodramatic, don't you think?

BEEBE: Melodramatic? You're talking about exposing years of government secrets. I can't imagine they're gonna take that lightly. You could jeopardise the public offering. You could jeopardise our television stations. You know a felon can't hold a broadcast license.

BRADLEE: You think I give two shits about the television stations?

BEEBE: You should. They make a hell of a lot more money than you do and without that revenue we'll be forced to sell. If the government wins and we're convicted *The Washington Post* as we know it will cease to exist.

BRADLEE: If we live in a world where the government can tell us what we can and cannot print then *The Washington Post* as we know it has already ceased to exist.

Bradlee has reminded them all about the purpose of a newspaper like the *Post*, and the full meaning of the First Amendment of the US Constitution guaranteeing freedom of the press. As the argument between the editors and the lawyers continues, Fritz calls Graham to bring to a head the conflict between

himself and Bradlee. Graham is called away from a party she is hosting at her home for the retirement of Harry Gladstein, the business manager at the *Post*, to take the call. The moment of Graham's crisis has arrived. It becomes a multiple-party conversation as others join in:

BEEBE: Hello, Kay. Would you like me to catch you up?

BRADLEE (*on another line*): I say we can, he says we can't. There, you're caught up.

PARSONS (*who is at the party in Graham's house*): Ben...hello, it's Art. Well, Ben, there are concerns here that are frankly above your pay grade.

BRADLEE: Well, there's a few above yours, Art, like fucking freedom of the press.

GRAHAM: Let's just be civil if we can.

BRADLEE: Do you think Nixon is going to be civil? He is trying to censor the goddamn *New York Times*.

IGNATIUS (Board Member): Yes, the *Times*, not the *Post*.

BRADLEE: It's the same damn thing. This is an historic fight. If they lose, we lose.

GEYELIN (*journalist and editor*): Hello? This is Phil.

GRAHAM: Is that Phil Geyelin?

GEYELIN: Uh, yes, Mrs. Graham.

GRAHAM: Good. I'd like you to weigh in if you would because I wanna know what the staff is feeling about this.

GEYELIN: Uh, well, frankly, Mrs. Graham, Ben Bagdikian and Chal Roberts have, uh, both threatened to resign...if we don't publish, that is.

PARSONS: Come on, Kay, what do you expect? They got nothing to lose.

BRADLEE: Due respect, we all have everything to lose if we don't publish. What will happen to the reputation of this paper? Everyone will find out we had the study. Hell, I bet half the town knows already. What will it look like if we sit on our asses?

PARSONS: It'll look like we were prudent.

BRADLEE: It will look like we were afraid! We will lose! The country will lose! Nixon wins! Nixon wins this one, and the next one and all the ones after that, because we were scared. Because the only way to assert the right to publish is to publish.

GRAHAM (*breathing deeply*): Fritz. Is Fritz there? Fritz, are you on?

BEEBE: I'm here, Kay.

GRAHAM: What do you think? What...what do you think I should do?

BEEBE: I think there are arguments on both sides.

GRAHAM: Yeah.

BEEBE: But I guess I wouldn't publish.

GRAHAM (*after a long pause, clearly anguished, and then*): Let's go. Let's do it. Let's go. Let's go, let's go. Let's publish (*and immediately hangs up*).

GEYELIN: What?

BAGDIKIAN: Phil? What'd she say?

BRADLEE: We go. She says, we publish.

MEG GREENFIELD (Reporter): Holy shit! Holy Shit!

The courage of Graham's decision is recognised by Bradlee's wife, Sally, who explains the different consequences for Graham and Bradlee:

SALLY: You're very brave. But Kay...Kay is in a position she never thought she'd be in. A position I'm sure plenty of people don't think she should have. And when you're told time and time again that you're not good enough. That your opinion doesn't matter as much. When they don't just look past you. When, to them, you're not even there. When that's been your reality for so long it's hard not to let yourself think it's true. So, to make this decision to risk her fortune and the company that's been her entire life...well, I think that's brave.

Graham is next seen talking to her daughter about the circumstances that have led her to this unexpected position, and the personal burden she carries in protecting the family legacy:

GRAHAM: I was never supposed to be in this job. When my father chose your dad [Phil] to run the company, I thought it was the most natural thing in the world. I was so proud, because you know Phil was so brilliant. And he was so gifted. But I thought that was the way it was supposed to be. Everybody thought that way then. And I was raising you kids and I was happy in my life. The way it was. But then when it all fell apart, you know...when Phil died, it was just...I was 45 years old and I had never held...I'd never had to hold a job in my life. But I just, I loved the paper, you know, I do. I do so love the paper. I don't want it to be my fault. I don't want to be the one who...I don't wanna let Phil and my father and all of you kids and everybody down.

When Bradlee finds out that it may be illegal to use the same source as the *Times*, he recognises the perils of Graham's position. Recalling Sally's comments, he rushes to Graham's home to brief her:

BRADLEE: There's been a bit of a complication. I didn't understand at first, but now everything is in a different light. Our source might be the same as *The New York Times*. If so, we could be held in contempt.

GRAHAM: Meaning?

BRADLEE: Well, we could all go to prison. Now putting that aside Katharine, I've come to realise just how much you have at stake.

They call Fritz Beebe and Paul Clark, a senior lawyer, to join them to discuss the changed situation:

CLARK: Mr. Bradlee, if you knew Mr. Bagdikian received the study from the same source as the *Times*...

BRADLEE: I didn't know because I'm not in the habit of asking my reporters who their sources are and if you'd spent any time at a real goddamn newspaper you'd know why.

BEEBE: You understand he's trying to help you, Ben?

CLARK: Mrs. Graham, hi. We can all...We can all appreciate why Ben wants to publish and if these papers had come from someone else we might have been able to skirt the issue.

PARSONS: I disagreed with you earlier, but I thought it brave. But this? If we were to publish knowing this, it would just be irresponsible.

IGNATIUS: Fritz, do you agree?

BEEBE: Well, I don't particularly like the idea of Kay as a convicted felon. And then there's the issue of the prospectus. Based on the conversations I've had with my friends at Cravath [a legal firm], I believe a criminal indictment would qualify as a catastrophic event. And given the likelihood of indictment now, Kay, it could...

GRAHAM: Yes, I understand. We have a responsibility to the company to all the employees and to the long-term health of the paper.

PARSONS: Absolutely, Kay.

Graham then reveals the transformation in her position, and how far she has shifted in thinking about the purpose of the company she owns:

GRAHAM: Yes. However, um...the prospectus also talks about the mission of the paper, which is "outstanding news collection and reporting," isn't that right?

BEEBE: Yes.

GRAHAM: And...and it also says that the newspaper will “be dedicated to the welfare of the nation and to the, uh, principles of a free press...”

BEEBE: Yes, but...

GRAHAM: So, one could argue that the bankers were put on notice.

IGNATIUS: But Kay, these are extraordinary circumstances.

GRAHAM: Are they? Are they? For a newspaper? One that covers the Nixon White House. *(To Bradlee)* Can you guarantee me that we could go to print without endangering any of our soldiers?

PARSONS: You can't be considering...

GRAHAM *(sternly)*: I'm talking to Mr. Bradlee now.

PARSONS: Fritz, you're not gonna let her do this. She can't go to...

BEEBE: No, now, she can, Arthur. And it's entirely her decision.

PARSONS: Kay, you're allowing Mr. Bradlee to lead you to folly. The legacy of the company is at stake and if you want to protect that legacy...

GRAHAM: This company's been in my life for longer than most of the people working there have been alive. So, I don't need the lecture on legacy. And this is no longer my father's company. It's no longer my husband's company. It's my company. And anyone who thinks otherwise probably doesn't belong on my board. *(To Bradlee)* Can you guarantee me that we can go to...

BRADLEE: 100%!

GRAHAM: All right, then. My decision stands...and...I'm going to bed.

BRADLEE: *(calls the print room chief who has been waiting for the order to print as the deadline nears)* It's Ben Bradlee. Run it.

The action shifts to frenetic scenes of the paper being printed, the delivery trucks heading out, bundles delivered to eager retailers. The scale of the operation is massive. Bradlee receives a call from the Attorney General who advises him that publication may be a breach of national security and cause harm to the United States, and requests that publication be stopped. Bradlee politely declines. The scene shifts to a courtroom in which the *Post* lawyers are making argument with government lawyers to continue publishing. Bradlee is watching Walter Cronkite interviewing Ellsberg and asking what he considers the most important revelations of the Pentagon papers are:

ELLSBERG: I think the lesson is the people of this country can't afford to let the President run the country by himself. Even foreign affairs any more than domestic affairs, without the help of Congress. I was struck, in fact, by President Johnson's reaction to these revelations as close to treason. Because it reflected to me the sense that what was damaging to the reputation of a particular administration, a particular individual, was in itself treason. Which is very close to saying, "I am the State". But this is a self-governing country.

At that moment, Bagdikian walks in with a satisfied smile and a paper sac under his arm. Bradlee asks him 'What are you so happy about?' Bagdikian replies 'I always wanted to be part of a small rebellion,' as he unpacks the sac which is full of newspapers from around the nation that have followed the lead of the *Post* and published. Bradlee, delighted, collects the newspapers and goes to Graham's office where he begins dropping each of the papers onto Graham's table. He says to Graham 'They all followed your lead and published the papers.' Graham smiles and says defiantly, 'At least we're not alone.' Bradlee says 'No matter what happens tomorrow, we are not a little local paper anymore.' They stand together, mirroring each other's pose, arms folded, looking with satisfaction at the national coverage before them.

In the Supreme Court, the decision to allow publishing is 6-3 in favour of the *Post*. Meg Greenfield is listening to a reporter on the phone dictating to her the reasons for the Court's judgement:

GREENFIELD: Listen up, everybody. Listen up. Justice Black's opinion. Okay. "The founding fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors".

Graham is in the print room when Bradlee joins her. She says:

GRAHAM: You know what my husband said about the news? He called it the first rough draft of history. That's good, isn't it? Oh, well, we don't always get it right, you know? We're not always perfect, but I think if we just keep on it, you know? That's the job, isn't it?

BRADLEE: Yes, it is.

Graham advises that the Nixon White House is still threatening legal action against the *Post*. Bradlee is unmoved, so she asks 'Are you not worried?' Bradlee says 'Nope. No Katharine, that's your job.' Nixon in voiceover is talking to an aide in the White House. He sounds drunk:

NIXON: I want it clearly understood that from now on, ever, no reporter from *The Washington Post* is ever to be in the White House. Is that clear?

AIDE: Absolutely.

NIXON: Never. Never in the White House. No church service. Nothing that Mrs. Nixon does. You tell Connie, “Don’t tell Mrs. Nixon,” ‘cause she’ll approve it. No reporter from *The Washington Post* is ever to be in the White House again. And no photographer either. No photographer, is that clear? None ever to be in. Now that is a total order. And if necessary, I’ll fire you. You understand?

AIDE: I do understand.

NIXON: Okay. All right. Good.

In her memoirs, Graham wonders why Nixon and his administration ‘were so upset by the publications of these [Pentagon] Papers, which were essentially a history of decisions made before they were in power. Nothing in them was a reflection on Nixon. I believe the administration’s reaction was an example of its extreme paranoia about national security and secrecy in general.’⁴ In rejecting Nixon’s secretive and vindictive way of working, Graham and the *Post* editorial staff ‘believed from the start that the material in the Pentagon Papers was just the kind of information the public needed in order to form its opinions and make its choices more wisely.’ Graham writes that publishing the Pentagon Papers was not ‘a breach of the national security as the administration claimed, but, rather, a contribution to the national interest—indeed, as the obligation of a responsible newspaper.’⁵ This reflection by Graham expresses her transformation as portrayed in the movie: the growth in her sense of purpose in standing up for one of the principal institutions in defending the public interest—a free press. She relied on one of the other bulwarks of the public interest—the law—to interpret the First Amendment in the same terms—in the terms quoted by Greenfield of Justice Black’s judgement, that the press is to serve the governed, not the governors. In spite of the sinister potential of Nixon as McNamara describes it, the President was constrained from imposing the power of the presidency on the *Post*’s decision to publish for the public interest. The judiciary, acting in its function as a separate and independent branch of government, supported the lawful and proper functioning of the press as another institutional protection of the public’s interest.

All through the Pentagon Papers imbroglio, Graham’s greatest concern was sustaining freedom of the press against ‘the Nixon administration’s imperious attitude that the authority to determine what the American people should know rests exclusively with the government’ and the truth of Bradlee’s view that if the press was the target then ‘the victim is the public.’⁶ Ultimately, Graham writes, Nixon’s administration lost in a head-to-head contest of the public interest because the ‘credibility of the press stood the test of time against the credibility of those who spent so much time self-righteously denying

⁴ Katharine Graham, *Personal History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 494.

⁵ Graham, *Personal History*, 495.

⁶ Graham, *Personal History*, 495-6.

their wrongdoing and assaulting us by assailing our performance and our motives.’⁷ The leadership of the *Post* ensured that the issues of public interest were properly represented, and scrutinised in public view from the perspectives of a diversity of interests.

In writing about Katharine Graham and her decision to publish the Pentagon Papers, Bradlee wrote that in those critical early moments, ‘it was enough for all of us—including let it be said quickly, the lawyers who had been arguing against publication—that Katharine had shown the guts and commitment to the First Amendment, and support of her editors.’ Bradlee reflects on what he learned about courage from Graham:

I think none of us truly understood the importance of her decision to publish the Pentagon Papers in the creation of a new *Washington Post*. I know I didn’t. I wanted to publish because we had vital documents explaining the biggest story of the last ten years. That’s what newspapers do: they learn, they report, they verify, they write, and they publish.⁸

What emerged in Graham’s leadership apotheosis was that in spending so much time worrying about the stock issue, she was distracted from where her leadership would truly make a difference. Graham did not need to be across every detail of financing the stock issue: Beebe, in whom she trusted so implicitly, was clearly across that material and could advocate more effectively than Graham to see it happen. Graham revealed in her discussion with her daughter what really mattered to her and her leadership: ‘I love the paper.’ The decision to publish or not was entirely hers to make. Her life experience had prepared her for making those most critical leadership decisions—by asking what is our purpose? What is the paper here to do, for whom, and why? In her memoir, Graham noted advice given to her by a former publisher of *The Washington Post*, John Sweetman, when she asked him what quality was most important in a person running a newspaper: ‘good judgement: don’t worry about your experience.’⁹ Graham drew strength from the people closest to her, each with a different perspective on the business: Beebe for the corporate business insight and risk; Bradlee for inspiration and drive in the editorial risk; and from her daughter and the memory of her late-husband, Phil, and his attitudes to the role of a newspaper in a democracy.

The movie closes with a report of a burglary in progress at the Watergate which will provide the leadership of the *Post* with its next and more threatening crisis as portrayed in director Alan Pakula’s 1976 movie, *All The President’s Men*.¹⁰ Graham gave greater emphasis in her autobiography to her newspaper’s peril in reporting on the Watergate crisis than to publishing the Pentagon Papers, writing that it was ‘a pervasive, indiscriminate use of power and authority from an administration with a passion

⁷ Graham, *Personal History*, 550.

⁸ Ben Bradlee, *A Good Life: Newspapering and Other Adventures* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 307.

⁹ Graham, *Personal History*, 421.

¹⁰ Alan J. Pakula, "All the President's Men," (Warner Bros, 1976), Feature.

for secrecy and deception and an astonishing lack of regard for the normal constraints of democratic politics.’ Graham described the mindset and behaviours that characterised the Watergate scandal as ‘a conspiracy not of greed but of arrogance and fear by men who came to equate their own political well-being with the nation’s very survival and security.’¹¹ In a piece she wrote about the consequences of lying in politics on the trust that citizens ought to have in their government, Hannah Arendt observed that:

What has often been suggested has now been established: so long as the press is free and not corrupt, it has an enormously important function to fulfil and can rightly be called the fourth branch of government. Whether the first amendment will suffice to protect this most essential political freedom, the right to unmanipulated factual information without which all freedom of opinion becomes a cruel hoax, is another question.¹²

In perhaps her most important reflection on the function of her leadership during the compounding crises of the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, Graham wrote of the transformation of the *Post* because of the tests those crises imposed on the whole organisation, and showing ‘what could be done by reporters arduously and painstakingly pursuing investigative work, by editors remaining sceptical and demanding and as dispassionate as possible under the circumstances, and by editorial writers helping to keep the questions foremost in the minds of our readers.’¹³ More important in terms of its effect, Watergate catapulted the *Post* to true national and international prominence. Because of the leadership from Graham and Bradlee particularly, the *Post* had found a new belief in its purpose in facing crisis, it found a new strength in its people, and had adapted to new circumstances that made it better able to endure an even greater crisis to come.

Graham’s observation on moral courage in leadership reflects the argument made in this dissertation that moral courage must involve an awareness of risk and of the necessity to make choices:

I have often been credited with courage for backing our efforts in Watergate. The truth is that I never felt there was much choice. Courage applies when one has a choice...By the time the story had grown to the point where the size of it dawned on us, we had already waded deeply into its stream. Once I found myself in the deepest water in the middle of the current, there was no going back.¹⁴

Graham’s invisibility in Pakula’s movie of *All The President’s Men* was of her own making. Graham was reluctant for the movie to be made in spite of assurances from Hollywood icon, Robert Redford,

¹¹ Graham, *Personal History*, 544.

¹² Arendt, *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics, Civil Disobedience, On Violence, Thoughts on Politics and Revolution*, 45.

¹³ Graham, *Personal History*, 547-8.

¹⁴ Graham, *Personal History*, 546.

who owned the rights to the book on their reporting of the Watergate scandal by Woodward and Bernstein on which the movie was based. Redford told Graham that he wanted to make a good movie about the First Amendment guaranteeing free speech and freedom of the press.¹⁵ Graham was concerned that a movie could not portray the grinding work done by the *Post*'s journalists and editors in rigorously checking and confirming facts, in the painstaking building of the story outwards from the smallest details until the big breakthroughs came when confessions by people linked to the White House brought down the whole rotten edifice of secrecy, threat, and bullying. In a letter to Redford after previewing the movie, Graham wrote

You really did what you told me you were trying to do—and I thought impossible—but you did it. It proves a lot of things that defy reason. My reasoning was that the story couldn't be laid out straight, because if you did, it would bore people. And if you had to hype it, it would hurt the paper. My other concerns for the paper and all our lives were no doubt overdrawn but real. I'm only sorry about them because I let them interfere with the kind of simple, direct relations I usually enjoy and value. So I want you to be very sure you know that I deeply admire what you did in creating *All the President's Men*...It pictures Carl and Bob almost, eerily, as I perceive them. They are tenacious, able, complex, intelligent and wise beyond their years, funny and nice. Incidentally, they have also withstood fame sensibly and decently.¹⁶

It's a letter that says much about Graham's humility and the character of her leadership as portrayed in *The Post*.

¹⁵ Graham, *Personal History*, 541.

¹⁶ Graham, *Personal History*, 543.

Chapter 8: Leading a Movement and *Selma* (2015)

Ava duVernay's *Selma*¹ is about the campaign to achieve voting rights for black Americans in 1965.² *Selma* is an important study because it portrays leadership from within a popular movement. The primary leadership subject in *Selma* is Martin Luther King, Jr (played by David Oyelowo), a model of charismatic and moral leadership and with little or no power to coerce followers. *Selma* portrays the political skills required of those leading a complex coalition of like-minded groups in pursuit of shared goals whilst negotiating divergent ideas on strategy. *Selma* portrays the grave risks taken by dissidents who seek change through institutional and legal reform whilst needing the protection of the institutions they would change. Above all else, *Selma* portrays the moral and physical courage required of leaders and their followers in seeking societal and political change that others would resist with extreme prejudice and violence.

An important prelude to *Selma* is Jay Roach's *All The Way*³, a movie portraying the leadership of President Lyndon B. Johnson (played by Bryan Cranston) in negotiating a Civil Rights Act in 1964. It is a presidential and Congressional election year, and Johnson is dealing with a political atmosphere supercharged by civil rights campaigns that are challenging the politics and morality of the unequal treatment in law and in custom of black Americans. Johnson is pursuing the Civil Rights Bill proposed by his predecessor, President Kennedy, in late-1963. Kennedy's bill was a response to the brutal suppression of peaceful civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama, in May 1963. The nation, and the world, watched protestors being attacked by police using dogs and billy clubs, and being battered with high-pressure fire hoses to break up their peaceful assemblies. Appalled by these images, and by the actions of Alabama Governor Wallace to prevent qualified young black Americans from safely enrolling at the University of Alabama, Kennedy appealed to the American people to recognise the crisis that too many Americans faced every day, and to address the 'one hundred years of delay [that] have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves.' Asserting that 'law alone cannot make men see right,' Kennedy told the American people:

JFK: We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. The heart of the question is whether

¹ Ava DuVernay, "Selma," (USA: Paramount Pictures, 2015), Feature.

² Important works for background on this subject are: Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: 1965-68*, 3 vols., vol. 3, *America in the King Years*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006); Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: 1954-1963*, 3 vols., vol. 1, *America in the King Years*, (London: Macmillan, 1988); John Lewis and Michael D'Orso, *Walking With the Wind: a Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986); Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: 1961-1973* 2 vols., vol. 2, *Lyndon Johnson and His Times*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Robert A. Caro, "Lessons in power: Lyndon Johnson revealed. A conversation with historian Robert A. Caro," *Harvard Business Review* 84, no. 4 (2006); Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: 1963-65*, 3 vols., vol. 2, *America in the King Years*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

³ Jay Roach, "All The Way," (USA: HBO, 2016), Feature.

all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the colour of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsel of delay?⁴

Having asked his countrymen to stand in the shoes of those whose rights are denied, Kennedy proposed action and outlined what he was asking of all Americans:

JFK: Now the time has come for this Nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or State or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them. The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand. Redress is sought in the streets, in demonstrations, parades, and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and threaten lives. We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and as a people...It is time to act in Congress, in your State and local legislative body and, above all, in all of our daily lives.⁵

All The Way begins with President Johnson taking up Kennedy's challenge in addressing Congress:

LBJ: We have talked long enough in this country about civil rights. We have talked for 100 years or more. It is time now to write the next chapter in the books of law. I urge you to enact President Kennedy's civil rights bill into law so that we can eliminate from this nation every trace of discrimination that is based upon race or colour.

All The Way tells primarily the story of Johnson's negotiations with the political leadership in Congress. Particularly important is the opposition of the Congressional leadership from the South in Johnson's own Democratic Party. It is bitterly opposed to the civil rights bill for taking away from white people the right to legally discriminate against black people, a view derived from tradition and custom, and the power retained by each of the states to determine such matters. But Johnson too, is a Southerner, from Texas, and is all too aware of the argument and the tactics of delay he will confront. He is determined to overcome them. Johnson's legislative program is led by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

⁴ Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, 1961-1963*, Vol III: 469.

⁵ Kennedy, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, 1961-1963*, Vol III: 469.

(played by Bradley Whitford), Johnson's erstwhile vice-president, a liberal Northerner committed to civil and voting rights. Johnson's cruel and demeaning treatment of the unfailingly loyal Humphrey contrasts with the trust between Lincoln and Seward portrayed in Spielberg's *Lincoln*, or between brothers John and Robert Kennedy in *The Missiles of October*. Johnson knows that he needs Humphrey to manage the politics on the House floor while Johnson wrangles the opposition from his own party in the Senate, but Johnson wants the civil rights victory for himself. As the movie illustrates in a number of vignettes and asides, Johnson is acutely conscious of his upbringing in desperate rural poverty in the Texas hill country and the perception of his coarseness of manner and ingratiating ways of politicking, especially with the Harvard- and Yale-educated Northern elites that surrounded the urbane and inspiring Kennedy and which Johnson has inherited. Johnson's upbringing inspired in him a drive to eradicate poverty and its crushing effects on hope and human potential, and to prove wrong all those who diminish and demean him. He wants to assert his victory in a liberal cause as a Southerner. Johnson leverages his Southern origins to ingratiate himself with the pre-eminent civil rights leader, Martin Luther King (played by Anthony Mackie). King is hopeful, but sceptical, of Johnson's intentions. King is deeply disappointed when Johnson decides to remove voting rights from the Civil Rights Bill because the politics of attempting it in an election year are too hard and the effort likely to fail, resulting in all the civil rights measures also being lost. King, likewise for political advantage and trusting in Johnson, agrees to ease the political pressure on voting rights until the Civil Rights Act is passed. The magnitude of Johnson's political courage is evident in *All The Way* when, in the euphoria of the passage of the Civil Rights Act, Humphrey offers his congratulations to Johnson on his 'glorious achievement'. Johnson replies with an honest but typically brutal observation of what the effort has cost:

LBJ: The Democratic Party just lost the South for the rest of my lifetime and maybe yours. What the fuck are you so happy about?

The movie ends with Johnson triumphant having been re-elected with massive popular approval, the Civil Rights Act signed, and no longer the 'Accidental President', determined to make his mark on the presidency.

Johnson is an intriguing political figure: a complex mix of personal aspirations and resentments, and of public spiritedness and meanness. Political scientist David Runciman has said that Johnson's life 'is a tale of redemption: he was a terrible man, but he did some great things.'⁶ Runciman believes that the formation of Johnson's character is crucial in understanding his presidency:

Like most politicians, Johnson's character was pretty set by the time he reached the top. He didn't change as president. He was the same unscrupulous, driven,

⁶ David Runciman, *Where power stops*, podcast audio, Talking Politics, accessed 29 August, 2019, <https://www.talkingpoliticspodcast.com/blog/2019/183-where-power-stops>.

opportunistic, cruel, avaricious, sentimental, domineering, capacious, compelling, faintly monstrous figure he had always been, even as a young man.⁷

All The Way portrays Johnson's evident contempt for those around him and his crudity and crushing carelessness in how he speaks to them, and most notably, to his wife, Lady Bird (Claudia Alta Johnson). Like Lincoln, Johnson is tormented by the fear of an early death: his father and grandfather died of heart disease aged in their 50s, and Johnson has already survived one severe heart attack. Lady Bird tries to intervene to prevent Johnson's excesses, but he is shown as a reckless workaholic who resents her intrusion even though he understands and shares her fears.⁸ But there are scenes too when Johnson is saved from moments of despair and frustration by the counsel of Lady Bird and Johnson's tirelessly loyal personal assistant Walter Jenkins. In those moments, they offer the close personal trust and support Johnson needs to find his courage and his direction, and to continue in his political work.

Runciman refers to the view of Johnson biographer, Robert A. Caro, that in political life power corrupts but it also reveals, that is, 'when politicians get to make the really big choices for themselves, then we get to see who they really are.'⁹ But Runciman says 'this strikes me as entirely the wrong way round. Power doesn't tell us the true nature of the man; the man tells us the true nature of the power.'¹⁰ Johnson's style and personality 'probed and tested the limits of power...Where he found them reveals what can be done by a president—and also what can't.'¹¹ Runciman's observation is a useful explanation of the frustration with presidential leadership that the characters playing Johnson express so often in *All The Way* and in *Selma*.

Selma opens with vision of King, just 35 years old, receiving the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. King is now an international symbol for all those struggling for civil rights around the world. King's iconic speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC in August 1963 has given campaigners a slogan in their fight—'I have a dream.' In receiving the Nobel Prize, King accepts it 'for our lost ones whose deaths pave our path. I accept this honour for the more than 20 million American Negroes who are motivated by dignity.' The action shifts to a group of young black girls dressed for a ceremony, descending stairs in the 16th Street Baptist church in Birmingham, Alabama, when it is ripped apart by an explosion. Four of the girls lie dead in the rubble. The church had become a focus of civil rights activity coordinated by King and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth. The scene shifts to the Selma Town Hall and a black woman, Annie Lee Cooper, is filling in a voter registration form. She takes it to a surly

⁷ David Runciman, *Where Power Stops: the Making and Unmaking of Presidents and Prime Ministers* (London: Profile Books, 2019), 7.

⁸ Lady Bird's political activity in her own right as First Lady is now well documented, along with the extent of her extraordinary support for Johnson in dealing with what might now be diagnosed as depression and anxiety. See the biography of Lady Bird in the White house by Julia Sweig, *Lady Bird Johnson: Hiding in Plain Sight* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2021).

⁹ Runciman, *Where Power Stops: the Making and Unmaking of Presidents and Prime Ministers*, 41.

¹⁰ Runciman, *Where Power Stops: the Making and Unmaking of Presidents and Prime Ministers*, 41.

¹¹ Runciman, *Where Power Stops: the Making and Unmaking of Presidents and Prime Ministers*, 7.

white clerk who chastises her for ‘stirrin’ trouble’ by her repeated attempts to register to vote as she believes she is entitled to do. She says ‘It’s all right this time.’ He replies spitefully that ‘It’s right when I say it is right.’ The clerk then asks her to recite the Preamble of the US Constitution which Cooper does. The clerk then asks Cooper how many county judges are in Alabama. Cooper replies correctly ‘67’. The clerk then asks her to ‘Name them.’ Unable to comply, she watches despairingly as the clerk smiles and stamps her form ‘Denied.’

The scene then shifts to Johnson (played by Tom Wilkinson) meeting King for the first time since King became a Nobel laureate. Johnson is obsequious in recognising King’s achievement, reminding him that it was Johnson’s proudest moment as the President who signed the Civil Rights Act into law. Whilst telling King that civil rights is a priority of his government, Johnson advises King that voting rights must be further delayed. Johnson explains that his focus will be on eradicating poverty, and asks King for his support. King argues that voting rights are fundamental to raising people out of poverty and cannot wait. When Johnson asks why, King explains:

KING: Because there’ve been thousands of racially-motivated murders in the South, including those four girls, and you know the astounding fact that not one of those criminals, who murder us when and why they want, has ever been convicted. Not one conviction. Because they’re protected by white officials chosen by an all-white electorate. And on the rare occasions they face trial, they’re freed by all-white juries. All-white because you can’t serve on a jury unless you’re registered to vote.

Johnson is not moved by King’s appeals to overcome the counsel of delay and to act on voting rights that year, 1965. King is disappointed, and leaves the meeting determined to support the ‘Freedom Summer’ campaign being conducted by young people from North and South, black and white. He decides to focus his own campaign in Selma, a deeply segregated city in the Southern state of Alabama with a reputation for violent intimidation and suppression of desegregation activists by local law enforcement, the state legislature, and vigilante groups.

King knows what he is up against. For all his moral authority and influence, his extraordinary oratorical skills in elevating the aspirations of his followers, his capacity to speak to people on their terms, the experience of segregation that he has shared with those in the movement, his success has come at a great cost. From leading the Montgomery bus boycott to desegregate them and through battles across the South to achieve the aims of the Civil Rights Act, King has known imprisonment, humiliation, assault, the violent deaths of friends and fellow campaigners and of innocent bystanders. He has had death threats against himself, his wife, and his family while serving the movement’s goals. King’s objective as leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Congress (SCLC) is to sustain a movement that will remove racial discrimination from the lives of his followers. His strategy is a moral challenge to those with institutional power who deny black Americans equality before the law wherever

they live. King's campaigns seek to reveal and disrupt the assumptions of life under segregation and bring their injustice into the clear light of day for the world to see. King's campaigns are, by his design and insistence, non-violent because they aim to show the violence, immorality, and inhumanity of those who oppose desegregation, and, to stand in comparison with the virtue, morality, and humanity of those seeking justice. As King says in *Selma*, non-violence is not passive: it is built on negotiation, protest, and resistance to achieve political reform that will last. Johnson is inclined to reform but less inclined to move quickly, so King's campaigns are designed to exert moral pressure on Johnson and the Congress to act, and in doing so, help the nation achieve a moral transformation to 'rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal".'¹²

The focus then shifts to King's arrival in Selma with his leadership team. At the hotel in which they are staying, they see prominently-displayed a 'Serving Whites Only' sign. A young white male hails King to introduce himself and punches King in the face and kicks him before being pulled away. He is a member, King is told, of a racist group called the White Citizens Council. The white police chief, Wilson Baker, who observed the incident, is confronted by two of King's local coordinators who ask why a known white supremacist was allowed to be present. Baker says what all of King's leadership know to be true—that they are a target:

BAKER: [Y]ou know darn well that every nut in America is here! And that is not my responsibility! (*To King*) It's his! They're here because he's here! And vice-versa! All I know is you folks booking into this place for one night is a calculated act of provocation.

King responds by saying that it is 'a calculated act of desegregation. Part of our job. That's what we do.' In kicking off the campaign, King addresses a packed and enthusiastic congregation and explains the goals of the campaign in Selma:

KING: Boycotting the buses in Montgomery. Segregation in Birmingham. Now? Voting in Selma. One struggle ends just to go right to the next and the next. If you think of it that way, it is a hard road. But I don't think of it that way. I think of these efforts as one effort. And that one effort is for our life as a community. Our life as a nation. For our lives. We can do this. We must do this!...As long as I am unable to exercise my constitutional right to vote, I do not have command of my own life, I cannot determine my own destiny, but it is determined by others who would rather see me suffer than succeed. Those that have gone before us say "no more!" "No

¹² Probably King's most remembered speech because of its refrain 'I have a dream'. Delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC, 23 August 1963, to half a million people participating in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. See William Safire, *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), 564.

more!” That means protest, that means march, that means disturb the peace, that means gaol, that means risk! And that is hard! We will not wait any longer!

MEETING: Give us the vote!

King gets to work to achieve a coordinated campaign that will stay focused on shared goals and strategy. Another group of young protestors, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) has been working in Selma and is resentful of King’s arrival because it overwhelms the work SNCC is doing locally. The two local leaders, James Forman and John Lewis, meet with King and express their concern. They are critical of the SCLC campaigns because they create momentum and then move on to other battles. King listens carefully whilst the debate occurs around him. As it descends into pettiness, King intervenes:

KING: That’s enough. Enough of this now. I haven’t the time for this. None of us got the time for this. John. James. The way our organisation works is straight forward. We negotiate, we demonstrate, we resist. And on our best days our adversary helps the matter by making a mistake. Now, we were in Albany for nine months and we made a lot of mistakes. But their sheriff, Laurie Pritchett, never made a mistake. Kept his cool, kept arresting us in a humane way, carried people to the gaol-wagons on stretchers. Day in, day out. There was no drama.

FORMAN: (*disparagingly*) You mean there was no cameras.

KING: Exactly. Now I know, we all understand, that you young people believe in working in the community long-term. Doing the good work to raise black consciousness. It’s good grassroots work. I can’t tell you how much I admire that. But what we do is negotiate, demonstrate, resist. And a big part of this is white consciousness. In particular the consciousness of whichever white man happens to be sitting in the Oval Office. And right now Johnson has other fish to fry and he’ll ignore us, too—if he can. The only way to stop him doing that is by being on the front page of national press every morning and by being on the TV news every night. And that requires drama. Now, John, James, answer me one question. I’ve been told the Sheriff in this town ain’t like Laurie Pritchett in Albany. He’s a big ignorant bully like Bull Connor in Birmingham. Well, you tell me. You know Selma. You know Sheriff Jim Clark. Is he Laurie Pritchett? Or is he Bull Connor?

LEWIS: He’s Bull Connor.

KING: Good! That’s good. But, it gets better...

The focus shifts to the march the next day, black people of all ages are marching watched by reporters and by white onlookers with scorn and hatred on their faces. King’s voice is heard over the images:

KING: Clark doesn't control the streets like Connor did. Clark's the County Sheriff and all he controls in Selma is the County Courthouse. So relatively speaking, we have clear avenues of approach to a defined battle-zone. In the courthouse sits the heart of the matter: the voter registration office. Now this is an exceptional circumstance. In Albany, there was no clearly-defined battle-zone. The issue was segregation, and segregation was everywhere. In Selma, we can concentrate all our action on one building. A citadel defended by fanatics.

Clark is everything they expect him to be: an expression of institutionalised segregation and its mindless brutality. With the marchers sitting or kneeling on the road in front of the courthouse, peacefully insisting on being allowed to enter through the front door, Clark denies them access and then provokes a young man, Jimmie Lee Jackson, to react while trying to protect his elderly father from being pushed to the ground. An older woman—the same Annie Lee Cooper seen earlier trying to register—clobbers Clark with a bag to make him leave Jackson alone. She and others around her are beaten and dragged away and arrested. King is arrested. Governor Wallace makes a speech denouncing the activists from 'the Cradle of the Confederacy' and reminding 'our people' of the goals of their founding fathers: duty, resisting attempts by outsiders to have them become 'one mongrel unit,' and advocating racial separation as Johnson watches reports of the violence and Wallace's speech on TV in frustration. King and Abernathy, meanwhile, are in a packed cell with others arrested at the courthouse. King is at his lowest ebb, afraid for his own safety and for the lives of those who follow him in their protest action. As King's closest confidant in his moments of greatest fear and doubt, Ralph Abernathy—'Ralphie' as King calls him—is a pastor in the same religious tradition as King. Abernathy is attuned to listening compassionately to the anguish of another, and helping others find where the truth lies in their motivations. Abernathy enables King to talk through his fear and doubt and helps renew the spiritual dimension that is at the core of King's leadership. Abernathy helps King to rediscover the sense of duty that inspires his work, the faith that sustains it through perils, and to refocus on the justice of their goals.

KING: I'm tired, Ralphie. Tiring of this.

ABERNATHY: Eyes on the prize, Marty.

KING: What's the prize, friend? We fight to have a seat at whatever table we want. How does it help a black man to be able to eat at a lunch counter, if he doesn't earn enough to buy the burger or can't even read the menu 'cause there was no Negro school where he's from? Is that equality?

ABERNATHY: Amen.

KING: And what about in our minds, equality in the black psyche? I mean, look at these men. Beaten and broken down for generations. Deciding to demand more?

What happens when a man stands up, says enough is enough?...Look at Medgar. Murdered the man in his own driveway. Kids and wife right there inside the house.

ABERNATHY: George and Hebert Lee, Lamar Smith.

KING: A man stands up, only to be struck down, and what happens to the people he led? What are we doing, Ralphy?

ABERNATHY: We take it piece by piece. Like we been doin'. We build the path as we can. Rock by rock.

KING: This cell is probably bugged. They're going to ruin me so they can ruin this movement. They are.

ABERNATHY: "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father doth feed them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"

KING: Matthew 6:27, yessir.

Their religious faith unites and inspires them as it does the movement they lead. But is it enough, they question, to deliver the political outcomes they are seeking for their followers, or just having pain and injury and arrest inflicted on them? King is reflecting on his destiny—and he is fatalistic. He is finding his courage to understand what happens to leaders in the movement for which he is now the most obvious leader, and the biggest target.

An unexpected ally appears whilst King is in gaol in Selma. King's wife, Coretta, meets with Malcolm X, the militant Muslim leader and former prominent figure in the separatist Nation of Islam, who is in Selma at the invitation of a protest group. In *All the Way*, Senator Russell warns Johnson of the kinds of people he will have to face once the old-style Southern political leadership has been swept away. In *Selma*, Johnson tells King that he is keen to preserve King's leadership as a preference to radicals like Malcolm X. Malcolm has said harsh things about King and his non-violent strategy in the past. Although Malcolm has broken with the Nation of Islam, he is committed to activism for black people. Malcolm tells Coretta he knows the SCLC leadership is wary of him and his intentions in Selma:

MALCOLM X: I understand that. Your husband and I, we do not see exactly eye to eye on how to achieve progress for the black man. And yes, I've been piercing in my critiques of non-violence. But because we don't agree, Mrs King, does not mean I'm the enemy.

CORETTA: What do you intend to say to these people then, sir? A lot of work has been done here. I don't intend to see it undone tonight.

MALCOLM: Let's just say, my eyes see in a new way. But your local Sheriff here? He doesn't know that. So allow me to be the alternative to your husband. The alternative that scares them so much they turn to Dr. King in refuge. Let my being here, Mrs King, represent the factions that will come if they don't give the good Reverend what he's asking for, and soon.

It is a clever move. Malcolm offers himself as the stalking horse of a more radical separatism prepared to defend its separate existence, whereas King's non-violence seeks to extend the participation of black Americans in the political life of the nation on the same terms as white Americans. When Coretta briefs King on Malcolm's conversation with her and his speech to the local activists, King is sceptical and unloads his concerns. He rails that Malcolm had called him an 'Uncle Tom' for his willingness to negotiate with oppressors, and that King's non-violence left black people defenceless:

KING: This movement, our movement has been the one that's moved the needle. Our movement changes laws and day to day life for our people. We lay down our lives against those dogs and those bombs and those billy clubs. While people like him talk and shout about it. But what has he changed? Actually changed?

Governor Wallace, in expressing his concern to the head of the Alabama Police, Colonel Lingo, bears out the truth of Malcolm's offer to be a stalking horse:

WALLACE: How in Christ's sake does Malcolm X slip into MY state, meet with the wife of the other one, and give an actual speech to these nigras who are already riled up enough? How does that happen, Colonel Lingo?

LINGO: Governor...

WALLACE: Is every spook militant in existence gonna pay us a visit? Huh? Do you know what this means? Johnson's gonna get jumpy. King and X together is sending him through the cotton pickin' stratosphere. And pictures of nigras getting beat in the street doesn't help the matter!

LINGO: Governor...

WALLACE: Now I can't make a move against that backwoods, white trash Sheriff Clark 'cause it'll be seen as I'm helping King. But someone got to get Jim Clark under control. Election year's coming up and this black voting business won't abide. I mean, what's not clear about that?

LINGO: George, I'm telling you if the Lord Jesus and Elvis Presley came visiting and they said, "Jim, we want you to treat them niggers nice", Jim Clark would beat the shit out the pair of 'em, then throw 'em in gaol.

WALLACE: Jesus H. Christ.

LINGO: Jim Clark's a good old boy and a friend of mine, but Jim Clark just ain't that scary. He's playing into their hands. Now, if you want fear, you need dominance in Selma. Now we picked up some intel about a night march, unannounced, some locals outside of King's group, unofficial they call it, 'sposed to happen tomorrow night once King leaves gaol. He bailed himself out to go to some bleeding heart fundraiser in California.

WALLACE: So, King's out of town. Fewer cameras. And at night.

LINGO: Find a reason to send us in there. Let's scare some real sense into those black bastards.

What follows is a police attack on the night marchers in Selma. Jimmie Lee Jackson, who stood up to Sherriff Clark at the courthouse and is marching with his parents, is pursued into a café, beaten, and shot to death by troopers.

King's leadership team realises a change of strategy is needed and something bigger than the campaign in Selma: something that will show Johnson and the watching nation 'the specific hardships and humiliations we can address' and must be 'evident in any legislation we want passed.' He meets with Johnson and advises him that he will lead a march from Selma to Montgomery, through Lowndes County in which not one of its 12 000 Negro residents is registered to vote, to the Alabama Capitol to demand voting rights legislation. The meeting goes badly. Johnson accuses King of creating a provocation in Selma, and of taking advantage of a person being killed to ratchet up his campaign. Johnson refuses to propose legislation that year and pleads with King to postpone the march. Meanwhile, Johnson's aide on civil rights, Lee White, tells King's aides that there are credible threats of violence against King. They are scornful of intelligence from the FBI because of its campaign of bugging and surveillance of all involved in the SCLC leadership. They know they will get no protection from Governor Wallace for those marching. They suspect that the FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, is orchestrating institutional harassment of King and his leadership group, including attempts to undermine King's marriage by sending evidence of his promiscuous sexual conduct to King's wife, Coretta. King denies it is him. He and Coretta talk about the threats and the 'constant closeness of death' under which they have lived their lives and the cost of it for them, the lives of their children, and their happiness. King's defensive reaction does not appear to convince Coretta. It is a pall over King's mindset as he prepares for the march and what he knows is a serious threat to his life. He tells his colleagues by phone that he is delaying his departure by a day because 'I have to be at home.'

The march begins without King and is marked by scenes of violence in what was a riot by more than 200 police led by Lingo against 500 unarmed and peaceful protesters. As reported from the scene, the protestors were 'young and old and they carried an assortment of packs, bedrolls, and lunch sacks,'

seeking to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma to commence the march to Montgomery. The violence is nationally televised, with an audience estimated at 70 million people. Scenes of the violence are interspersed with rapidly changing scenes of people watching appalled, crying, packing to travel and join in, of Johnson and Wallace arguing on the phone, of reporters filing stories describing the brutal methods used by police, even against people lying on the road or injured.

King arrives the following day and on TV asks ‘men and women of God and goodwill everywhere, white black and otherwise. If you believe all are created equal, come to Selma. Join us! Join our march against injustice and inhumanity. We need you to stand with us!’ He appeals to the nation to understand that no citizen can ‘call themselves blameless for we all bear a responsibility for our fellow man.’ Many people are arriving, including leaders of other religious faiths, to support and to join the marchers. President Johnson seeks to intervene to stop the violence, not by compromise, but by force. He tells White:

LBJ: I’ve got Congress calling me by the dozens. I’ve got picketing outside that gets bigger and bigger every day he tugs on their goddamn white liberal conscience. Every march pulls at ‘em! Especially when folks are getting beat in the streets! These pictures are going around the world! You tell Wallace and those backwater hicks that I don’t want to see any more of this horseshit! And you tell King he best not march, you hear me? And, I damn well mean it! Either King stops or Wallace stops, or I’ll stop ‘em both!

Wallace in the meantime reacts to the SCLC filing a court action against his orders preventing the march as a breach of public and traffic safety. He particularly reacts to the matter being heard by Judge Frank Johnson:

WALLACE: You get it moved off of his court!...If that lowdown, nigra-lovin’ traitor tries this case, they win. I know this man. Went to school with his pansy ass. He’s been ruling in their favour for years now! We’ve lost before we’ve begun!

President Johnson’s Assistant Attorney General, John Doar, meets King and Andrew Young (SCLC) in Selma. Doar warns them against marching but is told that he should talk with Governor Wallace and Jim Clark about preventing violence rather than ask the protesters not to have a peaceful protest. Doar wants to make a deal in which a march is endorsed by the President and protection is provided, as long as it is deferred. King refuses, putting the moral pressure to act on the President:

KING: Mr. Doar, thousands have gathered here to demonstrate their dignity. I don’t want to challenge Judge Johnson. I don’t want to go against the President. I don’t want any of this. The President could stop this with a stroke of his pen. He chooses not to. The decision is with your side, sir, not ours.

The protesters gather and march to the top of the arched Pettus bridge and see the troopers lined up at the other end waiting for them. The troopers are ordered to withdraw, and open a pathway for the marchers to advance. But King hesitates. While the marchers clap, King kneels and prays. He looks worriedly ahead. The marchers all kneel. King decides to turn them around and they head back into Selma. King's supporters confront him, confused by his decision:

LEWIS: People are angry, Dr. King. Angry. They went back to the bridge because they were hot about Sunday. That was our moment out there today. That was our chance.

FORMAN: And you threw it away!

KING: They could've sealed off the road behind us. No food, water, no kind of support allowed through. We wouldn't have made ten miles.

LEWIS: You saying it was a trap?

KING: I don't know what it was.

FORMAN: That was no trap! You know why they opened the road to us! Because all them nice respectable white folks was with us! And we should've capitalised on that! Because they won't be around long. They never are!

ABERNATHY: It was Marty's call! It's done!

FORMAN: He made the wrong goddamn call!

LEWIS: (*To Forman*) Two days ago you didn't wanna march at all! Now you mad 'cause this didn't go the way you planned? (*To King*) What happened out there? Tell me something. Please.

KING: I'd rather people be upset and hate me, than be bleeding or dead.

The explanation is not convincing and people are quietly concerned about King's resolve and his leadership. There are concerns that he has lost his courage, or, made a deal to preserve himself. Wracked with guilt, King retires to write a letter to Coretta, apologising for all the sacrifices she has had to make for him and his leadership of the struggle. He prays that he will 'justify the faith that you once had in me.' He feels the same fog of death that she had spoken of with him. He writes 'Only you and our family clears the haze.' It is an important moment of confession and reconciliation for him in the most important relationship in his life, and reveals his awareness of the threats and dangers he confronts as the most public face of the movement.

As the leadership contemplates what will happen in the days ahead, one of the white people who has joined the marchers, a Boston minister named James Reeb, and two colleagues are bashed and Reeb is killed by a gang of white racists who call them 'white niggers'. One standing over the body of the dying

Reeb snarls ‘Now you know how what being a nigger feels like ‘round here, boy.’ Outraged by the incident, King phones Johnson to vent his anger at the lack of support for citizens seeking to exercise their rights peacefully from violence by a mob whilst the police and authorities stand by and watch. Johnson reacts angrily, demanding that King stop the marching:

LBJ: Chicago, Detroit, Boston, I don’t care. Hell, two thousand people marching for you in Harlem. Good for you! But when you have people coming inside the White House? On a tour? They just sat down, Martin! Sat right in the main floor corridor, singin’ and shoutin’. I won’t have it!

KING: Mr. President, I cannot stop any...

LBJ: You can! You can stop it!

KING: No, YOU can stop it. YOU, sir, can do more. I’m glad to hear you called Rev. Reeb’s widow, sir. That’s very fine and it is right. I only wish Jimmie Lee Jackson’s family would have received the same consideration from their President.

LBJ: Don’t lay your guilt at my door. You’re the one choosing to send people out to slaughter when we told you there was trouble.

KING: We won’t sit idle while you wait a year or two to send this bill up at your leisure. That should be clear by now. We will continue to demonstrate until you take action, sir. And if our President won’t protect our rights, we will take this fight to court.

LBJ: You know, I’m...I’m trying here. We’re pretty close to figuring something out on this voting thing. But I will not have this. This bill has been almost impossible to craft, you hear me? You think you’re jugglin’, Martin. I’m jugglin’ too.

KING: I am a preacher from Atlanta. You are the man who won the presidency of the world’s most powerful nation by the greatest landslide in history four months ago. And you are the man dismantling your own legacy with each passing day. No one will remember the Civil Rights Act. But they will remember the stand-off in Selma while you never even set foot in the state. They will remember you saying “Wait” and “I can’t”. Unless you act, sir.

King seeks out a private meeting with John Lewis, and apologises to Lewis that the SCLC effort has caused rifts in SNCC. King confesses that he is frustrated and confused by Johnson’s failure to move, and his doubts that the movement can go on like this. Lewis tells King a story of the violence he experienced on the Freedom Ride to Montgomery, and the hatred and weapons of every kind from bricks to tyre irons and bats and axe handles used against them. Lewis had been beaten senseless and the next day awoke in a church:

LEWIS: I could barely hold my head up, but you were gonna be speaking and...I needed to hear you. I needed to hear you. You got up there. I was feeling down, but you got up there. Do you remember that day at all?

KING: I don't think we remember it the same way. What'd I say, John?

LEWIS: What I'm about to tell you now. And I hope you hear me. You said that...we would triumph. That we would triumph because there could be no other way. You know what else you said, "Fear not. We've come too far to turn back now."

SCLC goes to court and Judge Johnson hears the arguments about whether King and the SCLC breached the orders of the court and the Governor in returning to the Pettus bridge on the day the marchers turned around. In reading the reasons for his judgement to allow the march to proceed, Judge Johnson said:

JUDGE JOHNSON: It seems basic to our constitutional principles that the extent of the right to assemble, demonstrate and march along the highway in a peaceful manner ought to be commensurate with the enormity of the wrongs that are being protested and petitioned against. In this case, the wrongs are enormous. Therefore, the extent of the right to demonstrate in an estimated five day March from Selma to Montgomery has been approved accordingly.

Governor Wallace goes to Washington to meet President Johnson and to urge him to stop the march. It becomes a conversation about legacies. Wallace is trying to hold back change to the privileged position of his supporters whilst Johnson wants to make a Great Society:

WALLACE: Mr. President, malcontents are disrupting Alabama and it is your responsibility to stop them.

LBJ: They're protesting for the right to vote and the way they're treated in your state. So that's your problem, your responsibility, and it's on your watch.

WALLACE: Mr. President, I disagree. We have a certain way things are done. It's the way it is and it's the way the people want it to stay.

LBJ: George, why ya doing this? Your whole career has been working for the poor. Why you off on this black thing?

WALLACE: Because you can't never satisfy them. First, it's the front seat on the bus, next it's takeover of the parks, then it's the public schools, then it's voting, then it's jobs, then it's distribution of wealth without work.

LBJ: George, you see all those demonstrators out in front of the White House keeping my Lady Bird awake all the damn night? Well, why don't you and I go out

there, and let's announce that you've decided to let the blacks vote undeterred and this whole mess will go away. And I don't have to draft bills and force the issue and all that. Let's do that, George. Why don't you just let the nigras vote? You agree they got the right to vote, don't you?

WALLACE: There's no quarrel with that. I know that. That's the law.

LBJ: Well, then why don't you let 'em vote? We shouldn't be thinking about 1965. We should be thinking about 1985. You and I will both be dead and gone then. In 1985, what do you want left behind. You want them remembering you sayin' "Wait," and "I can't," and "It's hard?"

WALLACE: I don't right care what they think. And you shouldn't neither.

LBJ: Well, I'll be damned if history puts me in the same place with the likes of you.

Johnson is at last motivated to act quickly, and addresses the Congress. Each of the people whose stories we have come to know through the movie are shown listening or watching intently:

LBJ: I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy. At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama. There, long suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Rarely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. The issue for equal rights for the American Negro is that issue. For this issue, many of them were brutally assaulted. There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is only an American problem. The Constitution says that no person shall be kept from voting because of his race or colour. To correct the denial of this fundamental right, this Wednesday, I will send to Congress a law designed to eliminate these illegal barriers. This bill will strike down voting restrictions in all elections: federal, state, and local. And we shall do this. We shall overcome.

Interchanging between scenes of Johnson speaking to Congress and King addressing the crowd at the Alabama State Capitol at the end of the march, the movie switches to documentary vision of the march in progress, showing the reality of the abuse to which the marchers were subjected, a reminder of their vulnerability, and remembering those who were murdered during the Selma campaign. Over the vision, King is speaking from the steps of the Capitol in Montgomery. First, he reminds his followers of what they have achieved by their demonstration of determination and courage:

KING: This mighty march, which will be counted as one of the greatest demonstrations of protest and progress, ends here in the capitol of Alabama for a vital purpose. We have not fought only for the right to sit where we please, and go

to school where we please. We do not only strive here today to vote as we please. But with our commitment, we give birth each day to a new energy that is stronger than our strongest opposition. And we embrace this new energy so boldly, embody it so fervently, that its reflection illuminates a great darkness.

King then externalises their cause to an even greater one. He encourages his followers to see that their antagonists—by their own design—are living in a darkness too that consumes them in a self-destructive hatred.

KING: Our society has distorted who we are. From slavery, to the Reconstruction, to the precipice at which we now stand, we've seen powerful white men rule the world while offering poor white men a vicious lie as placation. And when the poor white man's children wail with a hunger that cannot be satisfied, he feeds them that same vicious lie. A lie whispering to them that regardless of their lot in life, they can at least be triumphant in the knowledge that their whiteness makes them superior to blackness. But, we know the truth... And we will go forward to that truth, to freedom.

King then offers the hope they need—of a better future as their reward for the suffering they have endured. Using words that ring with the scriptural faith they share, King exhorts his followers to continue their struggle until victory is won.

KING: We will march for our rights, we will march to demand treatment as full citizens, we will march until the viciousness and darkness gives way to the light of righteousness. You may ask, when will we be free of this darkness? I say to you today, my brothers and sisters, despite the pain, despite the tears, our freedom will soon be upon us. For “truth crushed to earth will rise again.” When will we be free? Soon and very soon. Because “you shall reap what you sow.” When will we be free? Soon and very soon because no lie can live forever. When will we be free? Soon and very soon because “mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword. His truth is marching on.”

King's leadership shows a penetrating clarity on the nexus between power and purpose, and politics and morality. He is shown as a politically savvy operator in *All The Way* and in *Selma*, tactically smart, clear in articulating his goals, and skilful in his advocacy. Without coercive power, King relies on the moral force of his arguments, and a strategy of non-violence that embodies the moral principle of his arguments. King believed that non-violence would work because ‘instead of submitting to surreptitious cruelty in thousands of dark jail [sic] cells and on countless shadowed street corners, [we] would force

[our] oppressor to commit his brutality openly...with the rest of the world looking on.”¹³ That strategy is consistent with King’s moral and ethical vocation as a Christian minister and evangelist—a religious leader and advocate in communities that are deeply religious. The morality of the non-violence that King advocates is consistent with the evangelical traditions and Biblical teachings of the black communities throughout the South that are involved in King’s campaigns. King’s oratorical set pieces are soaring sermons resonating with the religious scriptures that are so familiar and meaningful to so many in the movement he leads. He reassures his listeners that they are all children of God, that they are fighting for the justice that they are entitled to and have been denied, and that the promise of a more just and peaceful future in which they will enjoy the self-determination of all American citizens can be achieved. King gives a voice to the legions of those in the movement who are rendered powerless and voiceless by the oppressive, institutionalised discrimination they face in every aspect of their lives.

King’s campaigns force into public scrutiny the ways in which leaders like Governor Wallace use their power to advance and protect narrowly and racially defined interests while deliberately causing harm to others. It is important in King’s strategy that the campaigns he leads are local ones, involving local communities, and fighting for issues that matter in the daily lives of local communities throughout the South from Albany to Birmingham and Selma to Montgomery. Wallace is the inheritor of a system in which the institutions of government had become so corrupted and so unrepresentative that they constituted an oligarchy—a form of despotism hiding behind democratic forms—oppressing a large, disenfranchised minority living in his state without their interests being adequately represented or protected.

Just as in Spielberg’s *Lincoln*, the closing scenes of *Selma* are elegiac. Archival recordings of choirs of protestors singing the hymns that united them in protest and solidarity evoke the communitarian spirit of King’s movement. Captions as *Selma* ends tell the audience of the fate of those portrayed in the movie, and that within three years of the Voting Rights Act being signed into law, King is dead—murdered by a white gunman in the Southern state of Tennessee whilst campaigning for improved working conditions for the predominantly black sanitation workers in Memphis.

Part Two Summary

In Chapters 5-8, I have used a selection of movies to illustrate the principles of effective leadership in the public interest that I am proposing in this dissertation. That is, positioning leadership at the nexus of purpose and power, and how each of the leaders have demonstrated an awareness of: first, the source of the power that is delegated to them; second, the appropriate uses of that power in the purposeful pursuit of the interests of those they lead; and third, the limits of (and constraints on) the power they use to ensure it is used purposefully. Further to that, each of the leaders is portrayed in the process of

¹³ Jonathan Eig, *King: The Life of Martin Luther King* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Limited, 2023), 294.

making decisions to resolve a crisis, and representing the interests of those they lead in highly contested and competitive scenarios. It is not my intention to make an inventory of the leadership behaviours portrayed, but rather to contextualise the principles of effective leadership evident in the scenarios presented in each movie. Nor is it my intention to discuss the movies in the context of film history nor as works of history. I am using them as devices to illustrate the arguments I am making about the function of leadership and its relationship with the public interest in times of crisis. Each chapter deals with the use of leadership power in one of four different contexts: first, Abraham Lincoln using the institutional mechanisms of government to make a nation-changing reform; second, John F. Kennedy in using the executive (or prerogative) power of the Presidency to deal with an immediate and existential threat; third, Katherine Graham in using her power as owner of *The Washington Post* newspaper to defy a President attempting to constrain a Constitutional right guaranteeing freedom of the press; and fourth, Martin Luther King, Jr using the power of a movement in applying moral pressure on governments to deliver social justice; and in conjunction with King's campaign, Lyndon B. Johnson as the President who negotiates the political outcome in Congress that will achieve King's dream.

In each movie, the leaders portrayed experience a moment of apotheosis that reveals their moral imaginations and that inspires their strategy in the crises they confront. Typically, they are alone in that moment, or with their closest confidantes in talking through their moral dilemmas. For the treatment of Lincoln, his apotheosis is a story in three parts: in Ford's interpretation, Lincoln's apotheosis is in his dedication to the law as the means of achieving his destiny; in Cromwell's interpretation, Lincoln's apotheosis is in his acceptance that he must join his own ambition with Mary's ambition for him to reach his destiny in political life. As a consequence of that realisation, Lincoln debates his great rival, Stephen Douglas, and explicates the political ideals and motivations that inspire his presidency. Finally, in Spielberg's treatment, the apotheosis comes early when Lincoln as President is visiting a recent battlefield of the Civil War, strewn with mutilated bodies and the evidence of savage, dehumanising combat. Lincoln silently realises that the war is a necessary trial to achieve a Constitutional Amendment that will forever end slavery, and, restore the Union that has been torn apart in a brutal war to determine the issue of slavery in American life.

For Kennedy, the apotheosis is his realisation after a succession of ExCom meetings that military power alone will be inadequate to conclusively resolve the threat of the missiles from Cuba, and that striking Cuba would likely trigger a nuclear conflict in which millions of innocents would die. Because of the imperfect knowledge in ExCom about the Soviet motivation for putting long-range nuclear missiles in Cuba, or the Soviet determination to defend them, Kennedy chose a strategy that opened up diplomatic and back-channel negotiations—supported with military strength—to achieve a negotiated outcome. One of the strengths of Page's interpretation is the insight into Khrushchev's thinking once his strategy unravelled. Throughout the movie, Khrushchev is shown acting alone in devising his strategy, in defending it, and managing the details of its implementation. When it is clear the strategy

has failed, rather than descend into hubris and persist in a strategy that threatens mutual destruction, Khrushchev arrives at the same conclusion as Kennedy and reverses course to seek a negotiated outcome. In a crucial scene, when Khrushchev is confronted by his Presidium about the reversal of his strategy, he is infuriated at the Presidium's determination to run his gambit to its conclusion. With his new insight, Khrushchev questions them about the risks of not backing down. The scene ends with Khrushchev beseeching them, arms outreaching, 'Give me an answer!' The separate life experiences of both leaders in the Second World War may have been a factor in their decisions in ending the crisis, as each showed the moral courage to pause and rethink the limits of their power and the catastrophic reality of war in the nuclear age. The boon delivered from this trial for each may have been the realisation of a new paradigm for peace in the Cold War.

The apotheosis for Katherine Graham comes in her conversation with Robert McNamara in which she puts to him what she had come to know about the extent of the government's lying about American involvement in Vietnam. Graham spoke of McNamara's knowledge of the futility of the war and yet he condoned the continued deployment of troops, including Graham's son and the sons of their mutual friends, to Vietnam. Graham realises in that moment that she has the means and the responsibility as the owner of *The Washington Post* newspaper to protect the public's right to know what its government is doing in its name. Graham's moral courage in exercising her leadership is in her knowledge that she and her company will earn the enmity of the Nixon White House and the awesome power of that office to harm her business in a time of its greatest vulnerability. Her reflections on how that crisis and her leadership in it—along with Ben Bradlee's and the courage of the editorial team—drove the paper's growing capability to deal with an even greater crisis in the Watergate affair reveal an extraordinary depth of insight into the function of leadership in organisations. While Pakula's *All The President's Men* features Bradlee's bold leadership of the editorial team in the Watergate crisis, *The Post* shows how much Graham's leadership enabled Bradlee's.

Martin Luther King, Jr's apotheosis in DuVernay's interpretation of his leadership in *Selma* comes at the Edmund Pettus Bridge when King's courage appeared to fail him, and he turned the protest marchers around. Just days earlier, marchers had been savagely beaten and chased off the bridge by the police to prevent the march progressing. When the marchers reassembled, they are accompanied by people from all over the country—including many white people—who responded to King's call to come to Selma and join cause with the movement. At the moment King kneels on the bridge and looks down the road ahead, he imagines it is a portal into mayhem and violence against the people he leads, and the burden of that responsibility seems overwhelming. In the meantime, events seem to vindicate King's decision. Judge Johnson gives a judgement overturning Wallace's order to prevent the march. Coretta arrives in time for the court judgement and restores King's peace of mind. King talks with John Lewis who reminds King of a speech he made urging his listeners to continue action: 'fear not, you've come too far to turn back now.' Lewis tells King that speech inspired his civil rights activism. Most

importantly, the violence against the protestors has triggered protests in cities around the country supporting the cause of the marchers. Johnson is at last forced to act to protect his legacy and addresses Congress on his intention to put forward a Civil Rights Bill, asserting in the words of the song used by the civil rights activists, 'We shall overcome'. Even so, the dangers for King and those who will join him in the third attempt to march to Montgomery are still prevalent. Assistant Attorney General Doar appeals to King to not march for his own safety. King explains 'I cannot hide...we cannot hide.' King says he intends to 'focus on what God wants. We are here for a reason.' King's leadership embodies the moral and physical courage required of those he leads and the shared goals they are pursuing. The trial they have endured together delivers the boon that they had struggled to obtain—their voting rights.

For Roach's interpretation in *All The Way*, Johnson's life story and his upbringing in harsh rural poverty in the Texas Hills drive him and his political ambition for a Great Society that includes a war on poverty. John Kennedy's pledge to pass a Civil Rights Act to end racial discrimination in public life becomes Johnson's mission too. His masterly negotiations place him in opposition to some powerful figures in his own party, especially fellow Southerners who bitterly resist his efforts on matters of race and civil rights. Johnson's apotheosis in *All The Way* is his realisation that the presidency must be for something—for some great purpose, and that he will not be deterred from pursuing what he knows is right and, pragmatically, is unstoppable anyway. Johnson's moral courage is shown in his acceptance that the Democratic party will be split by his determination to pursue the civil and voting rights legislation. In DuVernay's *Selma*, Johnson is portrayed as a more diffident and pre-occupied figure, striving to prevent disorder that will distract from his Great Society legislative program. For DuVernay, Johnson's apotheosis comes when he realises that unless he acts in support of voting rights legislation, history is going to associate him forever with the violence and bloodshed in Selma, and with the obdurately racist and uncompromising Governor George Wallace and his constituency. Johnson has too great a regard for his office—and his legacy as President—to allow that to happen.

The analysis of the selected movies, each of them rich in interpretive detail, shows the value of engaging with history and biography in understanding the mindsets and actions of effective leaders. The extent to which the movies make a contribution to the historiography of their subjects is for historians to determine: the purpose of this dissertation has been to use these movies as a means of illustrating an intellectual bridge between theorising on effective leadership and thinking about the public interest.

Conclusion

Great leadership results from the collision of the intangible and the malleable, from that which is given and that which is exerted. Scope remains for individual effort—to deepen historical understanding, hone strategy, and improve character. The Stoic philosopher Epictetus wrote long ago, ‘We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we respond to them.’ It is the role of leaders to help guide that choice and inspire their people in its execution.¹

Henry Kissinger (1923-2023), former US Secretary of State (1973-77)

Kissinger’s insight in the above epigraph encapsulates the continuing reality for leaders dealing with the complexity of life in the real world. A wide reading of political and economic history and modern biography highlights that leaders of note have rarely (if ever) enjoyed prolonged periods of stability in the environments in which they are obliged to exercise leadership. The enduring reality for leaders is resolving conflict arising primarily from three sources: first, from within the entities they lead as internal constituencies compete for attention and priority; second, from beyond the entity through its relationships with other groups and societies comprising a plurality of contrasting and often conflicting interests; and third, from external operating environments characterised by constant change and competition among interests seeking to secure advantages for themselves. While leaders cannot control external factors, they must nevertheless make choices about how to respond to them. In this dissertation, I used a selection of movies as a vehicle to examine the experience of those leaders portrayed when they faced ‘the intangible and the malleable,’ the surprises and the existential threats. Leaders are often confronted by self-interest, sectional preferences, and social prejudices. These include ideas and ideologies based on fear or ignorance, aspirations propelled by blind optimism, a distorted sense of history and shared identity, the chauvinism of certain forms of nationalism and patriotism, and a people’s dogged determination to resist when resistance may be contrary to their best immediate or material interests. Kissinger’s life in politics and diplomacy exemplified his belief that an historical understanding is essential to dealing with complex crises which defy empirical analysis. As Kissinger explained in his book on leadership², it was essential that leaders adapt to the realities they face, to negotiate from an understanding of interests rather than ideological positions, and hone the development of strategies and the processes of decision-making to achieve outcomes that secure their best interests. Kissinger recognised the essential function of leadership and the burdens that leaders carry when taking responsibility for difficult decisions and unpopular actions; guiding discussion about the choices that

¹ Kissinger, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy*, 416.

² Kissinger, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy*.

are to be made from the options available; and explaining decisions even as those being led are encouraged (or exhorted) to embrace the new reality and adapt to its challenges and possibilities. My objective in this dissertation is to explain how the leaders portrayed in the selected movies demonstrated effective leadership that prioritises the public interest, and to illustrate the value of movies to inspire thoughtful public leadership.

I began this research seeking a more nuanced engagement of leadership theory using an approach informed by humanities disciplines in order to make leadership development (LD) more effective in equipping leaders with the skills and knowledge to develop a better understanding of moral and ethical decision making. In Chapter 1, I discussed the criticism by influential leadership theorists of contemporary LD that leaders would benefit from being more exposed to studies of history and philosophy, as well as the visual arts and literature. The principal lament of critics is that there is not a satisfactory approach to bridging what is best termed the ‘business school’ approach to leadership studies and what several humanities disciplines have to offer. I contend that those critics have not gone far enough. While a general engagement with the humanities disciplines will surely produce some benefits, a purposeful engagement must be more specifically focused on understanding the relationship between the function of leadership and the principles that define the public interest.

It was apparent from my survey of extant works (in Chapter 1) that the popular literature on leadership and short-form LD programs offered as professional development for emerging and future leaders are focused on leadership styles and the behavioural psychology of leadership (and its companion, followership). The usual emphasis is self-actualisation for leaders and followers and promoting idealised models of leadership (with specific titles linked to an organisational context or the leader temperaments), which concentrate on interactive processes negotiated between leaders and followers. While these models have appeal and serve as a pointer to the breadth of contemporary leadership theory, as I have argued here, they fail to explain adequately the function of leadership in organisations, nor are they sufficient in accounting for the use, misuse, and abuse of power by leaders in initiating actions for which they are (or should be) accountable. Further, I contend that the public interest is frequently framed as an idealised expression of contemporary progressive politics, lacking an adequate appreciation of the nuances associated with the development and delivery of public policy in highly diversified societies.

I have therefore returned to the core texts of leadership theory to identify the functions of leadership in groups and organisations—looking to discern standard statements of what leadership does (and is meant to do) in the effective functioning of the group or organisation. In my reading of the theory, I have endeavoured to make clear that the principal function of leadership is the use of delegated power in decision-making, and the achievement of certain objectives or outcomes resulting from decisions made. Power is delegated to the leader for a reason—that is, a purpose. That purpose is the advancement of the group’s interests for its own sake, and relative to other groups where there is competition between

groups. The critics of contemporary leadership failings who point to moral and ethical failings rather than technical expertise reveal their overriding concern with leaders using their power to make decisions that do not encompass the consequences of those decisions on interests external to their own. I have argued that organisations are a part of—not apart from—the society in which they operate, and therefore, that the purpose of leadership must be understood as simultaneously specific to the group and socially connected to the interests of others. This understanding of the link between leadership theory and decision-making in the public interest is relatively undeveloped in the extant literature, and I contend must become the core of more effective leadership development programs. I further argue that it is incumbent on leaders to develop a mindset of being ever conscious of the source of their power, its proper uses, and its limits, and to be aware of the consequences of their decisions on others and the expectation that consequences of those decisions will be taken seriously. That mindset requires an appreciation that advancing self-interest usually harms or diminishes the interests of others. To be indifferent to this consideration is morally and ethically unacceptable in the exercise of public leadership, and of the historic principles of government and governance that seek to enable people with a plurality of interests to live together, to cooperate in the success of their society, and to resolve conflicts of interests peacefully. In sum, this dissertation points to the lessons to learn in leadership develop, and the most useful places to look for answers in engaging with the humanities.

This dissertation has offered a clearer understanding of the nexus between purpose and power in the exercise of leadership and its relationship with the public interest. I have argued that purpose imparts legitimacy to power and that power ought to be seen as a means of achieving purpose. The efficient exercise of power by effective leaders is grounded in a sense of purpose being infused throughout the organisation and among its people. Purpose must, therefore, be evident in organisational strategy, culture, decision making, ways of working, collaboration, and communication. I have argued that, more importantly, organisations exist and operate in society with others, and that the pursuit of organisational purpose must be considered in a wider context. As I showed in chapters 2-4 when discussing the public interest and the ethical and moral dilemmas leaders may face, leaders with power but without a purpose beyond self- or narrow group interest are least likely to be effective in advancing the public interest. The absence of a sense of purpose related to the common good will defeat any leader's attempt to promote the pursuit of the public interest as an organisational objective. Leadership in the public interest is, I have argued, a conscious application of delegated power. Leaders are accountable for the use of power principally in terms of the purpose for which power was delegated. I have suggested that delegated power enables leaders to fulfil their function, that is, to use the power of their positions to make decisions that:

1. provide an elevated perspective on the organisation's fit with its external environment;
2. give direction through clearly articulated goals and strategies to achieve those goals;

3. ensure the organisations they lead are structurally and culturally aligned with the leader's goals and strategies;
4. form the leadership/management team;
5. allocate resources, and make delegations of authority to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively in achieving the goals;
6. ensure the entities they lead are adapted in the most optimal way to be successful;
7. ensure there are systems to resolve conflicts within the organisation and those external conflicts that are relevant to the organisation's success;
8. ensure effective governance relationships; and,
9. foster an organisational culture that recognises and rewards behaviours that contribute to achieving shared goals, that encourages people to work together, is perceived as being fair in its dealings internally and externally, and encourages innovation in adapting to change.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I proposed that a duty to act in the public interest resides in two distinct domains. In the bureaucratic domain, the institutions of government and governance apply a public interest test using the laws, policies, codes of conduct, and judgements about societal expectations and values (as they change from time to time) on leadership decision-making and its outcomes. Of greater significance is the political domain, embodied in the institutions of representative government which make the laws and determine the function of the bureaucratic institutions. As I have shown in Chapters 2 and 3, politics is principally how conflicts between competing and contrasting interests in a pluralistic society are resolved, and through which the representatives of the people may change the laws and structures that govern and regulate their society. It is through representative politics that the terms of cooperation in civil society are negotiated and from which the power to implement them derives legitimacy. This negotiation between interests is what makes a political community what it is—one that seeks to resolve conflict peacefully, in accordance with the law and principles of fairness, and to protect the rights of all. Further, I argued that resolving interests in a political community is not exclusively the result of the actions of political parties. Politics is relevant to leadership in the corporate world as a process for achieving a shared understanding of the competing or diverging interests in their operations, and in managing the differences and disagreements between people with those vested interests. Effective political negotiation begins with an understanding that it is unlikely that any party can control (or even alter) the circumstances that have produced conflict. Compromises or trade-offs are necessary if not inevitable in resolving conflicts between interests, aspirations, principles, and priorities.

Drawing upon an examination of a selection of movies interpreting leadership in times of crisis, I have argued that the combination of the bureaucratic and political domains that comprise the mechanisms for defining and applying the public interest has established institutionalised constraints

on leadership to protect society from the misuse and abuse of leadership power. Effective leadership development programs must inculcate emergent leaders with an understanding of how and why those institutional constraints are critical to the exercise of public interest leadership. Further, I have proposed that the concept of representation and its connotations for advancing the public interest should be the focus of bringing the humanities to the fore in more effective leadership development programs. The extant literature on the public interest as a concept in forming the development of leadership theory is remarkably thin. This dissertation offers an exploration of the principles that underpins a more cohesive, rational, and useful relationship between purpose, power, the function of leadership, and the public interest that is new. I have argued that this nexus is about much more than personal leadership styles, which has preoccupied the popular literature, and become so prolific in contemporary leadership development programs. My proposal repositions the discussion of effective leadership where it properly belongs—in a discussion of its function.

I argued in Chapters 2 and 3 that the public interest exists in two interrelated domains: the bureaucratic and the political. While the bureaucratic domain applies tests to leadership decision-making that provide assurance to the citizenry that decisions comply with the law and other institutional and governance standards, my contention here is that the political domain has primacy in a political community. I have used the collection of work by Western philosophers and political scientists curated by the Cranlana Colloquium for the pragmatic reason that it relates directly to thinking about the public interest as a context for leadership. What the Colloquium did not do, however, was relate that body of thought to leadership theory. I maintain that demonstrating that link, and its efficacy in thinking about leadership in the public interest, can transform leadership development by addressing the concerns about ethical and moral failures in leadership decision-making. The ideas that have influenced the drafting and intent of the laws by which citizens agree to live in a society are, in fact, fundamental constraints on leadership. It is not simply the extent to which those ideas may be expressed in conventions or entrenched in laws, but rather their function in shaping a civil society with a moral code and ethical principles that protect the marginalised and vulnerable from the excesses of those with power. Moral and ethical judgements will inform the work of legislative bodies and guide judicial interpretations of conflicting laws. The institutions of government exist primarily to serve the public interest while protecting the individual and inalienable entitlements and rights of the individuals comprising a society. This remains a complex undertaking of considerable intellectual and procedural challenge. As many of the thinkers discussed in this dissertation have argued, the public interest depends on an educated, politically aware and active citizenry, participating in the political processes to protect their individual interests, as well as the shared or public interest. I have argued here that this task cannot be left to unelected bureaucrats. Questions about rights and responsibilities, about what is fair and not, about what is right and not, and about how such issues are decided are ultimately political ones.

Consequently, I have suggested that leadership in any public entity, or any entity that deals with others in the public domain, will—and must be—institutionalised in order to protect the public interest. Through this research, I have described several ways in which institutionalisation of leadership in the public interest is apparent. First, in the extent to which leadership is constrained by the mechanisms put in place by civic, governmental, and political institutions. Second, that the power exercised by leaders is typically delegated and confined by the terms on which that power is given. This requires the institutions of our society to have available a variety of mechanisms to hold leaders accountable for the use of their power. Third, that leadership is ethical when it is purposeful, that is, when it uses its power to achieve goals that promote the interests of those they lead, and which mitigates harm done to the interests of others. I have proposed a maxim that effective leadership integrates purpose and power, and that leaders with a public interest mindset will be conscious of the sources of the power they use; the purposes for which it is delegated and used legitimately; and the reasons for the institutional constraints and limits on their use of that power.

I argued in Chapter 3 that Hannah Arendt's concept of representation is crucial in reaching an understanding of the importance of the political domain in the public interest. Representation is more than the representation achieved by citizens exercising their rights and responsibilities in electing representatives to legislative assemblies. In the context of leadership in the public interest, representation requires leaders to be mindful that their decision-making must protect, preserve, or promote the interests of people who will be affected by their decisions. My contention is that this obliges public leaders to take a larger view of the public interest than mere compliance with the law—it requires a moral imagination to see the interests of those who are affected by a decision, and to mitigate harm that may be caused to them. I have shown that the adage that the 'winner takes all' is neither a morally nor ethically responsible position for decision-makers in the context of their public interest obligations. Today, the argument about the responsibilities owed to shareholders and stakeholders is increasingly irrelevant as the interconnectedness of most interests becomes more apparent. In evaluating whether leadership decision-making is in the public interest, I argue that evaluations must relate primarily to the decision-maker's intent, and how the interests of others affected—directly or indirectly, individually or collectively—are identified, evaluated, and balanced, and how harms are mitigated. The public is entitled to ask how thoughtfully leaders have exercised their judgement in recognising this broader view of understanding the public interest. It is right that the actions of leaders are subject to scrutiny, just as the institutions scrutinising leaders must likewise be subject to scrutiny. In proposing a view of the public interest as a function of moral and ethical political action and decision-making, I am a realist in acknowledging the peril that self-interest is always alert for opportunity. Establishing a strong nexus between purpose and power in the mindset of leaders does not prevent mistakes being made. Leaders and their organisations can still make poor strategic decisions based on bad information or bad analysis no matter how ethical or moral they may be. The harm stemming from bad business or political

decisions is just as real for those affected by them, and the leadership will be considered ineffective, even though the decision from an ethical perspective was sound.

As I have shown in Chapter 1, leadership exists in a functional relationship with those who follow and the societies of which they are a part. The leadership task, then, is to inspire, organise, and enable those they lead to initiate actions and to get things done that align with an organisational purpose that will serve the public interest. The reciprocity of interest and values between leaders and followers is important in understanding the dynamic nature of the nexus of power and purpose. For Burns, and all those he inspired, this reciprocity is a positive virtue of transformational leadership thinking. Contemporary research on followership has, however, pointed to how that reciprocity can turn bad—when the influence of leaders on vulnerable followers, and the converse, can create the circumstances for immoral and unethical behaviour in which ideologically narrow self-interest or sectional interest becomes, or is allowed to become, dominant.

In Chapter 4, I argued the value of storytelling as a leadership strategy in communicating shared values and histories between leaders and followers, in bringing coherence to decision-making in times of crisis, and inspiring followers to strive for a more ideal future. I argued that movies bring an interpretive credibility and artistic skill in telling stories about moral dilemmas that make movies an ideal resource for leadership education. Movies provide examples of excellence in the craft of storytelling, in the performative aspects of leadership, developing oratorical skills, and understanding the importance of place and symbolism in leadership communication. But more importantly for this dissertation, movies are richly contextualised interpretations of leadership that offer a perspective that is not so well realised in other formats. Filmmakers create an immersion in a personal and even intimate view of leadership in action—of the intricate interweaving of emotion and thoughtfulness, of the pressures that are imposed on those making difficult decisions under duress, of how different perspectives and judgements are contested relative to others, and how critical relationships influence decision-making. I suggest that as interpretations of leadership, movies provide models of ways to think about leadership and the difference it can make in society. In this way, movies are an ideal pedagogical source for teaching and learning about leadership in the public interest.

In Chapters 5-8, I have used a selection of movies to illustrate the principles of effective leadership in the public interest in four different contexts of leadership power: institutional; executive or prerogative; corporate; and in a popular movement. The principal leaders in each are portrayed exercising the leadership responsibilities for which they are accountable—to use the power of their positions to advance the interests of those they lead. I have proposed that effective leaders in the public interest will have an understanding that the power of their positions exists to do things that are purposeful, that is, in the interests of those they lead, and is constrained to prevent misuse of that power. Throughout this dissertation, I have described the importance of purpose as a means of creating coherence in the functioning of an organisation, and as a moral imperative of leadership. I have argued

that effective leadership must think beyond a narrow definition of self- or group interest and embrace a larger view of the public interest, that is, take account of the interests of all who are affected by a decision, whether the consequences for them are intended or unintended. I have argued that this obligation is the basis of the public interest, and its management is the function of a political community. In each of the selected movies, the leaders portrayed have a unique vantage point at the nexus of power and purpose to resolve conflicts of interest that present existential threats to those they lead and their interests.³ Each was engaged in decision-making processes involving deeply complex political negotiations with competing interests that initiated the crisis or which are essential in its resolution. Each took responsibility for managing the crucial processes of evaluating the crisis and the risks it presented; determining what was most important to achieve in resolving the crisis; and leading the processes for making the necessary decisions. Each took responsibility for explaining the crisis and the decisions made to resolve it; for negotiating with the most important external interests and antagonists; and for managing the mechanisms of institutional governance. Crucially, each experienced a personal apotheosis in confronting the moral dilemmas presented by the crises, and that determined their commitment to lead for—and in—the interests of others. Each understood that their power is legitimised by the people who give it to them in order to do things that advance their shared interest, and that their power is limited and constrained by the institutional mechanisms of government and governance to prevent its misuse. That awareness shaped the development of strategies taken at their direction to resolve the crises they faced.

This dissertation responds to the gap identified by influential critics of leadership development who urge a more meaningful engagement with the humanities. To date, this engagement is typically described in rather vague terms as advocating familiarity with history, art, and philosophy as the basis of a more nuanced moral and ethical reasoning in leadership decision making. Rather than merely adding content to the leadership development curriculum in the hope that something relevant and meaningful occurs, I have identified an essential linkage between leadership theory and the public interest that is missing in the extant literature on leadership development, and, identified the most relevant and useful areas of the humanities to include in a revised leadership development pedagogy which will be more appropriate to developing leadership in the public interest. Future work to develop a pedagogy for teaching effective leadership in the public interest based on the principles that I have proposed in this dissertation and using movies for their richness in stimulating thoughtful discussion on would fill a gap in the field of leadership development.

³ Lyndon Johnson titled his 1971 presidential memoirs *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-69*.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Six elements and 18 practices of excellent CEOs¹

1. Corporate strategy—focus on beating the odds: set the direction for the organisation, have a plan in the face of uncertainty; focus on options with the firmest business case
 - a. Vision—reframing what ‘winning’ means: understanding the relative strengths and purpose of their company, of what enables the business to generate value, opportunities and trends in the marketplace, their personal aspirations and values. The best go one further and reframe the reference point for success, e.g., broaden it to enable a suite of indicators that inform performance and improvement and progress; acknowledging the competitive circumstances;
 - b. Strategy—make bold moves early: five best correlates with success (that is, moving at least 30% more than industry median)
 - i. Resource allocation
 - ii. Programmatic mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures
 - iii. Capital expenditure
 - iv. Productivity improvements
 - v. Differentiation improvementsMay be that externally-hired CEOs more likely to move with boldness and speed;
 - c. Resource allocation—stay active: an essential enabler of the other strategic moves—larger and quicker ones work best;
2. Organisational alignment—manage performance and health with equal rigour: don’t dally on moving lesser performers out of important roles or out altogether; best CEOs think systematically about their people, the roles they play, what they can achieve, how operations increase the impact of people.
 - a. Talent—match talent to roles that create most value: discover which roles matter most and see that the roles are managed rigorously and occupied by the right people;
 - b. Culture—go beyond employee engagement: surveys don’t get to the reality—thoughtful approaches to role modelling, storytelling, aligning of formal reinforcements (e.g., incentives), and skill building;
 - c. Organisational design—combine speed with stability: ‘agility’ a buzzword but evokes speed in decision making and execution rather than the deliberate pace dictated by the stable, standardised routines of large organisations. Facts show no such trade-off is needed—companies that are fast and stable are more likely to be more successful than those that are fast but lack stable operating disciplines. Best CEOs know which features of the organisation are stable and unchanging (but are good because of it) and create dynamic elements that can adapt quickly to new challenges and opportunities;
3. Team and processes—put dynamics ahead of mechanics: dynamics of the top team strongly influence the organisation’s success, yet too often it is observed to be underperforming, and CEOs are often blind to it; individual and institutional biases and clunky group dynamics can diminish with the effectiveness of the team and its processes.
 - a. Teamwork—show resolve: make sure composition is right—size, diversity, and capability; make the team productive by regularly evaluating and improving operating rhythm, meeting protocols, interaction quality, and dynamics.
 - b. Decision making—defend against biases: cognitive and organisational biases worsen everyone’s judgement. Best CEOs minimise effect of biases by having a team that challenges information and assumptions, tests a diversity of scenario outcomes, etc.
 - c. Management processes—ensure coherence: don’t allow one management process to foil another; require executives to coordinate decision making and resource allocations to ensure management processes reinforce priorities and work together to propel execution and strategy refinement.
4. Board engagement: help directors help the business and create long-term value.

¹ Dewar, Hirt, and Keller, "The mindsets and practices of excellent CEOs."

- a. Effectiveness—promote a forward-looking agenda: calls for the board to go beyond traditional fiduciary responsibilities (legal, regulatory, audit, compliance, risk, and performance reporting) and provide input on strategy, M&A, technology, culture, talent, resilience, external communications;
 - b. Relationships—think beyond the meeting: build trust and clearly delineate responsibilities between management and the board; best CEOs also promote connections and collaboration between the board and top executives, which keeps the board informed about the business and engaged in supporting its priorities;
 - c. Capabilities—seek balance and development: input on the board’s composition, expertise, and experience.
5. External stakeholders—centre on the long-term ‘why?’: know the company’s mission and values and they must influence decisions; but go further—keep referring to the purpose of the organisation;
- a. Social purpose—look at the big picture: CEOs spend time thinking about, articulating and championing the purpose of the company as it relates to the big-picture impact of day-to-day practices—results matter;
 - b. Interactions—prioritise and shape: use interactions with external stakeholders and investors to communicate and motivate action; also regulators, politicians, advocacy groups, community organisations;
 - c. Moments of truth—build resilience ahead of a crisis: effective risk-operating model, governance culture and risk culture; anticipate major shocks; recognise that most crises follow predictable patterns even though each one feels unique.
6. Personal time and energy—do what only you can do: look after your well-being:
- a. Office—manage time and energy: have great corporate support staff working for you to help organise your interactions;
 - b. Leadership model—choose authenticity: combine the reality of what they ought to do in the role with who they are as human beings;
 - c. Perspective—guard against hubris: trusted colleagues and others to bounce things around with.

Appendix 2: Leadership archetypes

Eight archetypes of leadership²

1. Strategist:	provides 'vision', direction, new ways of thinking
Change catalyst:	mastery of re-engineering, turnarounds, new organisational forms
Transactor:	negotiator, deal-maker
Builder:	entrepreneur, start-up
Innovator:	idea generator, solving complex problems
Processor:	achieve alignment of objectives and efficiency
Coach:	people development
Communicator:	influencer, persuader

Seven Transformations of Leadership³

1. Opportunist:	wins any way possible
2. Diplomat:	avoids making conflict overt, aligns group norms
3. Expert:	leads by logic, expertise, rational efficiency
4. Achiever:	leads through engaging goals and teams
5. Individualist:	aligns strategy, performance in personalised ways
6. Strategist:	personal and organisational transformations
7. Alchemist:	integrates material, spiritual, societal transformations

Categories of Leadership⁴

1. Crusaders v Pragmatists
2. Ideologues v Opportunist
3. Directive v Consultative
4. Task-oriented v Relations-oriented
5. Transformational v Transactional

Seven Shifts from Manager to Leader⁵

1. Specialist to Generalist:	understands the whole business model
2. Analyst to Integrator:	integrates knowledge across teams to solve complex problems
3. Tactician to Strategist:	sees patterns in complex external environments and responds
4. Bricklayer to Architect:	aligning systems, strategy, structure, skills
5. Problem solver to Agenda setter:	identifies and defines problems to focus upon
6. Warrior to Diplomat:	influences the operating environment and key stakeholders
7. Supporting cast to Lead role:	communicates and inspires

² Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, "The eight archetypes of leadership," *Harvard Business Review* (18 December 2013). <https://hbr.org/2013/12/the-eight-archetypes-of-leadership>.

³ David Rooke and William R. Torbert, "Seven transformations of leadership," *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 4 (2005).

⁴ Gustafson, "History, biography and leadership: grasping public lives," 107.

⁵ Watkins, "How managers become leaders."

Appendix 3: Survey of the development of leadership theory

Author	Theories					
Northouse⁶ (chronological)	Leader-centric; Traits, Behavioural Skills and competencies	Leader in Group theories: Relational, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Path-Goal	Goal-oriented theory: Situational, Identity, Contingent	Organisational behaviour (leadership as reciprocal process, goal orientation, values-based theory)	Transformational Transactional Charismatic	Authentic Adaptive Servant Followership
Antonakis⁷ (thematic)	Trait Behavioural Neurological Sociobiological	Relational LMX Path-Goal	Contingent Contextual Situational	Power	Charismatic/' new leadership' Transformational Transactional	Followership Authentic Ethical Servant Corporate Social Responsibility
T' hart and Uhr⁸ (analytical approaches)	Leader-centric: personal characteristics, life histories	Relational: leader/group interaction in two modes—transactional and transformational	Contextual— situational and temporal factors	Institutional checks and balances on leaders	Performative—leader as actor/role player	Ethical—values orientation
Hollander et al.⁹ (power shifts)	Traits to attributions	To leader to follower roles	To contingency models (incl. Path-Goal, normative,	To transactional approaches (LMX, incentives)	To charismatic to transformational	To organisational culture and leader style
House¹⁰ (social science)	Individual trait and characteristics: achievement, social influence, leader motive profile, charismatic, leader flexibility	Leader behaviour paradigm: task- or person-oriented	Contingency: Fiedler's Contingency, Path-LMX		Neo-charismatic	

⁶ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*.

⁷ John Antonakis and David V. Day, *The Nature of Leadership*, Third ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018).

⁸ t'Hart and Uhr, "Understanding public leadership: an introduction."

⁹ Edwin P. Hollander and Lynn R. Offermann, "Power and leadership in organizations: relationships in transition," *The American Psychologist* 45, no. 2 (1990).

¹⁰ House and Aditya, "The social scientific study of leadership: Quo Vadis?."

Appendix 4: Leader skill sets

Zaccaro et al.¹¹: six generalised skills sets:

1. cognitive abilities such as reasoning, problem-solving skills, divergent thinking skills, metacognitive thinking skills, cognitive complexity, cognitive flexibility;
2. social capacities such as social intelligence, self-monitoring, perspective-taking, communication, persuasion, negotiation, conflict management;
3. personality and how it contributes to cognitive performance such as tolerance for ambiguity, openness, emotional stability, conscientiousness;
4. motives to lead, for dominance, the need for power and achievement, high energy;
5. self beliefs such as capacities for self-evaluation, self-esteem, maintaining locus of control, self-efficacy, emotional stability, confidence, persistence, resilience; and
6. specific knowledge and skills related to relevant professional disciplines.

Northouse and Stogdill¹²

Northouse refers to important work done by Stogdill in 1948 that identified a suite of eight personal traits or characteristics of leaders. Subsequently, Stogdill came to see that these characteristics could not be differentiated from those of non-leaders, and were often identified as necessary responses to the demands of the situation or context. Consequently, in 1974 Stogdill described ten traits in situational contexts that would more clearly elaborate leadership traits.

Traits (1948)	Traits in Situational Contexts (1974)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. intelligence 2. alertness 3. insight 4. responsibility 5. initiative 6. persistence 7. self-confidence 8. sociability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. drive for responsibility and task completion 2. vigour and persistence in pursuit of goals 3. risk taking and originality in problem solving 4. drive to exercise initiative in social situations 5. self-confidence and sense of personal identity 6. willingness to accept consequences of decisions and actions 7. readiness to absorb interpersonal stress 8. willingness to tolerate frustration and delay 9. ability to influence behaviour of others 10. capacity to structure social interaction systems to purpose in hand

Northouse has subsequently identified five attributes: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability.

Kirkpatrick and Locke¹³ elaborated six traits that differentiated leaders from others: drive, motivation, integrity, confidence, cognitive ability, and task knowledge.

¹¹ Zaccaro, Dubrow, and Kolze, "Leader traits and attributes," 32-3.

¹² Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 19-26.

¹³ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 21.

Katz¹⁴ added conceptual thinking as one of three competencies essential to effective leadership:

1. technical (or task): knowledge and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity;
2. human (or social or relational): knowledge about and ability to work with people; and
3. conceptual (or cognitive): ability to work with ideas and concepts.

Roberts¹⁵

From the summary chapter, 'The Leadership Paradigm', Roberts identifies these as essential leadership attributes in statesmen (and by extension military leaders], starting with Napoleon:

1. to compartmentalise the mind
2. plan meticulously with a well-trained staff
3. appreciate terrain and guess what was on the other side of the hill
4. time attacks perfectly
5. exhibit steady nerves to entourage
6. encourage esprit de corps
7. publish inspirational proclamations
8. control the news cycle
9. adapt to modern tactical concepts
10. ask the right questions
11. show utter ruthlessness when necessary
12. single-minded in spotting the moment for decisive attack

Acknowledges Napoleon still made disastrous mistakes and ultimately lost, and then adds more through Churchill:

13. concentration
14. exceptional work ethic
15. energy
16. planning (noting Moltke's observation that plans are useless beyond a few days after contact with the enemy, and Eisenhower's plans are useless—planning is everything)
17. a good memory (or a good filing system)
18. a sense of destiny—role models from history

And generally

19. be lucky
20. appreciation of the political and economic as well as physical terrain

¹⁴ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 44-6.

¹⁵ Roberts, *Leadership in War: Essential Lessons from Those Who Made History*, 199-221.

21. well-timed unreasonableness (quoting George Bernard Shaw’s “the reasonable man adapts himself to the world, the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man”.)
22. tribalism or patriotism—a sense of exceptionalism
23. sense of humour
24. steady nerves (again) and self-control
25. importance of discipline and training—self and expecting it in others
26. ‘capacity for telling someone who thinks he is beaten that he is not’ (Patton)
27. personal example
28. understanding the psychology of the ordinary soldier and the civilian
29. ability to motivate others to go beyond what they think they can achieve
30. personal courage
31. great oratory not essential but helpful
32. quotes Nixon’s *Leaders*: “In a sense, management is prose, leadership is poetry. The leader necessarily deals to a large extent in symbols, in images, and in the sort of galvanising idea that becomes a force of history. People are persuaded by reason, but moved by emotion” (p. 213)
33. ruthlessness and inspiring fear in aid of your cause
34. creating a reputation for invincibility which means they don’t always have to fight—only when they have to and when the odds are good
35. literary ability
36. a capacity to surprise
37. political understanding

Roberts concludes his book on leadership in war with this observation: ‘It would be easy to say that...leadership is hard to define from first principles but you certainly recognise it when you see it. Yet in fact there are certain definable principles and leadership techniques that are eternal...what is more they can be learned...’¹⁶

Kearns Goodwin¹⁷

Identifies key attributes of Lincoln’s transformational leadership:

1. Acknowledge when failed policies demand a change in direction (p. 213)
2. Gather firsthand information, ask questions (p. 214)
3. Find time and space in which to think (p. 214)
4. Exhaust all possibility of compromise before imposing unilateral executive power (p. 216)
5. Anticipate contending viewpoints (p. 218)

¹⁶ Roberts, *Leadership in War: Essential Lessons from Those Who Made History*, 220.

¹⁷ Goodwin, *Leadership: Lessons from the Presidents for Turbulent Times*.

6. Assume full responsibility for a pivotal decision (p. 221)
7. Understand the emotional needs of each member of the team (p. 223)
8. Refuse to let past resentments fester; transcend personal vendettas (p. 224)
9. Set a standard of mutual respect and dignity; control anger (p. 225)
10. Shield colleagues from blame (p. 226)
11. Maintain perspective in the face of both accolades and abuse (p. 227)
12. Find ways to cope with pressure, maintain balance, replenish energy (p. 228)
13. Keep your word (p. 230)
14. Know when to hold back, when to move forward (p. 233)
15. Combine transactional and transformational leadership (p. 234)
16. Be accessible, easy to approach (p. 236)
17. Put ambition for the collective interest above self-respect (p. 238)

Identifies key attributes of TR's crisis management:

18. Calculate risks of getting involved (p. 247)
19. Secure a reliable understanding of the facts, causes, and conditions of the situation (p. 248)
20. Remain uncommitted in the early stages (p. 249)
21. Use history to provide perspective (p. 250)
22. Be ready to grapple with reversals, abrupt intrusions that can unravel all plans (p. 252)
23. Re-evaluate options; be ready to adapt as a situation escalates (p. 253)
24. Be visible. Cultivate public support among those most directly affected by the crisis (p. 255)
25. Clear the deck to focus with single-mindedness on the crisis (p. 256)
26. Assemble a crisis management team (p. 258)
27. Frame the narrative (p. 260)
28. Keep temper in check (p. 261)
29. Document proceeding each step of the way (p. 262)
30. Control the message in the press (p. 262)
31. Find ways to relive stress (p. 263)
32. Be ready with multiple strategies; prepare contingent moves (p. 264)
33. Don't hit unless you have to, but when you hit, hit hard (p. 266)
34. Find ways to save face (p. 268)
35. Share credit for the successful resolution (p. 270)
36. Leave a record behind for the future (p. 271)

Identifies key attributes of FDR's turnaround leadership:

37. Draw an immediate sharp line of demarcation between what has gone before and what is about to begin (p. 276)

38. Restore confidence to the spirit and morale of the people. Strike the right balance of realism and optimism (p. 277)
39. Infuse a sense of shared purpose and direction (p. 278)
40. Tell people what they can expect and what is expected of them (p. 279)
41. Lead by example (p. 280)
42. Forge a team aligned with action and change (p. 281)
43. Create a gathering pause, a window of time (p. 282)
44. Bring all stakeholders aboard (p. 283)
45. Set a deadline and drive full-bore to meet it (p. 284)
46. Set forth and maintain clear-cut ground rules with the press (p. 287)
47. Tell the story simply, directly to the people (p. 289)
48. Address systemic problems. Launch lasting reforms (p. 291)
49. Be open to experiment. Design flexible agencies to deal with new problems (p. 293)
50. Stimulate competition and debate. Encourage creativity (p. 296)
51. Adapt. Be ready to change course quickly when necessary (p. 301)

Identifies key attributes of LBJ's visionary leadership:

52. Make a dramatic start to show capability (p. 309)
53. Lead with your strengths (p. 310)
54. Simplify the agenda (p. 311)
55. Establish the most effective order of battle (p. 312)
56. Honour commitments (p. 314)
57. Drive, drive, drive (p. 315)
58. Master the power of narrative (p. 316)
59. Know for what and when to risk all (p. 318)
60. Rally support around a strategic target (p. 318)
61. Draw a clear line of battle (p. 321)
62. Impose discipline in the ranks (p. 322)
63. Identify the key to success. Put ego aside (p. 323)
64. Take the measure of the man (p. 324) (e.g., Everett Dirksen)
65. Set forth a compelling picture of the future (p. 326)
66. The readiness is all (p. 327)
67. Give stakeholders a chance to shape measures from the start (p. 329)
68. Know when to hold back, when to move forward (p. 331)
69. Let celebrations honour the past and provide momentum for the future (p. 335)

Appendix 5: Goleman's schema of emotional intelligence

Competency	Attributes	Context
Self awareness	Knowing one's strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and goals, and their effect on others. Hallmarks are self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and self-deprecating humour.	Leaders are constantly required to make judgement calls requiring a candid assessment of capabilities—their own and others, and their organisation's.
Self-regulation	Controlling or redirecting disruptive emotions and impulses. Hallmarks are trustworthiness and integrity, comfort with ambiguity, openness to change, conscientiousness, adaptability, and initiative.	Business is rife with ambiguity and change, and panic is easy, but the best evaluate, consider, use information, listen, plan how to respond, and execute.
Motivation	Driven to achieve for the sake of achievement. Hallmarks are optimism even in the face of failure, organisational commitment, a passion for the work, seeking out creative challenges, love of learning, pride in job well done.	Leaders bring energy to do things better and are restless with the status quo, eager to explore new ways to work.
Empathy	Considering the feelings of others especially when making decisions. Hallmarks are expertise in building and retaining talent, cross-cultural sensitivity, service to clients and customers.	Leaders know intuitively what others are feeling and respond to that, often reflecting their own feelings that are consonant with others. They recognise that intuition and the way team members feel about a problem is an important consideration in making good team decisions—'there is knowledge in feelings.'
Social skill	Managing relationships to move people in desired directions. Hallmarks are effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, expertise in building and leading teams, a wide circle of acquaintances, a knack for finding common ground or rapport with people—'nothing important gets done alone'	Leaders are adept at managing teams, are expert persuaders—a manifestation of self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy—and know when an appeal to emotion will work and when it is better to appeal to reason.

Appendix 6: Drucker's key questions for leader self-reflection¹⁸

1. What are my strengths? What patterns emerge from reviewing the decisions one has made over time?
2. Ask what knowledge I need that might help see a decision differently? What is being shut out by assumed knowledge or other assumptions?
3. How do I get things done? Am I a reader? A listener? How do I learn best?
4. Do I work well with people, and in which relationships? In a team, or alone, or as a subordinate, or in charge? Do I produce results as a decision maker or adviser?
5. What are my values? Do they align with the organisation's? Can I change them to make a better alignment? Values and strengths are linked—stress comes from a conflict between the two.
6. Where do I belong? What should I contribute? What does the situation require? Given my analysis of my strengths, best ways of working, values, and knowing what results have to be achieved, how can I contribute best?

¹⁸ Drucker, "Managing oneself."

Appendix 7: Dewar et al. mindsets and practices of excellent CEOs¹⁹

Excellent CEOs approach the role’s six elements with certain mindsets and adhere to 18 practices when fulfilling their unique responsibilities.



McKinsey
& Company

¹⁹ Dewar, Hirt, and Keller, "The mindsets and practices of excellent CEOs."

Appendix 8: Seven strategies of effectiveness in adaptive leadership (Heifetz)²⁰

1. Get on the balcony—keep an elevated view of what is happening and not get swept up by them; see the patterns and trends, the real issues, the real stakeholders, stay above the distractions
 - a. Identify the adaptive challenge: a gap between the shared values people hold and the reality of their lives; or a conflict in a community over values or strategy; these generate distress. Often easy to see the technical issues and solutions but they may be proxies for real underlying conflict of values and attitudes (e.g., LBJ and Wallace over civil rights, not states rights); these are nearly always in a social context—not just power or personality issues.

Diagnosis questions:

- i. What's causing the distress?
 - ii. What internal contradictions does the distress represent?
 - iii. What are the histories of these contradictions?
 - iv. What perspectives and interests have I and others represented to the segments of the community in conflict?
 - v. How are we in the organisation or group mirroring the problem dynamics in the community?
- b. Regulate distress: the holding environment as a means of containing distress and engage with the necessary learning.

Diagnosis questions:

- vi. What are the characteristic responses of the community to disequilibrium—to confusion about the future, the presence of threat, disorientation in role relations, internal conflict, breaking up of norms?
 - vii. When has distress appeared to reach breaking point (e.g., slide to civil war, or assassination)?
 - viii. What actions by senior authorities have restored equilibrium? What mechanisms to regulate distress are currently within my control given my authority?
- c. Focus attention to the issues: social systems frequently try to restore equilibrium by covering over tensions, or try to use current problem-solving methods, work avoidance mechanisms to reduce distress which only diverts attention from the source of the problem.

Diagnosis questions:

- ix. What are the work and work avoidance patterns particular to this community?
- x. What does the current pattern of work avoidance indicate about the nature and difficulty of the present adaptive challenge and work issues it comprises?
- xi. What clues do the authority figures provide?

²⁰ Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.

- xii. Which of these issues are ripe? What are the options for tackling the ripe issues, or ripening and issue?
 - d. Give work back to people: to what extent to orchestrate the conflict between competing interests to surface issues amongst others to deal with, or the changes they will have to make?
- Diagnosis questions
- xiii. Changes in whose values, beliefs, or behaviours would allow progress on these issues?
 - xiv. What are the losses involved in those changes?
 - xv. Given my role, how am I likely to be drawn into work avoidance?
2. Distinguish self from role (refers to JFK's personal response to Cuban missiles morphing from emotion (anger) to thoughtful reflection and analysis)
 3. Externalise the conflict (an extension of above—not internalise it or make it personal—enables leader to keep attention on the issue, and not the person of the leader)
 4. Use partners: confidantes and allies
 5. Listen, using oneself as data: to listen, one has to live with doubt; self-reflection, self-examination, reflection on learning
 6. Find a sanctuary: where one can hear oneself think
 7. Preserve a sense of purpose:
 - a. What is the opportunity now?
 - b. What should our purpose be?
 - c. Something that enables us to step back and review

Appendix 9: Making judgement calls (Tichy and Bennis)²¹

	PREPARATION PHASE	CALL PHASE	EXECUTION PHASE			
GOOD LEADER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picks up on signals in the environment Is energized about the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuts through complexity to get to the essence of an issue Sets clear parameters Provides a context and establishes a shared language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies important stakeholders Engages and energizes stakeholders Taps best ideas from anywhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a clear yes/no call Thoroughly explains the call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stays involved during execution Supports others who are involved Sets clear milestones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks for continuous feedback Listens to feedback Makes adjustments
	Sense and Identify	Frame and Name	Mobilize and Align	Call	Make It Happen	Learn and Adjust
		REDO	REDO		REDO	
POOR LEADER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot read the environment Fails to acknowledge reality Does not follow gut instincts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrectly frames the issue Does not define the ultimate goal Remains stuck in an old paradigm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not set clear expectations Brings the wrong people on board Does not correct previous mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dillydallies when it's time to make a call Fails to understand how issues intersect and how the call will play out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walks away once the call is made Does not gather important information Does not understand what good execution requires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not measure outcomes Does not respond to resistance in the organization Lacks operating mechanisms to make necessary changes
	PREPARATION PHASE	CALL PHASE	EXECUTION PHASE			

The Traditional View Versus the Process View

The distinction between leadership judgment viewed traditionally and judgment viewed as a process is apparent across various characteristics.

TRADITIONAL VIEW	CHARACTERISTIC	PROCESS VIEW
Single moment, static	Time	Dynamic process that unfolds
Rational, analytic	Thought Process	Rational and analytic but also emotional and full of human drama
Knowable, quantifiable	Variables	Often outside of a leader's domain; may relate to the call indirectly
Individual: A heroic leader makes the tough call	Focus	Organizational: The leader guides a process but is influenced by many actors and subsequent judgment calls
Making the best decision on the basis of known data	Success Criteria	Acting and reacting through a judgment process that guides others to a successful outcome
Top-down: The leader makes the key decisions	Actors	Top-down-up: Execution influences how judgments are reshaped
Closed system in which decision makers hold information and do not explain their rationale	Transparency	Open process in which mistakes are shared and learning is used to make adjustments
Unconsciously happens through experience or luck; reserved for top leadership	Capability Building	Deliberately encouraged at all levels

²¹ Tichy and Bennis, "Making judgment calls."

	PEOPLE	STRATEGY	CRISIS
Self How do you learn? Do you face reality? Do you watch and listen? Are you willing to improve?	Personal judgments about your ambitions, role, and capabilities	Personal judgments regarding your career and life strategy	Personal judgments made during times of crisis and introspection
Social Network Do you know how to build a strong team? How do you learn from team members? How do you teach them to make better judgments?	Judgments about who is on and off your team	Judgments about how your team evolves to meet business demands	Judgments about how and with whom your team operates during a crisis
Organizational Do you know how to draw on the strengths of others throughout the organization? Can you create broad-scale processes by teaching people to make smart judgments?	Judgments about organizational systems for ensuring the quality and capability of people in the organization	Judgments about how to engage and align all organizational levels in strategy execution	Judgments about how to work with the organization through times of crisis
Contextual Do you know how to create smart interactions among myriad stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, government, stockholders, competitors, and interest groups?	Judgments about which stakeholders are important and how to engage them	Judgments about engaging stakeholders to frame, define, and execute strategy	Judgments about how stakeholders both inside and outside the organization connect to resolve crises

Appendix 10: Typologies of followers

Kellerman²²

1. Isolates: completely detached, no interest in their leaders or in responding to them, nor in the system in which they are embedded; by knowing and doing little or nothing, isolates support the status quo.
2. Bystanders: observant and aware, but choose to stand by and do nothing; their withdrawal is tacit support of the status quo.
3. Participants: in some way engaged, sometimes support leaders and sometimes not; attempt to gain some influence by their actions.
4. Activists: feel strongly and are highly motivated; work hard to support or undermine leaders.
5. Diehards: prepared to sacrifice for their cause, and will do everything in their power to support or uphold a cause.

Zaleznik²³

1. Withdrawn (submissive/passive)
2. Masochistic (submissive/active)
3. Compulsive (high dominance/passive)
4. Impulsive (high dominance/active)

Kelley²⁴

1. Passive followers: look to the leader for direction and motivation
2. Conformist followers: always on the leader's side but needing leader's direction and motivation
3. Alienated followers: think for themselves but bring a negative energy
4. Pragmatics: fence-sitters who support the status quo but don't support the leader until others do
5. Exemplary followers: active and positive and offer independent constructive criticism

Chaleff²⁵

1. Resource: low support and low challenge—does enough to get by
2. Individualist: low support high challenge—speaks up to leader on own views, but are often marginalised
3. Implementer: high support low challenge—valued by the leader, typically supportive, get the work done, but fail to challenge leader's goals and values
4. Partner: high support and high challenge

²² Kellerman, "Leadership: it's a system, not a person!," 90.

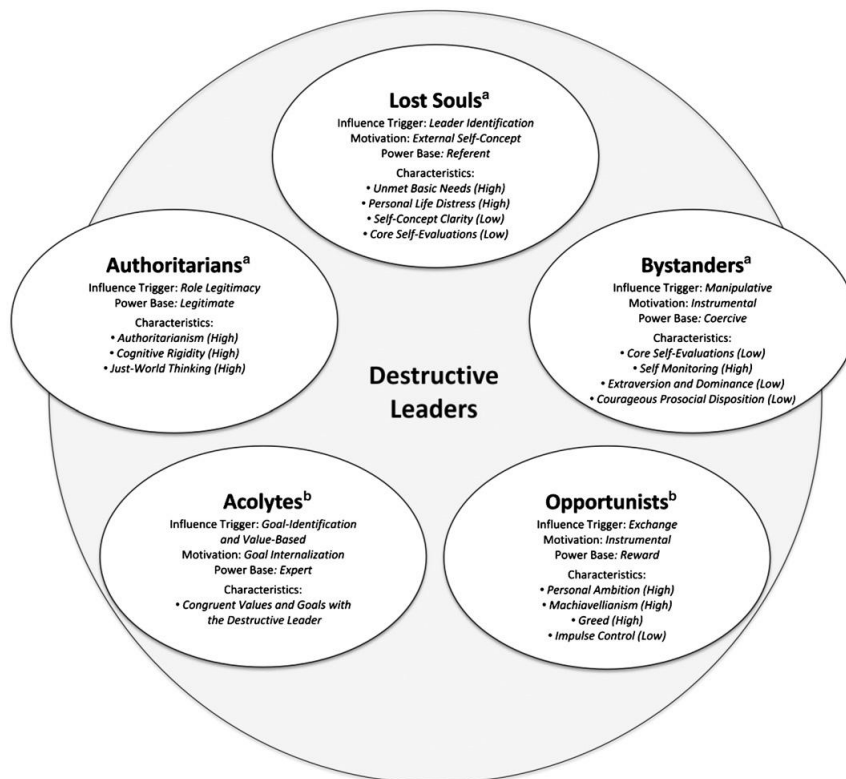
²³ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 296.

²⁴ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 297-8.

²⁵ Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 298-300.

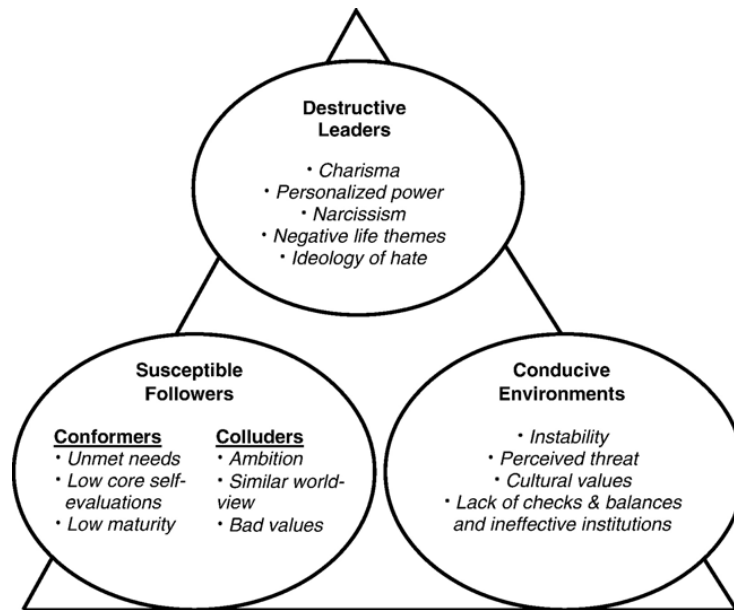
Appendix 11: Thoroughgood et al. follower archetypes and the susceptible circle²⁶

1. Conformers comprising
 - a. Lost Souls with poor self-concept and relying on leaders for direction, goal clarity, self-esteem, and belonging; the leader's referent power is crucial to them, that is, the leader's ability to link them with others through their liking of the leader's self-concept;
 - b. Authoritarians with a rigid reliance on hierarchy, ideology, and rules that emphasise the leader's right to lead; the leader's legitimate power is crucial to them, that is, the leader's formal status and position legitimates their adherence to the leader; and
 - c. Bystanders who are motivated by fear or safety and typically compliant even if they disagree with or dislike the leader; the leader's coercive power to punish or withhold resources is crucial to them;
2. Colluders comprising
 - a. Acolytes who see expression of their values and beliefs in the leader's mission; having their goals achieved is a strong motivation and the leader's expert power in explaining and advocating a shared ideology is crucial to them; and
 - b. Opportunists who see the leader as a means to their own enrichment through contingent rewards, that is, rewards that flow directly or indirectly from being part of the leader's in-group; the leader's reward power is crucial to them.



²⁶ Thoroughgood *et al.*, "The susceptible circle: a taxonomy of followers associated with destructive leadership."

Appendix 12: Padilla et al. typologies of relationships between bad leaders and bad followers²⁷



²⁷ Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser, "The toxic triangle: destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments," 180.

Appendix 13: Johnston's and Keyzer's Processes and Goals²⁸

Processes—the public interest contemplates evidence-based decisions for the common good of society and a decision-making process that is balanced and meets the needs of a majority of stakeholders. It involves the managed aggregation of interests depicted in the light of the need to reach consensus. It aims to achieve the collective will expressed through the laws passed by an informed parliament. It is a viewpoint that you reached at a point in time when opposing evidence or viewpoints are balanced.

Goals—the public interest is characterised by decisions or actions for the common good of the relevant public, and a set of shared values that reasonably reflect those of the greater public, as reflected in the laws/rules of the group. The public interest is concerned with the protection and advancement of the common good in a context that recognises human rights, and what matters to everyone in society in terms of their safety, welfare and wellbeing (at a given time).

Appendix 14: Johnston's and Keyzer's definitional elements²⁹

In priority order as determined by the survey participants.

1. Decisions or actions for the common good of the relevant public.
2. The set of shared values that reasonably reflect those of the greater public, as reflected in the laws/rules of the group.
3. The protection and advancement of the common good in a context that recognises human rights.
4. An evidence-based decision for the common good of society.
5. A decision-making process that is balanced and meets the needs of a majority of stakeholders.
6. The managed aggregation of interests depicted in the light of the need to reach consensus.
7. What matters to everyone in society in terms of their safety, welfare, and wellbeing (at a given time).
8. Collective will expressed by law from an informed parliament.
9. A viewpoint that you reach at a point in time when you balance opposing evidence or viewpoints.

Appendix 15: Wheeler's dimensions of the public interest³⁰

1. Outcomes—the objectives and substance of decisions made as well as the advice given to them as in the public interest
2. Inputs—the matters considered by the decision-maker are in the public interest
 - a. The relevance of matters considered
 - b. Exercising powers for proper purposes

²⁸ Johnston and Keyzer, "Seeking definitional consensus," 44.

²⁹ Johnston and Keyzer, "Seeking definitional consensus," 43.

³⁰ Wheeler, "The public interest revisited: we know it's important but do we know what it means? (Updated)," 40-1.

- c. Giving appropriate weight to matters based on their relative importance/significance
 - d. Complying with government and agency policy
 - e. Avoiding bias
3. Process—processes, procedures, and practices followed in making decisions are in the public interest
 - a. Comply with legal requirements
 - b. Act impartially, absence of discrimination, acting apolitically in performance of duties
 - c. Demonstrate fairness in use of discretionary powers
 - d. Act reasonably including with proportionality
 - e. Ensures confidentiality where appropriate
 - f. Demonstrate proper accountability and transparency
 4. Conduct—of the decision-maker is in the public interest
 - a. Acting in good faith
 - b. Avoiding or appropriately managing situations where private interests conflict or might reasonably be perceived to conflict with the impartial fulfilment of official duties
 - c. Showing respect for individuals

Appendix 16: Wheeler’s model for assessing the public interest³¹

Identifying how the public interest applies in three stages:

1. Identify the relevant population—the ‘public’ whose interests are to be considered in making the decision
2. Identify the ‘public interests’ applicable to an issue or decision
 - a. Using primary sources
 - i. the object clauses in legislation establishing an agency, or, other docs that establish the intent
 - ii. Terms of legislation that establish an office or agency and which give it functions and powers
 - iii. Any regulations, rules, or by-laws that set out the functions and powers of a public official/office/agency
 - iv. Any procedural requirements that the public official is required by law to comply with in making the decision (including procedural fairness)
 - b. Secondary sources
 - i. Government, council, or board policy
 - ii. Plans or policies made by or under statutory authority or approved by executive Govt, a Minister, council or board, or, approved by a relevant agency or authorised public official
 - iii. Directions given by ministers within scope of their authority
 - c. Tertiary sources
 - i. Agency strategic/corporate/management plans

³¹ Wheeler, "The public interest revisited: we know it's important but do we know what it means? (Updated)," 40-1.

- ii. Agency procedure manuals and delegations of authority
 - iii. As last resort, statements of duties for decision-makers position
3. Assess and weigh each applicable ‘public interest’ including balancing the conflicting or competing ‘public interest’ using
 - a. The revealed majority views or opinions of the public
 - b. The views of the elected representatives of the people
 - c. An objective assessment by an impartial person of the public interests likely to apply

Appendix 17: Hobbes’s obstacles to shared power³²

It is true that certain living creatures, as bees and ants, live sociably one with another, which are therefore why Aristotle numbered them amongst political creatures; and yet have no other direction than their particular judgements and appetites; nor speech, whereby one of them can signify to another, what he thinks expedient for the common benefit: and therefore some man may perhaps desire to know why mankind cannot do the same. To which I answer,

First, that men are continually in competition for honour and dignity which these creatures are not; and consequently amongst men there ariseth on that ground envy and hatred, and finally war; but amongst these not so.

Second, that amongst these creatures, the common good differeth not from the private; and being by nature inclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent.

Third, that these creatures, having not, as man, the use of reason, do not see, nor think they see any fault, in the administration of their common business; whereas amongst men, there are very many, that think themselves wiser, and abler to govern the public, better than the rest; and these strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into distraction and civil war.

Fourth, that these creatures, though they have some use of voice in making known to one another their desires and other affections; yet they want that art of words, by which some men can represent to others, that which is good, in the likeness of evil; and evil, in the likeness of good; and augment, or diminish the apparent greatness of good and evil; discontenting men, and troubling their peace at their pleasure.

Fifth, irrational creatures cannot distinguish between injury and damage, and therefore as long as they be at ease, they are not offended with their fellows: whereas man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease: for then it is that he loves to shew his wisdom, and control the actions of them that govern the commonwealth.

³² Hobbes, "Leviathan," 204-5.

Finally, the agreement of these creatures is natural; that of men is by covenant only, which is artificial: and therefore it is no wonder if there be somewhat else required, besides covenant, to make their agreement constant and lasting; which is a common power, to keep them in awe, and to direct their actions to the common benefit.

Appendix 18: Six principles of stakeholder capitalism

Six principles to framework for value creation and trade that infuses ethics, respects human beings, fosters innovation, help move beyond current problems.³³

1. Stakeholder cooperation: “Value can be created, traded, and sustained because stakeholders can jointly satisfy their needs and desires by making voluntary agreements with each other that for the most part are kept.” Rather than assume we are all self-interested primarily to maximise our own benefit, this principle highlights social nature of value creation. Any value is a social phenomenon. And must be created in context with the help of others who value what we create.
2. Stakeholder engagement: “To successfully create, trade, and sustain value, a business must engage its stakeholders”. Almost every business transaction involves customers, suppliers, communities, employees, financiers. Others are NGOs, media, civil society reps, etc. who are affected by or can affect value creation. Rather than argue about whose rights trump whose this principle acknowledges that a large cast of stakeholders are necessary to sustain value creation.
3. Stakeholder Responsibility: “Value can be created, traded, and sustained because parties to an agreement are willing to accept responsibility for the **consequences** of their actions. When third parties are harmed they must be compensated, or a new agreement be negotiated with all of those parties who are affected”. This principle rejects the view that business is amoral or immoral. If business is a social process, then morality is at its centre. Scandals and selfish behaviour are a breach of the trust and transparency normal for business to flourish.
4. Complexity: “Value can be created, traded, and sustained because human beings are complex psychological creatures capable of acting from different values and points of view. Individuals are socially situated and their values are connected to their social context. We are able to differentiate consequences and who is being affected. Acknowledges we can have profound effects on each other.
5. Continuous creation: Business as an institution is a source of the creation of value. Cooperating with stakeholders and motivated by values, businesspeople continuously create new sources of value. Working with and for others can be as strong a motivation as self-interest.

³³ Freeman, Martin, and Parmar, "Stakeholder Capitalism," 311-2.

6. Emergent Competition: Competition emerges from a relatively free society so that stakeholders have options. Competition is an emergent property rather than a necessary assumption to capitalism. Our assumption of competition can affect our behaviour. Not every interaction is a zero-sum game and not all have to be win-win.

Appendix 19: Purpose shifting—from how to why

A method for developing and embedding purpose in an organisation.³⁴

1. Purpose Questions

- a. What is our purpose as a company and how does it link with our “superpower”—our capacity to make a distinctive contribution to the world?
- b. Who benefits from our success, and what are our responsibilities—to shareholders, yes, but also to our workforce, suppliers, ecosystem participants, communities, and the environment in which we operate?
- c. Proof points
 - i. Declaring a purpose statement that is clear enough to help middle management make trade-offs in daily decisions, and credible in the eyes of stakeholders
 - ii. Defining specific, short-term impact goals

2. Strategy Questions

- a. When trade-offs arise, how should various stakeholder interests be balanced and reconciled? Who needs to be involved, and how will we make decisions?
- b. How willing are we to change our philosophy and economic model to reflect our purpose and enhance our social and environmental impact?
- c. Proof points
 - i. Incorporating purpose screens and criteria into budget and investment decisions
 - ii. Changing governance and sources of capital (such as becoming a public-benefit corporation)
 - iii. Sticking to bold purpose goals during times of economic turbulence

3. Culture Questions

- a. What is our heritage? Why have we been successful in the past? How does this foundation enable our purpose going forward?
- b. How will our purpose strategy enrich and strengthen our culture and values?
- c. How do we make purpose personal to employees, unlocking additional engagement?
- d. Proof points
 - i. Heavy, early investment in listening to stakeholders and understanding the current corporate culture—both weaknesses and strengths
 - ii. Candid, transparent assessment of corporate identity

4. Operations Questions

³⁴ Gast *et al.*, "Purpose: shifting from why to how."

- a. What are the biggest externalities across our value chain (including the impact of our products' use) that have not been considered, mitigated, or both?
 - b. How can we align our supply-chain partners to our purpose?
 - c. Where can we work with peers and other partners to diminish any negative societal impact caused by our sector—through, for example, collaborative circular-economy initiatives?
 - d. Proof points
 - i. Creating end-to-end value-chain accountability from sourcing to recycling, including sustainability metrics and other environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosures, and comparing with stated goals
 - ii. Investing to help suppliers achieve ESG goals and exiting relationships with those that can't or won't
5. Marketing & Sales Questions
- a. How would our products and services rank in terms of social and environmental impact, compared with a ranking on profitability?
 - b. What products and markets should be exited, and how will those decisions be made?
 - c. How will purpose affect future decisions to invest in new product and market opportunities?
 - d. Proof points
 - i. Exiting products/markets with significant, adverse social impact—even if it results in short-term revenue loss
 - ii. Entering new products/markets or making changes to existing products that enhance their societal value
 - iii. Making company-wide branding decisions that integrate purpose
6. Organisation Questions
- a. To what extent does organisational structure and governance enable employees to make trade-offs that prioritise purpose?
 - b. What are the most powerful levers to pull around incentives, policies, and processes to ensure purpose is lived?
 - c. How are employees able to engage on purpose today (including specific platforms and opportunities for dialogue)?
 - d. Proof points
 - i. Making clear changes to recruitment and capability-building processes to embed purpose
 - ii. Incorporating purpose-driven metrics into compensation and performance decisions
 - iii. Developing mechanisms to constantly measure the link between employee and corporate purpose
7. Engagement Questions
- a. How does our company talk about purpose with the board and investors?
 - b. Who are the external stakeholders and partners who must be engaged? How and when should we engage them to ensure an open and authentic dialogue?
 - c. What kind of public engagement enables us to project our purpose authentically?
 - d. Proof points

- i. Creating mechanisms to engage stake-holders early
 - ii. Engaging in purpose-driven public influence where appropriate
 - iii. Withholding non-purposeful use of public influence (such as deciding to forgo a lobbying opportunity whose implications include identifiable, negative externalities)
8. Measurement Questions
- a. What data and evidence are critical to measuring the total social and financial impact of our purpose, and what gaps exist today?
 - b. What is not being measured or reported today that society will expect and hold us accountable for in the future?
 - c. Proof points
 - i. Accounting for externalities in monetary terms
 - ii. Tracking and reporting progress against purpose goals

Appendix 20: Kidder's moral courage framework³⁵

Step 1: Assess the Situation

Five elements to consider in making a morally courageous judgement:

1. What motives make me want to act? Conscience? Outrage?
2. What inhibitions would keep me from acting? (reluctance to take responsibility, shamelessness, indifference) or counterfeits such as stubborn, wilfulness, priggish moralising, desire for self-aggrandisement.
3. What risks do I perceive? Could I suffer ostracism, disrepute, shame, derision?
4. Am I the one most suited to this action, or is this a stand someone else should take?
5. If there's no-one else, am I prepared to endure the consequences? (p. 38)

Step 2: Scan for Values

How aware of the absence of core values or the opposite of those values are present?

1. How pervasive is the lack of values?
2. If more than one value has been breached, how does that shape the response?
3. Is the failure to express a moral value significant or trivial?
4. Can I distinguish between the significant and the trivial? Issues that are significant are
 - a. Immediate, producing clear and present effects
 - b. Severe, causing serious harm
 - c. Irreversible, unable to be overturned by subsequent action
 - d. Widespread, affecting broad numbers
5. Am I clear enough on my own values to take on the failings of another?

Step 3: Acting on Conscience

Asserts that humanity's ethical dilemmas fall into four patterns:

1. Truth versus loyalty
2. Individual versus community
3. Short-term versus long-term
4. Justice versus mercy (p. 89)

Three resolution principles:

1. The ends-based principle of utilitarianism which calls on us to do the greatest good for the greatest number.

³⁵ Kidder, *Moral Courage*.

2. The rule-based principle—takes no account of consequences.
3. The care-based principle—what would we want others to do to us? (p. 93)

Step 4: Understanding the Risks

Does the individual have a clear picture of the three principle challenges (consequences) in any situation demanding moral courage?

1. Ambiguity
2. Exposure
3. Loss (pp. 137-8)

Step 5: Enduring the Hardship

What are the sources of my confidence in acting?

1. Experience—what I've done in the past, my background, skills, training, talents, abilities
2. Character—can I trust who I am rather than what I've done? Will the values and virtues that make up my inner being be there again?
3. Faith—something outside myself?
4. Intuition—is my instinct right? (pp. 173-4)

Step 6: Avoiding the Inhibitors

A dozen inhibitors to avoid:

1. Overconfident cultures that cut off action and discussion
2. Compromises to entice inaction
3. Foolhardiness—not making a proper assessment of the risks
4. Timidity—unwillingness to endure discomfort
5. Raw courage that ignores the principles of moral courage
6. Tepid ethics and an inability to rise above mere duty and tolerance that obscure vision and clarity that characterises true moral courage
7. Over-reflection—rationalising one's way out of an instinctive expression of moral courage
8. Bystander apathy dilutes taking responsibility because others are not speaking up
9. Groupthink that defends a bad collective decision that no one acting individually would have countenanced
10. Normalised deviancy leading to redefinition of some wrong behaviours as acceptable
11. Altruism in excess or misapplied
12. Cultural differences that shift the boundaries of what should concern me or others (pp. 211-2)

Appendix 21: Campbell's composite monomyth stages³⁶

1. Chapter I: Separation or Departure
 - a. The call to adventure (or the signs of the vocation of the hero)
 - b. Refusal of the call (or the folly of the flight from the god)
 - c. Supernatural aid (the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure)
 - d. The crossing of the first threshold
 - e. The belly of the whale (or the passage into the realm of night)
2. Chapter II: the Trials and Victories of Initiation
 - a. The road of trials (or the dangerous aspect of the gods)
 - b. The meeting with the goddess (or the bliss of infancy regained)

³⁶ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 28-9.

- c. Woman as the temptress (the realisation of the agony of Oedipus)
 - d. Atonement with the father
 - e. Apotheosis
 - f. The ultimate boon
3. Chapter III: Return and Reintegration with Society
- a. Refusal of the return (or the world denied)
 - b. The magic flight (or the escape of Prometheus)
 - c. Rescue from without
 - d. The crossing of the return threshold (or the return to the world of the common day)
 - e. Master of two worlds
 - f. Freedom to live (the nature and function of the ultimate boon)

Appendix 22: Propp's 31 functions³⁷

- I. One of the members of a family absents himself from home.
 - 1. *The person absenting himself can be a member of the older generation*
 - 2. *An intensified form of absention is represented by the death of parents.*
 - 3. *Sometimes members of the younger generation absent themselves.*
- II. An interdiction is addressed to the hero.
 - 1. *An inverted form of interdiction is represented by an order or a suggestion*
- III. The interdiction is violated
- IV. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.
 - 1. *The reconnaissance aims to find out the location of children, or sometimes of precious objects, etc.*
 - 2. *An inverted form of reconnaissance is evidenced when the intended victim questions the villain.*
 - 3. *In separate instances one encounters forms of reconnaissance by means of other personages.*
- V. The villain receives information about his victim.
 - 1. *The villain directly receives an answer to his question.*
 - 2. *An inverted or other form of information-gathering evokes a corresponding answer.*
- VI. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings.
 - 1. *The villain uses persuasion*
 - 2. *The villain proceeds to act by the direct application of magical means.*
 - 3. *The villain employs other means of deception or coercion.*
- VII. The victim submits to deception and so unwittingly helps his enemy.
 - 1. *The hero agrees to all of the villain's persuasions*
 - 2. *The hero mechanically reacts to the employment of magical or other means*
- VIII. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family.
 - 1. *The villain abducts a person.*
 - 2. *The villain seizes or takes away a magical agent.*
 - 3. *The villain pillages or spoils the crops.*
 - 4. *The villain seizes the daylight.*
 - 5. *The villain plunders in other forms.*
 - 6. *The villain causes bodily injury.*
 - 7. *The villain causes a sudden disappearance.*
 - 8. *The villain demands or entices his victim.*

³⁷ Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 26-64.

9. *The villain expels someone.*
 10. *The villain orders someone to be thrown into the sea.*
 11. *The villain casts a spell upon someone or something.*
 12. *The villain effects a substitution.*
 13. *The villain orders a murder to be committed.*
 14. *The villain commits murder.*
 15. *The villain imprisons or detains someone .*
 16. *The villain threatens forced matrimony.*
 17. *The villain makes a threat of cannibalism.*
 18. *The villain torments at night.*
 19. *The villain declares war.*
- VIII. (a) A family member lacks something or desires to have something.
- IX. Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched.
1. *A call for help is given, with the resultant dispatch of the hero.*
 2. *The hero is dispatched directly.*
 3. *The hero is allowed to depart from home.*
 4. *Misfortune is announced.*
 5. *The banished hero is transported away from home.*
 6. *The hero condemned to death is secretly freed.*
 7. *A lament is sung.*
- X. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.
- XI. The hero leaves home.
- XII. The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper.
1. *The donor tests the hero.*
 2. *The donor greets and interrogates the hero.*
 3. *A dying or deceased person requests the rendering of a service.*
 4. *A prisoner begs for his freedom.*
 5. *The hero is approached with a request for mercy.*
 6. *Disputants request a division of property.*
 7. *Other requests.*
 8. *A hostile creature attempts to destroy the hero.*
 9. *A hostile creature engages the hero in combat.*
 10. *The hero is shown a magical agent which is offered for exchange.*
- XIII. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor.
1. *The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test.*
 2. *The hero answers (or does not answer) a greeting.*
 3. *He renders (or does not render) a service to a dead person.*
 4. *He frees a captive.*
 5. *He shows mercy to a suppliant.*
 6. *He completes an apportionment and reconciles the disputants.*
 7. *The hero performs some other service.*
 8. *The hero saves himself from an attempt on his life by using the same tactics used by his adversary.*
 9. *The hero vanquishes (or does not vanquish) his adversary.*
 10. *The hero agrees to an exchange, but immediately employs the magic power of the object exchanged against the barterer.*
- XIV. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
1. *The agent is directly transferred.*
 2. *The agent is pointed out.*
 3. *The agent is prepared.*
 4. *The agent is sold and purchased.*
 5. *The agent falls into the hands of the hero by chance (is found by him).*
 6. *The agent suddenly appears of its own accord.*

7. *The agent is eaten or drunk.*
 8. *The agent is seized.*
 9. *Various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero*
- XV. The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search.
 1. *The hero flies through the air.*
 2. *He travels on the ground or on water.*
 3. *He is led.*
 4. *The route is shown to him.*
 5. *He makes use of stationary means of communication.*
 6. *He follows bloody tracks.*
- XVI. The hero and the villain join in direct combat.
 1. *They fight in an open field.*
 2. *They engage in a competition.*
 3. *They play cards.*
- XVII. The hero is branded.
 1. *A brand is applied to the body.*
 2. *The hero receives a ring or a towel.*
- XVIII. The villain is defeated.
 1. *The villain is beaten in open combat.*
 2. *He is defeated in a contest.*
 3. *He loses at cards.*
 4. *He loses on being weighed.*
 5. *He is killed without a preliminary fight.*
 6. *He is banished directly.*
- XIX. The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.
 1. *The object of a search is seized by the use of force or cleverness.*
 2. *The object of search is obtained by several personages at once, through a rapid interchange of their actions.*
 3. *The object of search is obtained with the help of enticements.*
 4. *The object of a quest is obtained as the direct result of preceding actions.*
 5. *The object of search is obtained instantly through the use of a magical agent.*
 6. *The use of a magical agent overcomes poverty.*
 7. *The object of search is caught.*
 8. *The spell on a person is broken.*
 9. *A slain person is revived.*
 10. *A captive is freed.*
 11. *The receipt of an object of search is sometimes accomplished by means of the same forms as the receipt of a magical agent*
- XX. The hero returns.
- XXI. The hero is pursued.
 1. *The pursuer flies after the hero.*
 2. *He demands the guilty person.*
 3. *He pursues the hero, rapidly transforming himself into various animals, etc.*
 4. *Pursuers turn into alluring objects and place themselves in the path of the hero.*
 5. *The pursuer tries to devour the hero.*
 6. *The pursuer attempts to kill the hero.*
 7. *He tries to gnaw through a tree in which the hero is taking refuge.*
- XXII. Rescue of the hero from pursuit.
 1. *He is carried away through the air.*
 2. *The hero flees, placing obstacles in the path of his pursuer.*
 3. *The hero, while in flight, changes into objects which make him unrecognizable.*
 4. *The hero hides himself during his flight.*
 5. *The hero is hidden by blacksmiths.*
 6. *The hero saves himself while in flight by means of rapid transformations into animals, stones, etc.*

- 7. *He avoids the temptations of transformed she-dragons.*
- 8. *He does not allow himself to be devoured.*
- 9. *He is saved from an attempt on his life*
- 10. *He jumps to another tree.*
- XXIII. The hero, unrecognised, arrives home or in another country.
- XXIV. A false hero presents unfounded claims.
- XXV. A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
- XXVI. The task is resolved.
- XXVII. The hero is recognised.
- XXVIII. The false hero or villain is exposed.
- XXIX. The hero is given a new appearance.
 - 1. *A new appearance is directly effected by means of the magical action of a helper.*
 - 2. *The hero builds a marvellous palace.*
 - 3. *The hero puts on new garments.*
 - 4. *Rationalised and humorous forms.*
- XXX. The villain is punished.
- XXXI. The hero is married and ascends the throne.

Appendix 23: Vogler's model of heroic transformation and archetypes³⁸

Vogler offers a version of Campbell's model comprising the following stages and the function of each stage in moving the story along:

1. Heroes are introduced in the ordinary world where...
2. they receive the call to adventure.
3. They are reluctant at first or refuse the call, but...
4. are encouraged by a mentor to...
5. cross the first threshold and enter the Special World, where...
6. they encounter tests, allies, enemies.
7. They approach the inmost cave, crossing a second threshold where...
8. they endure the ordeal.
9. They take possession of their reward and...
10. are pursued on the road back to the ordinary world.
11. They cross the third threshold, experience a resurrection, and are transformed by the experience.
12. They return with the elixir, a boon or treasure to benefit the ordinary world.

Vogler identified a number of common archetypes in telling the stories and advancing them, not as rigid character types, but as functions.

1. Hero
2. Mentor—a wise elder
3. Threshold Guardian—positioned to keep the unworthy from entering
4. Herald—issues challenges and announces the coming of significant change or a new force

³⁸ Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters* (Ann Arbor: Michael Wiese, 2007), 19.

5. Shapeshifter—can change appearance or mood, difficult to pin down, may mislead or keep the heroes guessing, loyalty or sincerity often in question
6. Shadow—represents the energy of the dark side, the unexpressed, unrealised, or rejected aspects of something in the story; often the home of monsters in our inner world, or all the things we don't like about ourselves; can be villains, antagonists, enemies.
7. Ally—a companion, sparring partner, comic relief, conscience; someone to send on errands or to carry messages, to scout locations; someone for the hero to talk with, to reveal important questions in the plot; helps to humanise the heroes, adding extra dimensions or challenging them to be more open or balanced.
8. Trickster—embodies the energies of mischief and desire for change.

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