A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO EDUCATIONAL LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES, THEIR FOLLOWERS, AND THEIR ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

HENNIE VAN DER MESCHT

Rhodes University, Grahamstown
Education Department
August 1996

ABSTRACT

Leadership is a richly researched and widely covered topic, attracting the attention of virtually every discipline within the human sciences. Research which focuses on leadership within an educational context is, however, a relatively recent development. Most of the leadership research conducted in this century has been driven by the needs of industry. Consequently, leadership theories have tended to emphasise the instrumentality, measurability and effectiveness of leadership. Leadership models, intent on being prescriptive and 'learnable', have been inclined to oversimplify the complexity of the leadership phenomenon. Another factor which accounts for these features is the research approach adopted by researchers, which has largely been positivistic.

This study is an attempt to investigate the underlying dynamics of educational leadership. It is an in-depth study of five educational leaders' perceptions of themselves as leaders, of the people with whom they interact, and of the organisations within which they work. The study is conducted along the lines suggested by phenomenology, a highly qualitative, anti-positivistic research approach, which encourages the researcher to set aside pre-conceived notions of the phenomenon, and to describe what is found exactly as it presents itself.

My findings have highlighted a wide and richly varied range of psychological, emotional and cultural factors which seem to play significant roles in how leaders perceive themselves, others and their environments. Most of these factors have been either entirely ignored or very scantily covered in mainstream leadership literature. Educational leadership emerges as a complex, virtually undefinable phenomenon; new and challenging research approaches and methods have the potential for increasing our understanding of how leaders lead, which in turn will have implications for leadership education and selection.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people and institutions who, in various ways, helped to make the successful completion of this dissertation a reality. My sincere thanks to the following:

- My wife, Caroline, who said the right things at the right time and listened a great deal;
- Clive Smith, my supervisor, who never allowed his critical faculties a moment's rest, and never kept me waiting;
- Chris Stones, my co-supervisor, who introduced me to phenomenology, and remained infectiously enthusiastic throughout;
- My son, Stephen, the existentialist, who worried my mind and troubled my psyche;
- My friend and mentor, Don Maclennan, who read every word and got rid of many of them;
- The five leaders who participated so enthusiastically in this study;
- My colleagues in the Education Department at Rhodes, for sowing seeds and 'being there';
- Rhodes University, who allowed me six months' sabbatical to complete the dissertation, and for providing financial assistance;
- The Human Sciences Research Council (CSD) for helping to fund the research.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 The roots of this study 1
1.2 Statement of research question 5
1.3 How this study is organised 6

2. THE LITERATURE 7

2.1 The discourse of the discontented 7
2.2 A reservation 12
2.2.1 A brief aside: Comparing leadership and management 12
2.2.2 An overview of the literature 16
2.2.3 The person 16
2.2.4 The situation 18
2.2.5 Person and situation: A synthesis 19
2.2.6 An interim critical reflection 22
2.2.7 Towards a more holistic picture 25
2.2.8 An enriched situation: Understanding organisational culture 26
2.2.9 The person returns 29

3. METHODOLOGY 39

3.1 Introductory thoughts 39
3.2 The phenomenological approach 40
3.2.1 *Lebenswelt* - intentionality and dialogue 40
3.2.2 *Lebenswelt* - uniqueness 42
3.2.3 *Lebenswelt* - perceptions 43
3.2.4 Phenomenology - a "pretentious science" 44
3.3 The challenge of method 45
3.3.1 Bracketing and reduction 45
3.3.2 Description 47
3.4 Methodological strategies 48
3.4.1 Natural meaning units 48
3.4.2 A different existence 51
3.5 Why phenomonology? 52
3.6 Methodological start-up procedure 54

4. **FROM MEANING UNITS TO DESCRIPTIONS** 60

4.1 Brief biographical sketch of Simphiwe 63
4.1.1 Description of the structure Simphiwe as leader 63
4.2 Brief biographical sketch of Michael 67
4.2.1 Description of the structure Michael as leader 67
4.3 Brief biographical sketch of Elizabeth 73
4.3.1 Description of the structure Elizabeth as leader 73
4.4 Brief biographical sketch of Jim 78
4.4.1 Description of the structure Jim as leader 78
4.5 Brief biographical sketch of Phindiwe 72
4.5.1 Description of the structure Phindiwe as leader 82

5. **EXPLORING THE *LEBENSWELT* - A DIFFERENT DESCRIPTION** 85

Simphiwe 87
Michael 89
Elizabeth 91
Jim 93
Phindiwe 96

6. **FROM THE SPECIFIC TO THE GENERAL** 98

6.1 Methodological considerations 98
6.2 Dominant themes 105
6.2.1 Perception of self 105
6.2.1.1 Playing a role / being oneself 106
6.2.1.2 The influence of significant others: family members ... 107
6.2.1.3 The influence of significant others: 'Heroes' 108
6.2.1.4 A perceived difference from other people 109
6.2.1.5 Morality 111
6.2.1.6 Early formative experiences 112
6.2.1.7 Reading and literature 113
6.2.1.8 Self-concept 114
6.2.2 Perception of others (followers) 115
6.2.3 Perception of environment/organisation 119
6.3 General statement 121
6.3.1 How leaders see themselves 122
6.3.2 How leaders view others (followers) 124
6.3.3 How leaders perceive their environments (organisations) 125

7. **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS** . . . 126

7.1 Different questions . . . 126
7.2 Different answers . . . 128
7.3 My findings compared: New questions emerge . . . 129
7.3.1 The person emerges . . . 130
7.3.1.1 Playing a role and being yourself . . . 132
7.3.1.2 Mothers . . . 134
7.3.1.3 Heroes . . . 137
7.3.1.4 On being different . . . 143
7.3.1.5 Values and principles . . . 145
7.3.1.6 Early formative experiences . . . 147
7.3.1.7 Literature and reading . . . 149
7.3.1.8 Self-concept . . . 151
7.3.2 Leaders' perception of others: a fundamental paradox . . 153
7.3.3 Leaders' perceptions of environments/organisations . . . 156

8. **THE SEARCH CONTINUES** . . . 159

8.1 An unresolved tension . . . 160
8.1.1 The grids again . . . 160
8.1.2 The complexity of person . . . 161
8.1.3 The complexity of situation . . . 163
8.1.3.1 Of politics and ideology . . . 164
8.1.3.2 The culture crucible . . . 168
8.2 It's all in the mind 174
8.3 Finding the princess in the tower . . . 177

9. **FINAL REFLECTIONS** . . . 183

9.1 Phenomenology reconsidered . . . 183
9.2 The limitations of this study . . . 188

10. **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH** . . . 192

REFERENCES . . . 199

APPENDIX: Natural Meaning Units . . . 209

Simphiwe . . . 209
Michael . . . 219
Elizabeth . . . 232
Jim . . . 242
Phindiwe . . . 252

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Research, like almost everything else in life, has autobiographical roots (Seidman 1991:24).

1.1 The roots of this study

This research springs directly from personal experience.

Five years ago I left the teaching profession for a lecturing post at university. I had been a secondary school English teacher for 25 years, occupying several leadership positions, ranging from subject head to principal. My post at the university included designing and teaching educational leadership and management courses to post-graduates, so an intensive immersion in the literature naturally followed. Thus it was that two decades of experience as an educational leader were brought face to face with nearly a century of leadership research and theory.

I remember several satisfying moments where the literature seemed to speak directly of (and to) my own experience. I was comforted by these. I remember also moments of exhilarating discovery, where the literature seemed to challenge my assumptions and question the theory I had (inadvertently, I felt) devised in twenty years of practical leadership. I felt excited by these. But what I remember best were moments when it seemed as though I was the battleground where these two forces (my own experience, and the literature) could periodically meet, firing awkward questions at each other, leaving me, numbed and confused, to clear away the debris in preparation for the next round.

Out of these moments of satisfaction, of exhilaration, and confused struggle grew the course for my first full-time Bachelor of Education class. The students - mostly Black principals and deputy principals of schools and colleges - had all opted to do the Educational Leadership and Management module; hardly surprising, at a time

when the word "management" had gained such power as to be regarded as the panacea for all ills, for all past injustices, failures, and frustrations. To what extent the theories we explored could (directly or indirectly) feed into their practice was a question that frequently insinuated itself into our sessions together. More often than not the question left me confused and dissatisfied. Was it simply that we had had very different leadership experiences? My own experience had, after all, been confined to historically white schools; schools which, throughout the troubled decades of Black school unrest and protest, had remained unaffected and untroubled. The leaders in my class had, by contrast, been caught in the struggle, frequently wedged between student demands and protests on the one hand, and increasingly bureaucratic attempts to retain control emanating from the former Department of Education and Training, on the other. No doubt our different backgrounds played a role.

But there was more to it than that. Could it be that what I had been teaching was in some way inappropriate to their needs? This did not appear to be the case, for, judging by their evaluations, they had enjoyed the course enormously, and had found it beneficial and informative. They said they had especially enjoyed the detours into my own experience as a school principal. Perhaps, if I had been listening carefully enough at that time, I would have recognised in that remark the substance of what had been missing from the course I had taught.

Fortunately, some time after the completion of the course one of my students, Philip, helped me to focus more clearly on what had been worrying me. He asked me whether, as a principal, I had been conscious of the fact that I was a leader. Quite an innocent question on the face of it, with an obvious answer. Of course I had been conscious of being a leader. Anyone who has run a school will know that one is not often allowed to forget that fact: problems, decisions and crises seem destined, somehow, to find their way to the principal's office. But this was not what Philip had in mind.

When pressed to explain, he added that he wondered whether, as a principal, I had known about and consciously applied the leadership theories I had been teaching: a very different question, to which the only answer I could give was no. Judging by his smile he seemed satisfied.

But I was not. And as I continued to ponder the implications of Philip's question - and the answer - I gradually began to understand what it was about the course I had taught that year that had made me uneasy. It was simply that the theories and models I had presented had somehow attained a separate existence; they seemed to exist apart from the complex interplay of emotion, ideology and socio-political factors, such as the inequalities brought about by decades of apartheid; apart, that is, from the very humanity that makes schools places of human ideals and values. And because I had presented them uncritically I had left little room for personal intervention on the part of either my students or, indeed, myself. Poor teaching, one might say. I remember being so anxious to impart as much as possible in the way of mainstream leadership thinking - by which I mean chiefly American leadership thinking - in the time available that opportunities for critical reflection were rare. But there was more to it than that. Part of the problem lay with the very materials I was presenting as tried and trusted theories and models. They were, in fact, the very materials I had been introduced to on the in-service training courses I had attended as an educational leader.

Why had I gone straight for these in designing a course? Firstly because they were all I knew. Secondly, I found them stimulating and informative. And thirdly, they were eminently teachable.

I had, in the course of the 1970s and 80s, been fortunate enough to attend a number of professional growth seminars, where I was introduced to notions such as different styles of leadership - the classic autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire categorisations; and to the models according to which one could determine whether one was task-driven or person-oriented; and to ways in which principal teachers could

facilitate professional growth among teachers, even by means of teacher-evaluation. These I had always found stimulating. I remember returning from weekend seminars fired up and enthusiastic to spread the good news, only to find that, in the cold light of day - usually a Monday morning - the machinery of schooling was simply starting another week, and it was business as usual. And as daily demands multiplied, my seminar notes - which had seemed to me like illuminated scrolls - somehow disappeared into a bottom drawer in my desk to be discovered months (or years) later during a spring-cleaning. They had made no lasting impression. I was not fundamentally changed by them.

It was not that I was not ready to be changed. On the contrary, I was passionately interested in leadership, and had enjoyed considerable success in attracting highly motivated teams of English teachers. Together we had formulated inspirational visions of what English could become in relatively hostile circumstances. It was no easy task, for example, to infiltrate the stronghold of physical achievement and reward in a boys' boarding school and postulate cultural and academic achievement as an attractive alternative. But this we succeeded in doing.

But little of what we had achieved could be ascribed to what we had learned at leadership seminars, because that which made these models and theories so striking was their oversimplified, instrumental nature; the very same qualities that made them so forgettable. They had not touched us as people. In the same way my course had not touched my students as people.

Philip had, perhaps unwittingly, put his finger on a serious problem, a problem of authenticity. For I could recall few instances in the course of that year when I truly believed what I was saying. Paging through my lecture notes simply confirmed this feeling. Hollow words, I thought; shades of Eliot's "hollow" and "stuffed" men, whispering together in "dried voices ... quiet and meaningless" (Eliot 1969:81). Where, amongst these "dried voices", was <u>my</u> voice? And where were the voices of my students?

The theory I had been teaching sat uneasily on my conscience, maintaining a separate existence. I knew, from my own experience of leadership, that the kind of rationality and neat symmetry implicit in many of these theories and models was simply not capable of addressing the unaccountable element that exists in every successful leadership initiative. This is the very phenomenon which contemporary leadership writers are grappling with, as is apparent in works that discuss vision, organisational culture and values. Yet even here, as I shall show, the drive is towards an instrumentality and recipe-writing that is fascinating and even profound, but which all too frequently overlooks the central element: the person who leads.

Hence this study, which focuses exclusively on the perceptions of the educational leader. It explores how leaders perceive their 'selves', how they perceive others, and how they perceive the organisations in which they function. It is assumed that a study of this nature will help to illuminate some of the unaccountable elements usually overlooked in the mainstream literature.

Why a phenomenological study? This question is explored in Chapter Three. Suffice it to say at this stage that a phenomenological approach has the potential for allowing - encouraging - researchers to approach phenomena with open minds, without *a priori* expectations of what may be found.

1.2 Statement of research question

There are really two questions that drive this research:

> First, what does being-a-leader mean to the individual leader?
>
> Second, what might be an appropriate way of exploring the first question?

1.3 How this study is organised

Chapter Two is a selective review of leadership literature, arguing the point that 'the person' has by and large been neglected in leadership research.

Chapter Three justifies the use of a phenomenological approach in this study.

Chapter Four presents the first set of situated descriptions for the five participants leaders. Here the essence of being-a-leader is explicated for each participant. These, as well as all subsequent descriptions, are based on meaning units obtained from the participants' interview protocols which appear in the Appendix.

Chapter Five is an attempt at presenting more concretely situated descriptions of the five leaders' *lebenswelt*.

Chapter Six describes the areas of commonality among the participants, and thus arrives at general descriptions.

Chapter Seven presents the beginnings of a discussion of my findings, comparing these with other research findings, and isolates new questions that arise.

Chapter Eight is an attempt to answer these new questions.

Chapter Nine is an assessment of how fruitful a phenomenological approach has been in an investigation of this nature, and considers the limitations of this study.

Chapter Ten offers suggestions for future leadership research.

CHAPTER TWO

The literature

2.1 The discourse of the discontented

> *Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it ... and still the concept is not sufficiently defined* (Bennis 1994:259).

The first hard fact that the prospective student of leadership needs to accept is that he or she is setting off on an unusual kind of journey. In one sense the territory is known: who, after all, does not (intuitively) know what leadership is? The traveller may be excused, therefore, for striding out with a degree of confidence. But the moment he or she begins to consult the maps left behind by those who have gone before, that confidence is likely to be replaced by confusion and frustration, exactly the kind of frustration that underlies the lament quoted above.

Bennis' is no lone voice. Yukl's (1989:267) overview of leadership research begins on a similar note:

> The field of leadership is presently in a state of ferment and confusion. Most of the widely known theories are beset with conceptual weaknesses and lack strong empirical support. Several thousand empirical studies have been conducted on leadership traits, behaviour, power, and situational variables as predictors of leadership effectiveness, but most of the results are contradictory and inconclusive.

Yukl enlisted several other dissatisfied voices to support his point. Stogdill described four decades of research as an "endless accumulation of empirical data" that "has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership" (cited in Yukl 1989:267). Salancik, Calder, Rowland, Leblebici & Conway likewise found that "after many years of investigation, it appears we have no ready, useful answers" (cited in Yukl 1989:267). Both Yukl (1989:267) and Bass (1990:913) quote Miner as concluding

that "the concept of leadership has outlived its usefulness"; Miner "suggested a moratorium on traditional leadership research" (Yukl 1989:267). Even Bernard Bass (1990:912-913) who compiled the encyclopedic *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership* and is one of the more optimistic commentators, expressed several pertinent reservations about what has been achieved:

> [S]ome topics and research designs have been overworked while other important questions remain relatively unexplored. An enormous amount of original, creative research was coupled with a wasteful repetition of tests of shopworn hypotheses and a general disregard for negative results. The atheoretical research published before 1965 was too unfocused, but much of the research based on naive, uncritical theorising that followed retarded the process of new discoveries.

Certainly there are more questions than answers! Suddenly the apparently flippant remark attributed to Peter Drucker:

> Leadership is all hype. We've had three great leaders this century - Hitler, Stalin and Mao - and you see the devastation they left behind (cited in Huey 1994:24)

begins to sound a little less like a busy man's attempt to terminate a boring discussion.

That confusion exists can hardly be doubted, but this is not the issue I wish to pursue. The question I want to explore is why this confusion and lack of clarity should cause such frustration (and even despair) among researchers. This excerpt from Yukl (1989:2) provides a point of entry for this exploration:

> The term *leadership* means different things to different people. It is a word taken from the common vocabulary and incorporated into a technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being precisely redefined. As a consequence, it still carries extraneous connotations that create ambiguity of meaning.

These few lines are, I think, representative of the discourse of the discontented. A brief analysis of this excerpt, and the other lines quoted above, will perhaps help to shed light on the underlying causes of the writers' discontent.

Yukl's key point is that leadership is shrouded in ambiguity, it "means different things to different people"; and this clearly worries him. He would rather have it "precisely redefined" so that everyone would always know exactly what was meant by the term. But, he says, the word carries with it "extraneous" (irrelevant or superfluous) connotations, brought about by the fact that it was "taken from the common vocabulary", which I take to mean "unscientific" language. For Yukl, the world clearly has two modes of being: the common, ordinary mode, and the "scientific". He is troubled by the fact that a concept, appropriated by the "scientific' world, stubbornly retains nuances of its other, more common existence. He would struggle with the idea that the concept perhaps exists more happily in the common world.

Similar attitudes are apparent in the other lines quoted. Bennis complains that the concept is "still ... not sufficiently defined". Like Yukl, he believes leadership can and should be defined. Like Yukl, he is frustrated by the ambiguity surrounding the concept - its "slipperiness" - but also by its protean ability to appear "in another form to taunt us". Yukl describes leadership research as being in a state of "ferment and confusion" and Salancik *et al.* mourn the absence of "*ready, useful* answers" [my emphasis]. On the theme of research findings, Stogdill wonders when we will produce "an integrated understanding of leadership" [emphasis in the original], and Yukl is dismayed by the "contradictory and inconclusive" nature of results.

Perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of the world-view that emerges here is the writers' tacit adherence to the Cartesian notion of an independent reality, one that exists quite apart from us, which we can therefore subject to objective scrutiny. Leadership, they think, is something out there; it can be clinically observed (if only it would keep still for a while and be less slippery and protean) and defined (if only

it were less complex and we did not have "such a proliferation of terms" for it); it can be put to use (if only we could find "useful" answers). Leadership research could and should produce a definition that is "sufficient" and "precise" (if only researchers would all work together on the same problem so that there might be less "ferment" and "confusion").

These are all indications of the extent to which these writers thought in terms of a natural scientific line of enquiry: it manifests itself as an overriding concern for certainty, for precision, for agreement, and for usefulness of research findings. These are, of course, all admirable goals that any researcher - regardless of what research tradition he or she is working in - would want to attain. But the problem here is lack of fit. Leadership is not a natural science; it falls within the gambit of the social sciences (chiefly psychology and sociology, and, more recently, anthropology, political science and education). Yet leadership research has been largely dominated by a natural scientific mode of enquiry. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that there is "ambiguity" and "confusion". The fact that these writers express their frustration and unhappiness about this simply underlines the extent to which they are themselves trapped in what is perhaps an inappropriate research approach.

This is neither the place nor the time to mount an attack on logical positivism, and a defense of more naturalistic research positions. This battle has been fought and won often enough over the past few decades (see, for example, Polanyi 1969, Valle & King 1978, Kruger 1984, Greenfield 1984). But it needs to be emphasised that a phenomenon such as leadership - a human endeavour - should be looked at on its own terms. How appropriate is it to expect order, clarity and predictability in so complex a field of human interaction? Clearly leadership research would gain much from the adoption of a different stance, enabling researchers to work within more naturalistic frameworks that **embrace** and even revel in the complexity and ambiguities that are uncovered.

A few lines from Michael Polanyi (1969:156), a natural scientist who for years chipped away at the edifice of natural scientific enquiry, bring this section to a close. Writing in 1964, Polanyi argued:

> The original intention of logical positivism was to establish all knowledge in terms of explicit relations between sensory data. In the course of the last twenty years this programme has been gradually relaxed, by admitting more complex data and making allowance for 'open textures' and 'flexibilities' of the framework. The most recent development in this direction came to my notice in Michael Scriven's assertion that problems of structural knowledge in science can 'only be solved by reference to concepts previously condemned by many logicians as "psychological not logical", e.g. understanding, belief and judgment'.
>
> I suggest that we transform this retreat into a triumph, by the simple device of changing camps. Let us recognise that tacit knowing is the fundamental power of the mind, which creates explicit knowing, lends meaning to it and controls its uses.

The discontented voices quoted above could certainly gain by adopting an attitude of transforming 'retreat' into 'triumph'. Perhaps they would feel less threatened if they 'changed camps'. So, for example, it is possible to be excited, rather than frustrated, by the fact that leadership keeps changing form; this is after all a tribute to the human spirit's ability to adapt as circumstances, and the conception of the self, constantly mutate. It is possible to accept that leadership cannot be defined, though it can be described. And each subsequent description will illuminate another of the uncountable facets of a uniquely complex human phenomenon. If research is in a state of 'ferment and confusion', so much the better. It may encourage new and previously unexplored lines of enquiry. Furthemore, if results are 'contradictory and inconclusive' it is possible to submit that this is to be expected when one is dealing with a human science. Finally, that there is still no 'integrated understanding' of leadership is hardly surprising, since researchers seem to have been determined to analyse the phenomenon into its various components, and to study these in isolation, as I shall shortly demonstrate. It is difficult - impossible, perhaps - to gain a sense of the whole by concentrating solely on its constituent parts.

2.2 A reservation

This section is an attempt to present a selective overview of research trends and findings in the field of leadership. It is not an exhaustive literature review. Such reviews already exist (see Bass 1990); and, in any event, to the best of my knowledge, whilst there are several references to the need to conduct research into leadership along phenomenological lines (Bar-Tal 1989, Bass 1990, Goodman 1992), no such research has actually been undertaken. This in itself provides a meaningful reason why this overview is necessary, for I shall need to show how it is that a phenomenological study may help to illuminate another dimension in the multi-faceted picture that represents our understanding of leadership.

Furthermore, to suggest that the considerable body of leadership literature that exists is entirely irrelevant to this study would be both arrogant and false. I am confident that my findings will, to some extent, articulate meaningfully with what others have discovered, albeit by radically different means. I am also hopeful, though, that my research will throw light on previously concealed or poorly understood areas.

2.2.1 A brief aside: Comparing leadership and management

It is essential, however, that I first clear up a point of potential confusion. I do, throughout the thesis but in this chapter in particular, refer to both leadership and management theory and research. This is not to suggest that I believe these to be synonymous. They are, I think, essentially different activities, and yet sufficiently similar to each other to defy attempts to capture the essence of each in a glib definition. Neither can, I think, be easily defined. Yet I need to spell out my understanding of these concepts, and to explain why I think it appropriate to draw on management as well as leadership theory.

Leadership sounds more exciting than management. We think of a manager as one who maintains a system, keeps it running, and tries to preserve the status quo.

Functions that are typically managerial - such as evaluation, control and supervision - may have unpleasant connotations for us. By contrast, we think of a leader as one who challenges the status quo, one who bucks the system. Leadership behaviour and attributes - such as innovativeness and creativity - have appealing connotations for us. Where do these constructs come from?

"Management" has industrial and commercial roots. As Adair (1988:6) explains:

> In the 18th and 19th centuries the terms manager and management were applied to employees appointed by entrepreneurs to run their businesses. As owner-entrepreneurs gave way to publicly-owned companies so managers with entrepreneurial and leadership characteristics have been looked for, particularly at the more senior levels.

This link between management and business persists. Today we use the term "manager" more loosely: principals are regarded as managers; sports teams have managers; it has become customary and acceptable to apply the term to any person who heads an organisation, regardless of whether it is a profit-making organisation or not. In the same way our thinking has grown and broadened, so that we now give equal emphasis to factors other than the mere mechanics of running a business, such as the people who work there. And yet, some of the mechanistic nuances contained in Frederick Taylor's definitive *Principles of Scientific Management*, published in 1911, still pervade our thinking; hence we continue to associate management with efficiency, productivity, supervision and control.

By contrast, leadership is rooted in the grand narratives of history, inspiring and life-changing events that are part of our cultural heritage. Thus we hold in our collective imaginations the profoundly powerful examples of larger-than-life, charismatic world-changers: Moses led the Israelites to the promised land; Gandhi inspired India to independence; Chaka led the Zulus to glory; Mandela liberated South Africa. These are the people who supply the metaphor from which we draw our notion of leadership.

Naturally, changing times and circumstances affect and alter these constructs in subtle ways, but we still tend to think of leadership and management as two distinctly different, perhaps even mutually exclusive activities. Here is an example of this kind of dichotomous thinking, taken from the highly acclaimed *Leaders - The Strategies for Taking Charge* (1985:21) by Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus:

> There is a profound difference between management and leadership ... "To manage" means "to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct." "Leading" is "influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion." The distinction is crucial. *Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things* [emphasis in the original].

For all that this description sounds neat and acceptable, it is, I think, stating the difference too strongly. It is patently absurd to imagine that managers never "influence" others, or "guide" actions and opinions. And do leaders never "accomplish", or take "responsibility for" tasks? As for the italicised point of the extract, it has, I think, the ring of sloganeering one associates with advertising. Slogans may be useful teaching language, but they are not necessarily truths.

A more carefully reasoned (and reasonable) argument is provided by Richard Schmuck (1986). Schmuck summarised the differences between leadership and management in three statements. His first point refers to position and power. While the manager's power is legitimized by organisational structure, "leaders emerge because of the spontaneous recognition of followers ..." (p. 5). Secondly, while managers act in accordance with institutional interests, leaders "choose their actions in line with the followers' wishes, concerns, and interests" (p. 5). And finally, managers often try to maintain "rational detachment" (p. 5) from followers, whereas leaders typically try to achieve a sense of togetherness and teamwork. These are more subtle distinctions, grounded in organisational reality, and hence more acceptable.

But the crux of Schmuck's argument is his vision of a more holistic, multi-faceted phenomenon:

> administrators should combine both leadership and management skills into their repertoires ... Leadership brings the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment ... Management brings the efficiency, the concern with detail and coordination ...(Schmuck 1986:11).

This is similar, in some ways, to the kind of synthesis John Adair (1988) had in mind when he argued that management, whilst still being strongly anchored in Taylorist dogma, was moving closer to leadership by taking on board key leadership concerns. Using Douglas McGregor's Theory Y concept - which postulates that people are noble, altruistic, hard-working, and so on - as his basis, he concluded:

> Those who hold a high concept of man, as McGregor did, do tend to see management as synonymous with leadership. American writers such as Chester Barnard in his book *The Functions of the Executive* and Peter Drucker in *The Practice of Management*, and British writers - notably L.F.Urwick in *Leadership in the 20th Century* and Roger Falk in *The Business of Management* -all laid considerable stress on leadership within management. The experience of the Second World War, and the influence of such powerful advocates of leadership in management as Lord Slim further encouraged those who adopted what I have called the high view of management (Adair 1988:11-12).

Adair himself does not regard the two as synonymous, but in stressing the existence of one within the other, he clearly aligns himself with Schmuck: ideally, one wants both at the same time and in the same person.

This is the view I will take. Leadership and management exist side by side in a dialectic relationship. Each has distinctive qualities, but there are huge areas of overlap, areas that continue to grow as our understanding of both grows. I shall therefore need to draw on the literature of both.

2.2.2 An overview of the literature

In reviewing the most influential literature on leadership of this century one is struck by the tendency among researchers to polarise and isolate factors which help to determine the nature and effectiveness of leadership.

2.2.3 The person

The earliest records of empirical research on leadership, dating as far back as 1904 (Bass 1990:59), were concerned with identifying personal attributes of leaders. Drawing on the Aristotelian notion that "some are marked out for subjection, others for rule" (Hoy & Miskell 1987:271), the trait approach dominated leadership research until the middle of this century. It is true that the trait theory alone yielded little in the way of useful results. Ralph Stogdill's review of trait studies stretching over 42 years ultimately produced nothing more enlightening than a list of five or six general categories of the personal qualities associated with leadership (Hoy & Miskell 1987; Bass 1990). Its usefulness seems limited to its capacity to select the kind of person who is likely to prove successful in a very specific leadership role and setting. Stogdill himself expressed two pertinent reservations: "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits ..."; and "The pattern of personal characteristics of the leaders must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers" (cited in Hoy & Miskell 1987:272). It was probably the publication of Stogdill's article - *Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature* - in 1948 that "sounded the seeming death-knell of a pure traits approach to the study of leadership" (Bass 1990:78).

But the trait theory - or rather, trait thinking - is by no means dead. Every year when the topic of leadership is introduced in my classes, the students' first response is to want to produce a list of personal attributes which characterise the ideal leader. Hardly a surprising reaction, when one considers the extent to which history has been

shaped by leaders; indeed, the history of the world might well be interpreted as the history of leadership. Stories and accounts of great leaders through the centuries abound; and while it is true that researchers have worked hard to contain the phenomenon within the confines of what may empirically be studied as a science, it is equally true that the story of the leader, as a symbolic representation of an ideal type, continues to fire the imagination and feed the human spirit's need for perfection. It is these connotations which not only account for the way most people still think about leadership, but also for the fact that they think about it at all. Far from being "extraneous" (Yukl 1989:2) therefore, these connotations are central to our understanding of leadership. The trait approach did not fail because nothing was found: the reason for its failure lay, more fundamentally, in the kinds of questions that drove the research, questions which were so intent on finding overlap and agreement (Bass 1990:78) that the richness of what was being exposed was completely overlooked. As a result, there was no attempt to explore the probable sources or origins of observed personal attributes, particularly those of a psychological nature. Nor was there any interest in how each individual leader experienced his or her traits, and how these may therefore have been influencing their leadership.

A more critical, post-modern view of trait thinking is represented by Blackmore (cited in Ngcobo 1996), who has suggested that people in positions of power - such as selection committees who appoint teachers to promotions posts - have continued to think in terms of the "great man" theory to justify the exclusion of women from leadership positions "on the basis that most women do not possess 'leadership qualities' such as competitiveness, aggressiveness, rationality, forcefulness and independence" (Ngcobo 1996:10). The same argument may, of course, be used to explain selection procedures that are discriminatory on racial grounds. Models are socio-cultural constructs. In South Africa the model for ideal leadership is not only male, but also white, since it is the white male who has dominated economic, political, educational and cultural developments for the past few centuries. The ideal South African leader would therefore look no different from the idealised western

type, with his accompanying characteristics of aggression, competitiveness, need for authority and structure. A profile of what a Black South African leader may look like has been slow in coming; but the recent publication of *Ubuntu* (1995) by Lovemore Mbigi (with Jenny Maree) could be regarded as a modest attempt to begin to fill that gap. Mbigi drew attention to values that are derivative of Black African culture, some of which seem contradictory to those associated with the western ideal type of leadership and management. These are values such as group solidarity, conformity, compassion, human dignity, collectivism and mutual respect. If nothing else, *Ubuntu* points up a weakness of trait thinking, viz. its assumption that leadership is somehow culture-less and universal in terms of time and place.

2.2.4 The situation

For researchers and scholars in the field, however, the trait approach had lost its allure by the late 1940s. Stogdill's acknowledgement of the role played by the nature of followers (cited above) pointed the way for a pendulum swing away from the attributes of the leader towards a pre-occupation with situational factors. What followed was an over-emphasis on identifying distinctive characteristics of the setting in which leaders operated, leading to the view that leadership was "entirely situational in origin..."(Bass 1990:78). In seeking "characteristics of the setting to which the leader's success could be attributed" (Hoy & Miskell 1987:273), research seemed set on proving that leaders were made, rather than born; and, of course, therein lay the seeds of its demise. For while it is obviously true that circumstances influence and perhaps even shape leaders' behaviour, it is equally obvious that leaders are people who possess certain personal attributes; they are not blank slates on which situations may write formulae for successful leadership; their response to environmental influences must occur within the frameworks of who they are as people.

Not that the situational approach added nothing to our understanding; indeed, its emphasis on environment was in itself a valuable contribution, drawing attention to the fact that studying traits only cannot lead to a comprehensive understanding of

leadership. The movement also gave insight into just how complex the environment can become. Numerous contextual variables were isolated and described, including structural properties (such as size), organisational climate (such as the degree of openness), role characteristics (such as power) and subordinate characteristics (such as knowledge and experience (Hoy & Miskell 1987). Bass (1990) included elements of the external environment as situational variables, such as market stability, and economic, social and legal influences. Today we would probably be in a position to add several other key variables, particularly in the context of educational leadership; factors such as students' rights and political power, and the role of parents. Yet, to what extent these variables may be said to produce leadership remains an unanswered, and perhaps unanswerable question. Or better still, a question that does not need an answer. Isolating (and polarising) dimensions of leadership is unlikely to lead to an understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon. Thus the situational movement was ultimately caught in a trap of its own making.

2.2.5 Person and situation: a synthesis

A more profitable line of enquiry might have been to explore the reciprocal exchange of influence between leader and environment. As Hoy & Miskell (1987:374) put it: "To restrict the study of leadership to either traits or situations is unduly restrictive and counterproductive." Clearly a more thorough investigation of this dynamic was needed. But the trend towards negating the existence of predetermined, inborn leadership traits was too firmly established, and what followed was a proliferation of theories and models reducing leadership behaviour to styles which were determined by the manner in which leaders balanced the concern for task on the one hand, with concern for the feelings and well-being of the people on the other (Sergiovanni & Starratt 1988).

Classifying leadership in terms of styles seems to have had its origins in research conducted by Lewin, Lippitt and White in 1938 (Sashkin & Lassey 1983:95). Postulating three styles - autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire - the researchers set

up experiments with boys' clubs, using adults who had been instructed on which style to adopt. As might be expected, a democratic leadership style - one which allowed for group discussion and follower input - proved the most effective. The autocratic style led to hostility and a lack of productivity when the leader was absent. Under laissez-faire conditions the groups performed poorly; less work was done, and the high degree of disorganisation resulted in discouragement and aggression (Bass 1990: 545-546). Sashkin & Lassey (1983:96) reported that similar experiments carried out thirty years later with college students had produced similar results. The three-styles model thus stands as one of very few theories or models that have been validated through testing. It has also been enormously influential in several ways. The words "democratic", "autocratic" and "laissez-faire" have readily found their way into what Yukl (1989:2) would call our "common vocabulary". Bass (1990:900) goes so far as to suggest that:

> To some degree, all research on leadership styles prior to Burns' (1978) introduction of the concepts of transformational versus transactional leadership could be conceived of as being about democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire leadership, which takes us back to where it all began in 1938 with Lewin and Lippitt's seminal experiment.

The model has also fed directly into subsequent situational and contingency theories of leadership. One of the most influential of these, Blake and Mouton's (1964) "Managerial Grid" leans heavily on some of the overt and covert assumptions that drive the Lewin *et al.* model. The grid postulates that leaders' attitudes towards "Concern for production" on the one hand, and "Concern for people" on the other, may be ranked on a scale of 1-9. Thus it is possible to construct a graph where concern for people is the horizontal axis and concern for production the vertical. One could plot one's position on the graph by responding to a series of questions and scoring one's answers in the prescribed manner. Blake and Mouton described their five extreme positions as follows:

1.9 Country Club Management
9.9 Team Management

5.5 Middle of the Road
1.1 Impoverished Management
9.1 Task Management (Blake & Mouton 1983:126).

Obviously the ideal position is 9.9, where concern for people and for production are equally balanced. The grid was clearly an elaborated version of the three-styles model: "Task management" is "autocratic" leadership, "Team management" is "democratic", and "Impoverished management" is "laissez-faire". Where the grid offers some advancement over the earlier model is in making explicit the tension between task and person orientation, a tension that had (covertly) informed Lewin *et al.*'s thinking.

The centrality of this tension to earlier and subsequent leadership and management thinking warrants a brief exposition of its origins and varied applications. It seems that the separate and distinct nature of these dimensions (task and person orientation) was first explicated in studies conducted at the Ohio State University during the middle and late 1940s (Sashkin & Lassey 1983, Hoy & Miskell 1987, Hersey & Blanchard 1988, Bass 1990). The researchers developed the "Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire" (LBDQ), containing items describing "consideration" - friendliness, trust, mutual respect and warmth in the relationship - and "initiating structure" - establishing clear patterns and methods of procedure (Hersey & Blanchard 1988:91). Concurrent research conducted by the University of Michigan Survey Research Centre identified the same key dimensions, which they called "production-oriented" and "employee-centered" behaviour (Hoy & Miskell 1987:283). And the same tension informed the formulation of Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model, which distinguishes between "relationship behaviour" and "task behaviour" (Hersey & Blanchard 1988:188). In an attempt to fill a glaring gap in previous theories - situational factors - Hersey and Blanchard introduced another variable, viz. "follower(s) readiness", subdivided into "job readiness" and "psychological readiness" (Hersey & Blanchard 1988:188). Leaders would then be guided by the level of readiness (or maturity) of a particular follower in terms of what kind of style to adopt: an 'unready' subordinate would need high task and low

relationship leadership, and so on. Unlike the Blake and Mouton grid, however, the Hersey and Blanchard model does not postulate an ideal style: the leader needs constantly to shift his or her behaviour to match the maturity level of the particular follower (or followers) in any given situation.

Many other well-known and influential models may be mentioned here, but none offers much in the way of broadening the picture of leadership which behaviouristic thinking had manufactured. Fiedler's (1963) contingency model, for example, seems promising at first glance, as it professes to "take into account the personality of the leader as well as aspects of the situation which affect the leader's behaviour ..." (Fiedler 1983:160). But a closer look at what Fiedler means by "personality" reveals that we are back again with the two-faced animal trapped in Blake and Mouton and Hersey and Blanchard's grids. Similarly, the notion of "situation" - a dimension whose potential richness had already been explicated by situational approaches (see above) - is reduced by Fiedler to three "subscales" (Fiedler 1983:163): the extent to which leaders are accepted, the degree to which tasks are structured, and the positional power of the leader. Fiedler conceded that this was "a rough but useful method for defining situational favorableness" (Fiedler 1983:163).

2.2.6 An interim critical reflection

How is one to account for these various models' popularity and influence? It is not as though any of them has been found to be totally valid and reliable. Bass (1990) has painstakingly recorded the results of the batteries of tests that many of the more influential models have been subjected to; and for each set of results that confirms their validity, there are at least as many that do not (see, for example, pp. 483, 491, 506, 507). And yet, even in the absence of confirming evidence, the models have continued to feature in leadership training programmes. As recently as 1988 Hersey and Blanchard (1988:198) claimed:

> In 1974 the Information Systems Group (ISG) of Xerox ... made a

> major commitment to Situational Leadership as a training concept. Situational Leadership is now a corner-stone of ISG's building-block training strategy and is taught to middle-level as well as new first-level managers.

Why? The answer is, I think, fairly straightforward. These models have several appealing features in common. One of these is simplicity. Regardless of what refinements are added, each of these models essentially probes the same tension, viz. the leader's task- and person-orientation. Another is prescriptiveness. The act of leading can be alarmingly unpredictable and frustrating, as leaders will know. What these models offer is a prescribed way of doing, given a certain set of circumstances. This is probably what Bass (1990:494) had in mind when he concluded that situational models "give managers a sense of quick mastery of a complex problem". Vecchio (1987), has drawn attention to another feature of situational leadership theory, particularly as it occurs in Hersey & Blanchard's model. Noting the general reluctance among researchers to submit the theory to vigorous testing, he ascribed its popularity to its "strong intuitive appeal" (Vecchio 1987:446). A fourth feature - a logical development of the first - is the fact that the essence of most of these models can be (has been) graphically represented. For all that this may seem an insignificant feature, it is, I believe, a strong reason why the models are so easily memorised and understood, and so eminently teachable. How many people in the management/leadership business would fail to recognise the Hersey and Blanchard quadrants with their superimposed bell-shaped curve? The models provide clear and simple guidelines, and are, as such, ideal teaching material.

One has also to consider that, during the late 1950s to the early 1970s when these models were devised, organisations (including schools) were still viewed largely in terms of Taylorist notions of efficiency, and the even more pervasive rationality of an ideal bureaucracy first outlined by Max Weber (Hughes 1985). Thus the models, as guidelines to effective leadership, were appropriately complementary to prevailing management thinking.

It is, nevertheless, necessary to reflect critically on the theory - or, rather, the lack of theory - and general assumptions about human behaviour that underpin these models.

Perhaps the most obviously questionable of the designers' assumptions is their simplistic notion of personality, or personal attributes. Even Fiedler's contingency model (FCM), arguably the most sophisticated, is open to question in this respect. At the heart of the FCM is a scale consisting of sixteen semantic differentials. The scale, known as the LPC (least preferred co-worker), is used to measure leaders' attitudes to persons with whom they work least well. An LPC score will then indicate the extent to which a leader is task - or person-oriented (Hoy & Miskell 1987); it will, in short, determine a leader's "style", which, unlike "behaviour" (Hoy & Miskell 1987:285), remains constant and invariant: so much so that Fiedler recommended leaders change the situation to suit their styles, rather than the other way round.

However, as Bar-Tal (1989:81) has pointed out, "the LPC scale relates to a very limited portion of the universe of possible leadership characteristics". It cannot possibly, therefore, account for, or give a comprehensive picture of, a leader's personality traits. And even if it could, "it would still not explain followers' behaviour because it cannot account for a substantial portion of the variance of leaders' behaviour" (Bar-Tal 1989:81):

> The assumption behind conceptions of personality traits (such as the LPC) is that the individual who possesses certain traits maintains certain types of cognitions, needs and motives in every situation all the time. Such an assumption, however, is unacceptable. Cognitions, motives and needs are dynamic and may change (Bar-Tal 1989:81-82).

A similar criticism may be levelled at the model's perception of the situation as somehow being an independent, objectively verifiable reality that can be changed if it is at odds with the personality traits of the leader. This is, of course, nothing more or less than the Cartesian duality of person and world, a position that phenomenology

and ethnography would find indefensible, as has been pointed out. Phenomenology would argue that there is no situation other than that which the personality has construed; and that the personality has itself been partly construed by the situation. In short, the relationship between these phenomena is a dialogue in which meaning is constantly being re-negotiated. Any attempt at defining this dialogue in reductionist, statistical terms is therefore bound to be crude and simplistic, ignoring the subtle richness of what is actually happening.

Much the same may be said of the other models that gained currency over this period. The complex phenomenon of leadership found itself, again and again, reduced to grids, quadrants, scales, and graphs. The picture that emerged was a very clear one, but, simplified to the point where it could be most easily learned and memorised, it became in the end little more than recipe writing.

2.2.7 Towards a more holistic picture

> *Metaphor is often regarded as a device for embellishing discourse, but its significance is far greater than this. For the use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervades how we understand our world generally* (Morgan 1986:12).

The publication of James McGregor Burns' *Leadership* in 1978 marked the beginnings of a fundamental shift in leadership thinking (Sergiovanni & Corbally 1984, Bennis & Nanus 1985, Yukl 1989, Bass 1990). Burns' articulation of transformative leadership led to a move towards a more holistic and at the same time less traditionally scientific view of leadership. But before this development can be explored, I need to reflect briefly on how conceptions of organisations had developed: in this respect I agree with Sergiovanni (1984:115): "Leadership and its organizational context are inseparable and thus it is difficult to understand one without the other." And with Yukl (1989:212):

> An important source of insight into the dynamics of transformational leadership is provided by research and theory on organizational culture.

2.2.8 An enriched situation - understanding organisational culture

Situational and contingency models can, as has been pointed out, be viewed as appropriate to the prevailing notion of organisations. The organisational metaphors originating in Taylorism and bureaucracy have been powerful and pervasive: some would argue that they still prevail. Morgan (1986:22), for example, thought that the image of an organisation as a "machine" was still prevalent, "for the mechanistic mode of thought has shaped our most basic conception of what organization is all about." Hughes (1985:8) believed that:

> Schools and colleges, particularly if they are large, conform to a considerable degree to Weber's specification of bureaucracy, as judged by their division of work, their hierarchical structures, their rules and regulations, their impersonal procedures and their employment practices based on technical criteria.

And finally Bush (1986:45), synthesising structural, systems, bureaucratic, rational and hierarchical elements into what he called "formal models", warned:

> it would be inappropriate to dismiss formal approaches as irrelevant to schools and colleges. These theories remain valid as *partial* descriptions of organization and management in education.

But organisational thinking has developed beyond the boundaries imposed by the machine metaphor. Current thinking focuses on a richly extended conception of situational factors, usually referred to as corporate or organisational culture by contemporary writers such as Deal & Kennedy (1982), Sergiovanni (1984) and Schein (1985). Schein (1985, 1992) in particular has provided a comprehensive view of organisational culture. Yukl (1989:212) has summarised Schein's concept as:

> the basic assumptions and beliefs shared by members of a group or organization. The assumptions and beliefs involve the group's view of the world and their place in it, the nature of time and space, human nature, and human relationships. Schein distinguishes between underlying assumptions, which may be unconscious, and espoused values, which may or may not be consistent with these values.

> Espoused values that are not consistent with underlying beliefs based on prior learning will not accurately reflect the culture.

In a subsequent publication, Schein (1992:12) placed emphasis on the notion of how culture is learned by a group:

> 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 those problems.

He also referred to the "the perceptions, language, and thought processes that a group comes to share" and which "will be the ultimate causal determinants of feelings, attitudes, espoused values, and overt behaviour" (cited in Smith 1995:144).

The key aspect here is a renewed interest in the human factor, not the simplified notion adopted by contingency models, but the involvement of the whole person. Hence the emphasis on values, on world-view, on "perceptions, language, and thought processes." Other writers have slightly different emphases. Deal and Kennedy (1982), for example, wrote about "heroes" (p. 72), "rites and rituals" (p. 59), and "symbolic management" (p. 141). Vaill (1984:91) spoke of "purposing",

> *that continuous stream of actions by an organization's formal leadership which have the effect of inducing clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purposes* [emphasis in the original].

Bass (1990:587) summarised the content of organisational culture in a comprehensive table, including visible as well as invisible phenomena. Gradually the machine metaphor has given way to what Morgan (1986) would refer to as an "organism" (p. 39) or perhaps a "brain" (p. 79).

For all that this metaphorical shift may sound modern and new, its origins may be traced back to the 1920s. One of the most significant unexpected findings of the

Hawthorne Studies was the identification of an informal organization (and indeed, informal leadership) existing "alongside the formal organization ... designed by management" (Morgan 1986:41). Informal groups operated according to different, self-generated sets of rules and norms (Hoy & Miskell 1987). During the 1930s Chester Barnard's *The functions of the Executive* drew attention to the concept of an informal organisation "as a necessary concomitant of every *formal* organisation" (Hughes 1985:7). In the 1940s, Max Weber, the father of bureaucracy, distinguished between "two different ... meanings" of the concept of rationality:

> One is the more formal, organizational meaning, the *Zweckrationalität*, later designated by Mannheim as "functional rationality." This aspect of rationality is very closely related to the process of structural differentiation and complexity ... But rationality pertains also to the realm of meaning, of values, of *Wertrationalität*, of what has been called in Mannheim's terminology "substantive rationality" (Eisenstadt 1968:*li-lii*)

And in the 1950s:

> Philip Selznick proposed the "definition of institutionalised mission and role" and the "institutional embodiment of purpose" as being two essential functions of the "institutional leader" (Vaill 1984:89).

None of these early views does, of course, represent a truly new way of thinking about organisations. The "substantive" elements were simply the other side of the coin; for Barnard, for example, these were elements that needed to be kept in check by somewhat sinister means (Hughes 1985:7). A more clearly argued, penetrative attack on the prevailing metaphor of rigid structures followed in the 1970s with Cohen, March and Olsen's conceptualisation of the "garbage can model" (Bush 1986:110) and Weick's notion of "loose coupling" (Weick 1976:1). Both metaphors point to the ir-rational, dis-ordered elements that characterise educational organisations in particular, elements that led Bush (1986:108) to describe such organisations as "ambiguity models".

Thus, by degrees, the groundwork was laid for a more complete explication of what

we now understand as organisational culture. The phenomenon has come to provide the framework for contemporary management thinking, and for understanding transformative leadership.

2.2.9 The person returns

It would be fair to say that the concept of transformational leadership signified a renewed and enriched emphasis on the leader as person. The behaviourist models discussed earlier had reduced this dimension to a dichotomous task/person orientation, as in the Hersey and Blanchard model, or a task/person continuum, as in Fiedler. Against the more uncertain and unpredictable background of organisational culture, the transformational leader may be conceived as acting in ways which are sometimes beyond rational understanding. But never with complete freedom and power: the tension that now becomes central to leadership studies is that between the enigma of the charismatic leader, and the need to curtail this power in the interests of institutional welfare.

It is a debate that featured strongly in the work of Max Weber. Weber wrote extensively on charisma, defining it as:

> a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities (cited in Eisenstadt 1986:xviii).

But what seemed to preoccupy Weber was not the nature of the charismatic personality itself so much as the need for the "routinization" of charisma:

> [The] transformation of a great charismatic upsurge and vision into some more continuous social organization and institutional framework constitutes the first step in the routinization of charisma ... the process through which the charismatic characteristics are transferred from the unique personality or the unstructured group to orderly institutional reality (Eisenstadt 1968:xxi).

Loye (1977:1) has commented on how "tortured" Weber appears to have been by "the charismatic appeal of ideological involvement in conflict with his **scientific need** [emphasis in the original] for non-involvement".

Similar quandaries characterise contemporary writers' notions of transformative (or transformational) leadership. Burns (1978:442), for example, returned to the "great man" model for his explication of the transformational leader. This is apparent in the examples he used, charismatic world-changers such as Gandhi, Moses and Joan of Arc. But he went on to demonstrate how the role of the "great man" could be "demythicised" and "demystified" through a systematic consideration of the practical implications of transformative leadership. And while he insisted that the role of the "great man" was in no way "diminished" through this analysis, one senses his anxiety to identify guidelines for the free-ranging spirit of the transformational leader.

Usually, though, these guidelines take the form of values. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of transformational leadership - according to the literature - is the normative and motivational influence of values. The elements of bargaining and of a (sometimes undeclared) contract which characterise transactional leadership are replaced by loftier ideals of moral transformation. Transforming leadership, Burns (1978:20) explained, occurs:

> when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.

In similar vein Covey (1992:102) regarded "principle-centered power" as being the only legitimate power a "principle-centered leader" will utilise, since it is built on moral principles such as integrity, honesty and trust. And morality lies at the heart of the explication of the notion of vision that has so gripped the imagination of scholars, frequently occurring as the key element in the new generation of writers' leadership treatises (Bennis and Nanus 1985, Block 1987, Peters 1987, Senge 1991, Wilson 1992).

Feather (1992:111) has described values as:

> organized summaries of experience that capture the focal, abstracted qualities of past encounters, that have a normative or oughtness quality about them, and that function as criteria or frameworks against which present experience can be tested ... But they are not affectively neutral abstract structures. They are tied to our feelings and can function as general motives.

If indeed values are "tied to our feelings" - as they surely must be - as well as "central to the self-concept" (Feather 1992:109), one would expect contemporary leadership literature to convey a strong sense of the leader as person. Yet this is rarely the case.

One of the reasons is of course the kind of research that has been conducted. Bass (1990:140-150) lists numerous researchers' attempts to find correlations between leaders' values and their effectiveness. Typically these studies have been surveys, operating on predetermined descriptions of what researchers regarded as values. What has emerged has of necessity been a series of generalised pictures that give little sense of leaders' personal qualities and make-up. An example mentioned by Bass (1990:144) is the application of England's "Personal Values Questionnaire" administered to 2000 American, Australian, Indian and Japanese managers. The most significant finding was that successful leaders in all four countries were guided by pragmatic rather than moralistic values, "emphasizing productivity, profitability and achievement" (Bass 1990:144). Yukl's (1989:190) reference to Ewing's study of case histories indicates the extent to which research into values seemed inevitably destined to reveal an all too familiar sounding dichotomy:

> Successful managers deemphasize personal values, such as kindness, gentleness, and sympathy, and instead emphasize getting results.

We have not, it seems, moved far beyond the task/person dichotomy which had characterised personal attributes in the behaviourist models previously described.

But another, more powerful reason is that, far from being "affectively tied to our feelings" (Feather 1992:111), values are frequently treated in the literature as instrumental and pragmatic organisational goals rather than moral, normative guidelines. For Bennis and Nanus (1985:104), values:

> might dictate that whatever the new vision for the future of the bank is, it should emphasize quality and excellence of service ...

Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1992:105) found that what they called "Professional Values" - "specific role responsibility, consequences for one's immediate clients ... and knowledge" - were most frequently cited by respondents as influential in their decision making. The group they called "General Moral Values" was the least frequently cited. Schein (1992:9) referred to "espoused values" as:

> the articulated, publicly announced principles and values that the group claims to be trying to achieve, such as 'product quality' or 'price leadership'.

It seems, then, that leadership discourse has settled on a semantic variable of the concept of values - as things, outcomes or goals that <u>are valued</u> - that is unlikely to provide a basis for research into the leader as a morally involved, individual person. Deal and Kennedy (1982:22), discussing this very phenomenon, distinguished between "ultimate" and "particular values":

> Even if ultimate values are chimerical, particular values clearly make sense for specific organizations operating in specific economic circumstances. Perhaps because ultimate values seem so elusive, people respond positively to practical ones. Choices must be made, and values are an indispensable guide in making them.

This may be so; but however "chimerical" or "elusive" ultimate values may be, they do exist. And leaders do bring unique ethical frameworks to bear in their leadership. To ignore these, and focus instead on practical (or shared, or espoused) values only, has the effect of reducing the sense of the leader <u>as person</u> to just another variable in the organisational culture. Contemporary leadership literature has therefore largely

failed to capture the uniquely personal element of leadership. Indeed, the person vanished entirely in Sergiovanni's (1992:41) argument that "community norms" could act as a unifying force in organisations which were geared towards developing "self-management"; these norms then became "substitutes for leadership", making leadership redundant.

And yet, researchers and writers seem unanimous in affirming the centrality of the leader as the initial articulator of the organisation's vision (Deal & Kennedy 1982:38; Bennis 1984:65; Bennis & Nanus 1985:95; Yukl 1989:211; Schein 1992:211). This fact was corroborated by Smith (1995) in a recent study of teacher socialisation in a South African multi-cultural school. Whereas he had initially thought that recruitment would be the decisive factor in desegregating a school staff, Smith's understanding of the teachers' experiences and perceptions led him to conclude that:

> the founding Principal's leadership [was] the [emphasis in the original] decisive factor ... His visionary and moral leadership attracted people of diverse racial, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds around him. Teachers are adamant his decisive, at times insistent to the point of being autocratic, style rallied them to a cause that they unconsciously shared and which he articulated (Smith 1995:297-298).

So too, Carlson (1996:102), in investigating the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in two schools - one in South Africa and one in the United States of America - found that "Most of the major problems experienced with TQM at the two schools seem to have been rooted in leadership issues."

Why, then, the reluctance among researchers to investigate the person, to search for the essential being of leadership? Is it, perhaps, as Loye (1977:2) has suggested, "as though we sense the search could lead to a violation of the temple wherein are kept the ultimate secrets of self and society"? Contemporary writers on leadership and organizational culture have done much to liberate our thinking, highlighting some of the intangible elements in these spheres. But more often than not their writings become recipes for success, and the question driving research seems still to be "What

should leaders do?" This is true also of educational organisations, as Griffiths (1993:152) has pointed out:

> Schools and colleges are becoming accustomed to terms like 'senior management teams', 'total quality management' and 'line' or 'matrix management', all of which have been imported into educational thinking and practice from business. Little of this activity focuses on the personal beliefs of individual teachers - and, as is clear from overviews, even concepts like 'ownership', 'partnership' or 'shared ethos' can conceal attempts to mitigate imposed change, rather than real sharing.

Griffiths (1993:152) argued for research approaches that draw on "reflective practice, and the subjective experience of teachers, often making use of research into the self ...." She rooted her argument in Heidegger's notion of authenticity. Authenticity, according to Heidegger, is derived from the world we inhabit, provided that we are able to step out of that world and critically assess its nature (Griffiths 1993:153). Research participants therefore need the freedom to express who they are, to tell their own "autobiography ...[as] an important part of [their] feeling of self-worth and authenticity" (Griffiths 1993:153).

The thrust of Griffiths' argument is a torch Thomas Greenfield has been carrying for over two decades. In a paper published in 1975 Greenfield attacked the then prevalent structural-functionalist and systems view of educational organisations as "distinct from the actions, feelings and purposes of people" (cited in Hughes 1985:18). Hughes (1985:18) identified this paper as "a landmark in theory development". And of course, the mid-70s was indeed a time of transformation of management and organisational thinking, as I have shown. It seems, though, as if the core of Greenfield's argument is hardly represented in contemporary writing. Greenfield (1984:150) spoke of organisations as "nonnatural entities" and "cultural artifacts". Leadership needed to be understood as the will and imagination of individuals:

> To talk of leadership, therefore, we must talk about leaders and about those who follow them or who fail to follow them. We must talk too about the meanings that bind leaders, followers, and all participants together in the social setting ... we will see schools and organizations generally as cultural artifacts, as products of human imagination bearing the imprint of individual men and women (Greenfield 1984:158-159).

Reflecting on the relevance of Greenfield's writing to Catholic schooling, Cahill (1994:253-254) has drawn attention to Greenfield's use of a metaphor which appropriately captures his vision of education:

> He [Greenfield] argues that the 'factory model' of schooling diminished the understanding of education as a 'deeply mysterious process', and instead he uses the metaphor of the educator who moves the students in certain directions just as a gardener works with and brings out the spirit of what is already there.

As might be expected, Greenfield refused to cloak the problematic issue of personal moral consciousness in institutionally clinical terms, as many other contemporary writers are inclined to do:

> No one can escape from the fundamental questions: What must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil? The answer is only possible thanks to the splendour of the truth which shines forth within the human spirit (cited in Cahill 1994:256).

Not that Greenfield is alone in this position. A recently published report on a panel of scholars and practitioners' deliberation on leadership has drawn attention to what the panel described as "intangible human qualities" (Bolman & Deal 1994:85). According to the writers, "the panel's deliberations emphasized the importance of leaders' hearts" (Bolman & Deal 1994:85). A panellist is quoted as saying:

> The separation of leadership from the question of who I am and what is my purpose and meaning in life is moral illiteracy. People in leadership positions don't have the language to talk about morality, nor the words to describe it... They therefore become victims of the dominant values of our society - careerism, materialism, and measuring who I am by how much power I have. (Porter).

This observation is, interestingly enough, nothing less than a more recent version of Loye's 1977 comment that the nature of our political, economic and social tasks results in a "nonideological pragmatism" which "can only be solved by an emotion- and value-free rationality...." (Loye 1977:7).

The implications for research are clear. As more scholars and leaders insist on upholding the primacy of personal values, of individual choice, of the human spirit's will and imagination, so the individual in all his and her complexity may gradually begin to occupy centre-stage in organisational and leadership enquiry. Ethnographic and phenomenological approaches are well suited to this line of enquiry, for in both the notion of an independent reality, that is open to objective, rational enquiry, is assumed to be questionable. Both set out from the assumption that it is the subjects' (or research participants') experience of their reality that is to be investigated. Phenomenology in particular claims that the only reality open to investigation is the reality constituted by the individual (Valle and King 1978). For the ethnographer - whose discipline is anthropology and whose interest is chiefly in culture - there is an acceptance that "the informant has native emic knowledge"; the researcher's role is to "promote the unfolding of emic cultural knowledge" (Spindler 1987:20). Both approaches are driven by a need, on the part of the researcher, to gain deeper understanding of a uniquely complex situation involving human interaction, "to discover what is going on there" (Wilcox 1982:458). Both reject the notion of an hypothesis that can be empirically tested, postulating instead a bracketing (or setting aside) of preconceptions or stereotypes (Wilcox 1982, Stones 1988) on the part of the researcher, so that the data can speak for themselves.

It is therefore not surprising that both ethnography and phenomenology are frequently mentioned as potentially fruitful approaches. Willower (1982:4) felt that:

> [phenomenological] analyses ... appear to have real potential if undertaken by persons who have carefully studied phenomenological method and its various historical manifestations.

Greenfield argued that "phenomenological" and "qualitative-ethnographic" approaches had the potential for investigating "human intention, value, commitment ... human will and choice" (Cahill 1994:255). Bar-Tal (1989:87-91) proposed a focus on the "phenomenological fields" of leaders and followers as a potentially more fruitful line of enquiry than the application of models such as Fiedler's Contingency Model. Goodman (1992) spoke of researchers' obligation to question their notions of reality and referred to phenomenology as one the first "alternative paradigms" (Goodman 1992:118), where people are viewed as actively constructing their reality, and conflicting interpretations and interests are seen as normal. Starratt (1993:5) drew attention to the need for studies in which different genres - such as narrative, story and anecdote - are acknowledged and applied:

> The narrative and 'thick' description tend to present a longitudinal and more dynamic picture of leadership than the static, snap-shot and quantified picture derived from surveys of leaders and subordinates. Analyses of these narratives yield useful generalizations which summarize the dynamic and longitudinal patterns of leaders' activities. These generalizations are illustrated by captivating stories ...

Yet few researchers seem to have taken up the challenge. Greenfield (1984:161) could find only two studies which "focus upon school principals as leaders": Harry Wolcott's (1973) *The Man in the Principal's Office* and Mary Metz's (1977) *Classrooms and Corridors: The Crisis of Authority in Desegregated Schools*. The fact that neither of these works gets even a mention in Bass's (1990) authoritative and encyclopedic handbook of leadership is in itself an indication that mainstream leadership research is not prepared (or perhaps not ready) to acknowledge alternative approaches, in this case ethnography. Yet, where might an interested student find a richer, more fully (and 'realistically') fleshed out picture of the leader as person than in Wolcott's landmark publication? Admittedly the reader has to work a little harder to construct that picture. There are no tabulated findings, no statistical analyses, no ready made, quick-fix answers. There are, instead, dense narratives and 'thick' descriptions, yielding a rich, human, universally 'true' explication of the person who leads a school, of those who are led, and of the complex organisational environment.

Smith's (1995) recent ethnographic study of a South African school - referred to above - gives a similar sense of the person, especially the principal, but also, though to a lesser extent, the teachers. Smith (1995:98-118) devoted an entire chapter to an explication of the founder principal's "cultural paradigm" , his "vision" and how this vision came to be shared, and how a particular culture was eventually established. Genres employed were those of description, and of liberal quoting from interview transcripts. In this way the principal as well as other staff members interviewed were allowed to speak for themselves, so that a rich and dynamic picture could emerge. And because the researcher was driven simply by a need to find out what was happening, rather than the need to support or refute an hypothesis, Smith could acknowledge "contradictions" (Smith 1995:110) in the principal's cultural paradigm, adding further to the sense of the principal as person.

But there are still - it would appear - comparatively few studies of this nature. There are - as far as I could establish - no studies of educational leaders conducted along phenomenological lines. This study, then, is an attempt to begin to address what many scholars and writers have identified as a need. The next chapter is devoted to an explication of the particular line of phenomenology employed, and to a justification of why it is deemed appropriate to the questions that drive this research, questions probing the realm of leaders' perceptions of themselves, of those they lead, and of their environments.

CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

3.1 Introductory thoughts

Since phenomenology as a research approach and methodology has been extensively described and applied (see, for example, Giorgi, Fischer & Von Eckartsberg 1971, Denton 1974, Valle and King 1978, Kruger 1984 and 1988, and Spinelli 1989) I confine myself in this chapter to touching on some of its more salient features, particularly those which have helped to inform this research. I then move on to justify more fully my reasons for choosing to conduct this research in the phenomenological tradition, and finally to describe how the research was initiated.

To move beyond this point - i.e. of initiating the research - within the confines of this chapter would be phenomenologically unsound. There is no one correct methodological procedure; the methodological steps taken by the researcher cannot be pre-determined. This does not of course imply that steps should not be planned beforehand; but essentially such planning should be open-ended, leaving room for revision, adaptation and even complete rejection of some of the envisaged strategies. This position has been defended by Amedeo Giorgi (Giorgi *et al.* 1971:11):

> The problems of methodology cannot be considered in isolation, but only within the context of the phenomenon to be investigated and the problem aspect of that phenomenon. These three things, the method, the phenomenon and the problem aspect of the phenomenon must be dialogued continuously and no one of them can be considered to the total exclusion of the others.

Methodological issues can therefore not be confined to this chapter, but must of necessity be dialogued throughout the thesis.

3.2 The phenomenological approach

The phenomenological research approach arises from an existentialist view of the world, one which seeks to understand the human condition "as it manifests itself in *concrete, lived* situations" (Valle and King 1978:6.) Phenomenology collapses the Cartesian duality (of mind and body, and, by implication, subject and world) by insisting on the interrelatedness and interdependence of people and their lived-world (*lebenswelt*). Human beings are thus never seen as separate from the world they inhabit.

More significantly, human beings constitute their world, and are in turn constituted by the world (Valle and King 1978). In other words, people are seen as fully contextualised, making meaning of their world and being endowed with meaning in turn. This notion of co-constitutionality - or *being-in-the-world* - is central to the phenomenological position, and informs both the nature and procedure of the research. The researcher is bound to attempt to enter the world of the participant, in order to gain understanding of the participant's *lebenswelt*, and to gain insight into how it is being constituted. How is such entry to be achieved? Before this question can be addressed the nature of the *lebenswelt* needs to be more fully explicated.

3.2.1 *Lebenswelt* - intentionality and dialogue

A key concept in understanding the special characteristics of the *lebenswelt* is the notion of **intentionality** as articulated by Brentano and later Edmund Husserl (Spinelli 1989:11). Derived from the Latin (*intendere*) - "to stretch forth" - the term refers to "the fundamental action of the mind reaching out to stimuli which make up the real world in order to translate them into its realm of meaningful experience" (Spinelli 1989:11). "Stimuli" here refers always to objects, as explained by Kruger (1988:28):

> Consciousness ... always intends an object - I do not just love, I love someone, I do not just see, I see something... He [Husserl] investigated consciousness as intentionality, i.e. consciousness as being

> directed on to that which is not consciousness itself. ... being conscious means an intentional act through which man lets the world appear to him.

The word "lets" is perhaps an unfortunate choice here, since it implies choice on the part of the individual where no choice exists. To live is to be constantly in the world, intentionally making meaning and being endowed with meaning. We are, in Merleau-Ponty's words, "condemned to meaning" (cited in Valle and King 1978:102.) Thus a key feature of the *lebenswelt* is dialogue: "Man is neither an encapsulated subjectivity nor an organism but rather a dialogue with a meaningful world" (Kruger 1988:30). Understanding this fundamental position has significant implications for the researcher, as it helps to define the terrain which is to be interrogated. The researcher must needs focus on the dialogue itself, the "dialectical organization of experiencing-behaving subject and physical social world which essentially defines the phenomenon in question" (McConville 1978:103). Sartre's distinction between *pour soi* and *en soi* (McConville 1978:103) is helpful here:

> The term "en soi" (in itself) is used by Sartre to denote the physical, natural world. He uses this term always in counterpoint to "pour soi" (for itself), which refers to human consciousness. Like most existential-phenomenological ontologists, Sartre founds his comprehension of Being upon an investigation of the dialectics of subject (pour soi) and world (en soi).

The researcher's focus is on neither the human subject nor the human world, but necessarily on the meaning which is itself a process. In a sense, then, the phenomenon which the researcher investigates is accessible only by means of the dialogue, the meaning of which comes about through the interaction between subject and world.

3.2.2 *Lebenswelt* - uniqueness

Another characteristic of the *lebenswelt* is its uniqueness to each individual. It goes without saying that no two people will experience their worlds in quite the same way; even the simple act of observing a tree will differ (however subtly) from observer to observer. Husserl's explanation of this phenomenon was to distinguish between two constituents of intentionality:

> The **noematic focus**, that is the what of the experience, is made up of the content ...[i.e. it is the object or objects being observed]. The **noetic focus**, on the other hand, contains those referential elements dealing with how each individual's various cognitive and affective biases add further elements of meaning to the experience. Together, the noematic and noetic foci lead each individual to interpret the [same] experience in a different and unique manner ...(Spinelli 1989:14).

Keen (in Valle and King 1978:245) distinguished between "immediate experience" and "reflective experience", the latter being experience which has been filtered by linguistic and cultural frameworks. These frameworks correspond to what Spinelli referred to as "cognitive and affective biases" , i.e. schemata, mental and attitudinal frameworks which filter and shape our experience in a unique way, thus rendering them "only partially sharable" (Spinelli 1989:14). This is not to say that each individual's experience of the world is unsharable. Naturally there <u>are</u> shared experiences, or areas that are shared, particularly where people have common cultural and linguistic roots. These are not to be denied: indeed these form the structure of life as we know it, and serve to highlight the uniqueness of individual *lebenswelt* elements. In a multiple case-study such as this one, the researcher is likely to identify areas of commonality among his five participants; his task will not end there though, for he needs to interrogate that which is unique in each participant against this fabric of commonality.

3.2.3 *Lebenswelt* - perceptions

Any attempt at gaining understanding of individuals' *lebenswelt* requires an acknowledgement of the importance of perceptions. The researcher needs to accept that the "concrete, lived world" is made meaningful by means of reflective experience. Inasmuch as the "concrete" includes objects, people, places, feelings and attitudes, the individual's dialogue with these, even at its most primitive level (such as in narratives) are perceptions, and it is these perceptions that constitute the data to be explicated. Giorgi (1994:203) is particularly helpful on this point:

> The phenomenological approach admits to a reality independent of consciousness but claims that knowledge of such reality can only occur through consciousness of it, so it is better to study the reality claims made by persons through their consciousness of it. The task here is to understand the reality claims (or non-reality claims) precisely as they are made by the research participants. In other words, it is the perceived reality that phenomenologists are interested in, and often 'distortions' are more vital than veridical perceptions.

What seems significant here is that perceptions are seen not as complete, finite views of reality, but as constantly shifting interpretations. Further, that the perceptions themselves constitute dialogue: i.e. perceptions arise from our experience of reality, but serve also to shape our reality. It is assumed that our perceptions are reliable indicators of how we are likely to act upon (or react to) our environments. Though cast in broader sociological terms, Giddens' theory of structuration hinges on a similar notion:

> Giddens asserts the interdependent and dynamic relationship between agent and context. The agent makes sense out of his context, and that making sense of it generates action. The action, however, reproduces the context, or, as Giddens would label it, the 'structure'. At the heart of this analysis is Giddens' notion of the 'duality of structure'. Instead of allowing a dualism of action and structure, Giddens posits a duality: action is shaped by structure but at the same time action produces or reproduces structure (Starratt 1993:26).

In phenomenological terms, the relationship between perceptions and reality is also seen to be "interdependent and dynamic", so much so that our perceptions come to mean reality itself, or at least the only reality we are able to subject to scrutiny.

3.2.4 Phenomenology - a "pretentious science"

Acknowledging the role of reflective experience has significant implications for the researcher. Since the researcher is essentially investigating the meaning which the individual makes of his or her world, it goes without saying that the individual's schemata will themselves become the focus of such investigation. Yet herein lies an inherent paradox, for it is the phenomenologist's intention to "solve problems prereflectively" (Van den Berg 1972:75); i.e., to access and gain insight into individuals' immediate or prereflective experience. It is the "impossibility" of this task that leads Van den Berg (1972:75) to describe phenomenology as an "extraordinary and pretentious science":

> Pretentious, for how can one think about, reflect on, that which, by definition, takes place before thinking, prereflectively?

It is in the phenomenologist's response to this "impossible" challenge that the rigour of phenomenology lies. Van den Berg's answer - to "... make the problem speak for itself" (1972:75) - sounds deceptively simple. For in order to allow a phenomenon to "speak for itself" the researcher needs to interrogate and acknowledge his or her own schemata, preconceptions and notions of the topic at hand. It is in this process of acknowledging and setting aside such preconceptions that the real rigour of the phenomenological method lies.

Against this background, I return to the question posed earlier: How is the researcher to gain entry into the *lebenswelt* of the participant and try to make sense of it?

3.3 The challenge of method

3.3.1 Bracketing and reduction

At the heart of a phenomenological approach to research lies what appears to be a paradoxical position. Van den Berg (1972:63) advised:

> He who desires to know what, in a given situation, is happening psychologically, does well *to put himself in that situation* [emphasis in the original].

Polanyi (1969:153) spoke of "indwelling". Distinguishing between two ways of perceiving - "looking *at* and attending *from*" - he developed his theory of "tacit knowing" as a necessary condition for all knowledge:

> Every time we make sense of the world, we rely on our tacit knowledge of impacts made by the world on our body and the complex responses of our body to these impacts... Phenomonology contrasts this feeling of our body with the view of the body seen as an object from outside. The theory of tacit knowing regards this contrast as the difference between looking *at* something and attending *from* it at something else that is its meaning. Dwelling in our body clearly enables us to attend *from* it to things outside, while an external observer will tend to look *at* things happening in the body, seeing it as an object or as a machine. He will miss the meaning these events have for the person dwelling in the body and fail to share the experience the person has of his body. Again we have a loss of meaning by alienation and another glimpse of the meaning of dualism (Polanyi 1969:147-148).

Polanyi argued further that it was only through *indwelling* that the external observer was able to attend from rather than look at that which he or she was observing. In collapsing the scientific dualism of 'something out there' to be observed, and an objective or external observer, Van den Berg and Polanyi posited a position of **subjectivity**, involvement that amounts to virtual identification with that which is to be studied. Yet in order to achieve indwelling, one has to subject oneself to such rigorous examination as will expose any presuppositions one may have, approaching

the object of study with an open mind. This argues for as high a level of **objectivity** as may be attained. The phenomenological method operates within the field of tension between these two positions. It is only when such objectivity has been attained that the researcher may be true to the most fundamental dictum of phenomenology as methodology, viz that the data must speak for themselves.

This is achieved through a process of:

> phenomenological reduction - a process of suspending, or bracketing, personal preconceptions and presuppositions by making them explicit ... through this process the researcher attempts to approach the phenomenon of investigation from a position of conceptual silence (Stones 1988:124).

For Giorgi (1994) this research position has the potential for opening up the investigation to previously unimagined possibilitities:

> The researcher's phenomenological task then, is not to specify in advance the nature of the reality as taken up and posited by the research participants. This frees the researcher to discover possible reality claims that may be outside his or her *a priori* specifications (Giorgi 1994:203).

A reservation needs to be spelt out here. It has to be conceded that complete reduction cannot be achieved. It is as much as to claim that I, the researcher, can identify and strip away the sum total of my schemata, every assumption, feeling and attitude I may have about the phenomenon of leadership. Clearly this is impossible. I cannot, therefore, approach the phenomenon in total "conceptual silence". There is no such thing as "immaculate perception", as Wolcott (1994:13) has reminded us. What is intended here is clearly an ideal.

Yet the attempt must be made, if one is to be true to one's data, for the temptation to classify, categorise and in the process reject some of one's raw data must be suppressed until repeated readings have revealed a more holistic sense of the experience. Thus one submits to the "rule of horizontalization" which:

> urges us to avoid placing any initial hierarchies of significance or importance upon the items of our descriptions, and instead to treat each initially as having equal value or significance (Spinelli 1989:18).

A second safeguard against the imposition of preconceived interpretive frameworks on the data refers to the method of writing up data, rather than the stance the researcher adopts. It is the phenomenologist's insistence on the epistemological primacy of description.

3.3.2 Description

Giorgi's (1992a) argument for a descriptive rather than a hermeneutic approach illuminates the cardinal importance of description as the basis of all phenomenological enquiry. The crux of his argument was that description and interpretation, while being "on the same side when compared to mainstream science", were essentially different activities:

> description is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of experience within the constraints of intuitive or presentational evidence. The key point here is that a descriptive attitude implies necessity demanded by saying that one describes what presents itself precisely as it presents itself, neither adding nor subtracting from it. The description also implies the adoption of the attitude of phenomenological reduction, which implies the bracketing of past knowledge about the phenomenon being experienced as well as the withholding of existential affirmation.
>
> By interpretation I mean the development of a plausible but contingent line of meaning attribution to account for a phenomenon... even as one is accounting for a phenomenon one is aware that arguments for other accounts could also be given. Thus the motive for interpretation is usually a situation of doubt, ignorance, or unclarity (Giorgi 1992a:121-122).

The key word here is "contingent", for in interpretation one attempts to clarify meaning "in terms of a contingently adopted theoretical perspective, assumption, hypothesis ..." (Giorgi 1992b:122). As has already been pointed out, the

phenomenologist attempts to put aside such contingent filters. Thus an insistence on a descriptive rather than an interpretive stance is a natural corollary of the notion of bracketing.

Here, too, it must be conceded that pure description probably does not exist. Description is, for example, not synonymous with depiction. Brand (cited in Chamberlin 1974:131) referred to the Husserlian notion of description as "intentional analysis": the researcher's description is shaped, as it were, by that which is described:

> Description is not something in itself but gets its determination from that which is to be described; and as description it is determined in such a way that it keeps at a distance everything that is not a determination showing what the thing is.

One is of course still left with the questions: What is it that is to be described? What form should such description take? Or, put differently, how is the reality of the individual or individuals to be rendered meaningful to the reader?

3.4 Methodological strategies

3.4.1 Natural meaning units

The adoption - or more correctly, development - of an appropriate methodological procedure is perhaps the most important challenge facing the phenomenological researcher. Although this may well be the case for any researcher working within a post-positivist, qualitative research paradigm, the problem seems more acute for phenomenologists, chiefly because its champions deliberately set out to develop an alternative to the experimental, natural scientific approach to psychology. Thus, while much time and energy had been expended on establishing a sound philosophic basis and achieving conceptual coherence, the important question of translating theory into research practice had, by 1970, received comparatively little attention.

According to Stones (1988:141) it was only during the 1980s that "...phenomenological psychology had come to present a significant challenge to the traditional research paradigms." The phenomenologist-researcher does, therefore, have a limited history on which to draw: nor will he or she find much in the way of consistency in the examples that do exist: there do indeed seem to be as many strategies as there are researchers. In short, there is no single, generally accepted research strategy. Nor should there be, since, as has been pointed out, it is the phenomenon itself, the data generated through enquiry, and the problem to be addressed or question to be answered that should determine the methodological procedure. To impose *a priori* procedures onto a new investigation would be phenomenologically unsound. Nevertheless it would be helpful to look briefly at procedures that have been followed and recommended, if only to gain an understanding of the possibilities that exist.

One of the earliest expositions of a procedure involving the identification of what have come to be known as "natural meaning units" may be found in Giorgi (1970). The procedure has been lucidly explicated by Stones (1988). Having obtained protocols from research participants - usually by means of open-ended interviews - the researcher interrogates these with a view to identifying statements which are "self-definable and self-limiting in the expression of a single, recognizable aspect of [the subject's] experience" (Cloonan 1971, cited in Stones 1988). These meaning units are then subjected to rigorous reflection, so that essential themes may emerge, and transformation, which entails the explication of meaning units, i.e. making explicit (in psychological terms) that which is implicit in the raw data. The final step would be to synthesise insights gained, and present this synthesis as a coherent and psychologically meaningful description of the participants' lived experiences (Stones 1988). A brief look at a research example in which this procedure has been employed would suffice to give a sense of its worth and its potential usefulness for this study. Of the many available studies, I shall focus on Aanstoos' (1983) phenomenological study of thinking.

Research on how people think had for decades been dominated by information processing models. Inspired by the pioneering work of Newell and Simon (Aanstoos 1983:245) researchers set out to prove that thinking was essentially no different from computer processing:

> In other words, thinking is viewed as a series of elementary or primitive processes, combined serially according to explicit, predetermined rules, each process of which is a formally definite operation for the manipulation of information in the form of elemental and discrete symbols (Aanstoos 1983:245).

Testing this model was a relatively simple matter: computer programmes - typically using chess playing as the mental activity - could be so programmed as to produce the same results as their human chess playing counterparts. But, as Aanstoos pointedly observes, similarity of results in no way proved that these results had been arrived at in similar ways. Clearly, it was the <u>process</u> of thinking that needed to be investigated. Experimental research of the kind described here falls into the trap of "presuming to know the very phenomenon that needed to be disclosed" (Aanstoos 1983:246). The question therefore remained: what is the essential nature of the process of thinking?

Aanstoos addressed this question by adopting the phenomenological stance of bracketing preconceptions about the phenomenon, and attempting to approach it in a "noninferential" way, seeking "not to test hypotheses but to discern the essential [meaning]" of the process of thinking (Aanstoos 1983:248). He obtained think aloud protocols from five chess players. Each player spoke his thoughts as he played, providing the researcher with five rich descriptions of the cognitive processes that occurred in the course of five different chess encounters. These were then read "with an attunement not merely to the factual content of the words but to the intentional, lived experience of the subject" (Aanstoos 1983:248-249). Next, meaning units were identified from which central themes could be extracted and articulated in a structurally coherent manner. In this way he was able "to disclose how thinking is manifested in chess playing" (Aanstoos 1983:249).

Aanstoos' analysis provided startlingly new insights into the thinking process, most of them pointing up the shortcomings of information processing models. To cite an example, in contrast to the information processing explanation of the "look ahead function" - which stated that it "proceeds in a linear, move-by-move counting out fashion, to a predetermined depth", Aanstoos found that such sequences were "always embedded within thinking's overarching contact with an implicit sense of the flow of the game as a whole" (Aanstoos 1983:250). There is clearly no need to list all of his findings here: the point that needs to be made is that Aanstoos, in adopting the phenomenological stance, was able to look at the phenomenon itself and come to a new understanding of how it manifests itself.

3.4.2 A different existence

In an account of phenomenological research approaches it is difficult to ignore the work of J.H. van den Berg. His classic text, *A Different Existence* (1972), provides one of the most developed answers to the questions posed earlier: "What is it that is to be described? What form should such description take? Or, put differently, how is the reality of the individual or individuals to be rendered meaningful to the reader?"

In *A Different Existence*, essentially a case study of a patient, Van den Berg critiqued the traditional behaviouristic approaches to psychotherapy. He exposed the shortcomings of applying *a priori* analytical frameworks to the patient's pathology, focusing particularly on the notions of projection, conversion, transference and mythicising. It is not necessary to provide a detailed account of his critique here; suffice it to say that he saw the act of identifying these tendencies in a patient (such as projection) as distinctly unhelpful to the therapist or the patient, since neither is "able to explain the way a projection takes place" (Van den Berg 1972:19). This is so because these behaviours occur unconsciously, and "the unconscious is not be experienced mentally. As soon as it is experienced, it stops being unconscious" (Van den Berg 1972:30). He then proceeded to posit an approach that sought to reveal the

RHODES UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

essence of how the patient lived his world. This he achieved by setting aside preconceived theory, including the hypothesis of the unconscious, and attending to the reality of the patient as it was presented by the patient himself.

What emerged was an extended description of the patient's lived-world, guided by the following four questions:

> 1. What is the relationship of oneself and objects, and what can be said about this relationship when there is mental disturbance?
> 2. What is the relationship of oneself and one's body, and what is the relationship when there is mental disturbance?
> 3. What is the relationship of oneself and other people, and what is the relationship when there is mental disturbance?
> 4. What is the relationship of oneself and one's past, or, more in general, and time, and what can be said about this relationship when there is mental disturbance?
>
> (Van den Berg 1972:31).

One recognises the key elements of the phenomenological position here: the insistence on seeing people in terms of their lived, concrete situations; the insistence on context, in terms of other people, space and time. And in particular, the removal of the therapist to the extent where pictures (such as of the patient's experience of his world, body and time) are allowed to emerge naturally from the descriptions provided by the patient.

3.5 Why phenomenology?

As is evident from his questions, Van den Berg's interest was in pathology; the purpose of his investigation was to discover in what way the perceived reality of his patient was "a different existence". It is true that phenomenology developed into an investigatory approach within the context of psychology, psychotherapy, to be more specific. Naturally this leads to the question of the potential usefulness (and validity) of an approach like Van den Berg's in a research context where the focus is not on

"mental disturbance" (Van den Berg 1972:31). Put more directly: Of what use are Van den Berg's questions to me in my research into educational leadership?

Firstly, *A Different Existence* serves as a comprehensively developed model of the phenomenologist's rejection of *a priori* frameworks on a phenomenon to be examined, and an insistence on allowing themes to emerge from the data. This is perhaps where its greatest value lies. Secondly, by maintaining a position of naive interest in these emergent themes - world, body, other people and time - Van den Berg continually stresses the concrete situatedness of his patient, and, in the process, gives that reality pre-eminence. Finally, the four dimensions of being are recognised as being different facets of the same phenomenon:

> Van den Berg treats body, world, others and temporality as mutually implicatory and to speak of one always implies reference to the others, and these references should be made explicit (Giorgi in Kruger 1984:25).

Thus a holistic, lived experience is allowed to emerge.

The implications of these fundamental positions for my own research are considerable. Firstly, as I have argued in Chapter One, leadership research has by and large been conducted by behaviourists more interested in categorising and predicting than in describing. My position is that leadership is a way of being, rather than a way of doing. In conceding that leadership cannot be defined I must needs allow it to speak for itself; phenomenology allows me to remove myself as researcher from the phenomenon; if I can be sufficiently receptive to the respondents' lived-world experiences, I should come to a clearer understanding of leadership. Secondly, the focus of my research is on leaders' perceptions of themselves within their contexts, in this case their followers and the environments in which they lead. What I wish to explore, in other words, are the same fundamental relationships described by Van den Berg in *A Different Existence*. And finally, however many essential themes I may identify and describe, it is ultimately the phenomenon of leadership as it is lived holistically for each of the participants that I strive to depict.

It is for these reasons - and many others no doubt - that phenomenology has not remained the exclusive province of the psychotherapist. There are many examples of micro studies in the human sciences (outside the field of psychotherapy) in which a phenomenological method has been applied (see, for example, Stones 1982, Aanstoos 1983 - discussed in some detail above - Allen 1986, Lambie 1987 and Giorgi 1992b). What these researchers have in common is the fact that they questioned the obvious, taken for granted reality of a given situation, and approached phenomena afresh, from a position of epistemological naivety as it were. This is my own position. I believe - as Aanstoos felt about thinking - that students of leadership have assumed that they already know what leadership is: all that remained therefore was to devise the perfect model. It was precisely this kind of assumption that led to the proliferation of leadership models and theories, as mentioned in Chapter One. Elegant and convincing as they may be, they add little to our understanding of the enigma of leadership.

Against this background I present the following account of how this research was initiated.

3.6 Methodological start-up procedure

The seventeen students enrolled for the M Ed degree in Educational Leadership and Management in 1994 were asked whether they would be prepared to participate in this research. The students met the criteria for selecting participants, as outlined by Stones (1988:150), to a high degree:

- They all occupied leadership positions in formal and non-formal educational contexts; i.e. they "have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Stones 1988:150).

- They were all "verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions ..." (Stones 1988:150).

- Whereas they did not all have the same home-language as the researcher, those who were non-mother tongue speakers of English had sufficient command of English to obviate the need for translation; the risk that subtle nuances of meaning might be missed was therefore minimal.

- Their sense of commitment to the research was likely to be strengthened by the fact that they were students in the field. Giorgi (1985) argued that, in terms of a phenomenological research perspective, subjects' responses were enriched by the fact that they were both participants in and observers of the research.

The students all agreed to participate.

They were then asked to write brief autobiographical profiles. This I regarded as a crucial step in the data-gathering process, for the following reasons:

An existential-phenomenological view of the world acknowledges the "total, indissolulable unity or interrelationship of the individual and his or her world" (Valle and King 1978:7). I hoped that access to biographical knowledge of the "world" of the participants would help to flesh out the uniquely complex *lebenswelt* of each participant.

Secondly, I believed that information of this nature might provide a basis for such attitudes and perceptions as may emerge from the data.

I also hoped that biographical data might provide a form of intra-subjective validity, or methodological triangulation.

The second step in the data-collection process was a written response to questions I had devised. I particularly wanted written protocols, believing that these would help to focus my subsequent enquiry, allowing me to ask questions "already grounded in the explicit descriptive material of the subjects' written characterizations" (Fischer 1985:139).

The problem of formulating my original questions proved to be a complex one. Conscious of the phenomenological attitude to the importance of subjects' experience of the phenomenon, and of my own interest in leaders' perceptions of themselves, their followers and their contexts, I sought to obtain a balance between these in the questions I framed. Thus my first question: *How do you see yourself as a leader?* would seem to probe personal perception only; in fact, though, the question could hardly be answered without reference - whether explicitly or by implication - to experience.

The remaining questions were designed to lead the respondents to reflect - more objectively - on their leadership. Here I needed to focus on "followers" and "contexts". Thus the second question: *How do others see you?* was designed to probe the extent and nature of any feedback (from followers, peers, superintendents, evaluators and the like) the respondents had received, and, more importantly, how they had processed this feedback. Responses to this question would therefore further flesh out the respondents' portrayal of themselves as leaders, as well as provide a starting point for probing their perceptions of their followers. I was conscious here of drawing on leadership research in America, where disenchantment with the exploration of personality traits had led researchers to devise the prototype of what was to become the "Leader Description Behavior Questionnaire." Bass (1990:511) reports on the origins and early applications of this instrument:

> On the LBDQ, respondents rated a leader by using one of five alternatives to indicate the frequency or amount of the particular behavior that was descriptive of the leader being rated. Responses to items were then simply scored and added in combinations to form

> subscales on the basis of the similarity of their content. These subscales were then intercorrelated and factor analyzed... Two factors were produced: consideration and the initiation of structure.

The LBDQ would request respondents to decide whether a leader (A) *always*, (B) *often*, (C) *occasionally* or (D) *seldom* or (E) *never* acted as described by an item such as:

> 1. He lets group members know what is expected of them.
> 2. He is friendly and approachable (Bass 1990:512).

The instrument itself is of little interest or relevance here; I mention it merely as an example of how others' perceptions of leaders have been explored by researchers. The LBDQ was in essence designed to rate leaders against pre-conceived notions of how good leaders behave - not one of the intentions of this study. It is also hardly surprising that the instrument's most important shortcoming was its failure to capture the complete picture:

> It became apparent that some of what leaders do had been missed. A great deal of behavior of leaders was being lost in the emphasis on just two factors to account for all the common variance among items describing this behavior (Bass 1990:513).

The third question: *Who/what have been important influences on your development as a leader?* was an attempt to encourage respondents to move beyond their immediate contexts, both in time and place, to obtain information that may illuminate the here and now. I hoped this question would lead the respondents to an exploration of the past, identifying significant others (family members, other leaders) who had contributed in some way to whom they had become. I also believed that questions referring to other times and places would lead to the kind of story-telling that would provide a rich source of experiential data. This did indeed prove to be the case, as I shall presently demonstrate.

Questions four and five - *What are your leadership strengths?* and *What are you*

leadership weaknesses? were intended to be as demanding as they sound. Naturally my interest lay not so much in how the respondents "rated" themselves (in terms of balancing weaknesses and strengths), but in what they regarded as strengths and weaknesses. The questions also linked - thematically - with the second question. I sensed that the degree of agreement between how others saw the respondents and how they saw themselves might provide a fruitful area for further probing. The questions were also designed to encourage respondents (by implication) to give examples from their experience.

The last question: *What is the source of your authority?* was designed primarily to probe respondents' understanding of their leadership contexts. I hoped that it would shed light on managerial practices (such as decision making), ethical issues (such as accountability), and the essentially political notion of power. I was also interested in examining the degree of correlation between responses to this question and the first question.

Five of the students were selected as participants, on the basis of the richness and spontaneity of their responses. An additional criterion applied in this selection stage was my need to use subjects who differed from each other in terms of gender, cultural and educational backgrounds. I was interested in investigating the influence of these differences on their perceptions of themselves as leaders. Moreover, since leadership is so rich a phenomenon, I thought it likely that using a variety of subjects would increase the possibility of identifying underlying themes in the many different forms of expression the experience may take.

I then studied the selected protocols carefully, highlighting comments that seemed likely to yield rich interview data, and proceeded to interview each of the five participants, using a tape-recorder to record the discussion. Since my original set of interview questions was generated solely from the protocols, the interviews were in fact highly focused. But the interview dynamic was invariably towards rich narrative, thereby opening up a multitude of new avenues for further exploration. In this sense

the interviews were also open-ended and non-directive, so that the "deeper attitudes and perceptions" of the subjects might be allowed to emerge (Cohen and Manion, 1989:324). The transcribed interviews constituted the essential raw material of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

From meaning units to descriptions

The protocols obtained from the five interviews I conducted are, as might be expected, rich but chaotic. This is after all the very essence of qualitative data, particularly when they have been gathered by means of loosely structured interviews, including many open-ended questions. The first challenge I needed to face was how to create some kind of order in the data that would make it possible for myself - and, ultimately, for readers in general - to obtain a coherent sense of how each participant experiences leadership. Despite having one or two reservations about the phenomenological technique of delineating natural meaning units I ultimately settled on this as the most appropriate approach.

My most serious reservation was that I was loathe to disturb in any way the "wholeness" of each of the protocols I had obtained. It seemed to me that, whereas it was certainly possible to distinguish between statements which were thematically distinct from each other, there was always the danger of destroying the interconnectedness of these statements. Statements which seemed entirely new and different were usually linked to or associatively illuminative of (however subtly) preceding or succeeding remarks. It is of course this very phenomenon which endows protocols obtained in this way with their rich sense of wholeness. Yet it is equally true that this "wholeness" would not be immediately apparent to the reader. Indeed, it became apparent to me only after repeated readings of the texts, and, ironically, only after I had attended to the unique meaning of each statement <u>as an integral part of the protocol as a whole</u>. It seems, then, that one can present faithfully the big picture by looking more closely at its constituent parts. Isolating meaning units therefore seemed the most appropriate approach to follow.

A second reservation (not nearly as significant as the first) was that the process seemed to me unnecessarily laborious. Why could I not simply present, in the form of a prècis, the gist of what each participant had said? It would certainly be less

time-consuming, and might I not ultimately produce much the same kind of result? It is with these questions in mind that I followed exactly that procedure, selecting one of my protocols and extracting, as though I were making a summary, what I thought to be its main points. But I was less than happy with the result, for what I had inadvertently accomplished was to eradicate the person behind (or inside) the words. In producing a summary I did, of necessity, omit points which seemed of minor importance, or perhaps even irrelevant. As a result, my summary could certainly inform the reader of what the participant had said, but fell entirely short of conveying a sense of how the phenomenon was lived by the participant. I felt I could identify with Peterson's (1994:185) observation that he found "most attempts at general, structural accounts uninteresting and a detraction from the raw descriptive material". I found it salutary to remind myself of my research question, which is not "What are X's views on leadership?", or even "What kind of leader is X?" but "How does X experience leadership?" These realizations led me back to an acceptance of the technique of delineating meaning units in an entirely clinical, disinterested way, so that I could retain my bracketed stance and read the transcripts "with an attunement not merely to the factual content of the words but to the intentional, lived experienced of the subject" (Aanstoos 1983:248-9). I was looking for a shortcut where none existed.

The procedure I followed, then, was to list separated meaning units for each protocol and then proceed to an explication of the meaning contained in each. The process of explication was first defined by Giorgi (cited in Cloonan 1971:117):

> If meaning [of the phenomenon] is to be understood, it is done better by a process that for a lack of a better term can be called explication, that is, the process of making explicit or thematizing the locus of any given phenomenon within its horizon.
>
> Whenever a phenomenon appears, it always appears within a certain horizon or context, and the horizon that implicitly is given with the phenomenon is not irrelevant for the understanding of the phenomenon. On the contrary the horizon is essential for the understanding of the phenomenon because the role that the

> phenomenon plays within the context, even if it is only implicitly recognized, is one of the determiners of the meaning of the phenomenon.

Where I felt meanings were particularly strongly locked within the participants' words I retained those exact words. In these cases I coded each quotation (e.g. **A1**, where A refers to the first participant, and 1 to the first meaning unit. In this way I was able to render the raw and chaotic data into something more manageable, whilst still retaining the 'voice' and sense of the original.

I was then able to articulate the essential structure (e.g. "Jim as leader") of each of the protocols. "Structure" is understood to refer to the "in depth unified meaning that comprehends and relates the disparate lived meanings" (Giorgi in Kruger 1984:25). The resultant descriptions hopefully capture the meaning of what leadership is for each of my five participants. In this step I broke with the rule of horizontalisation, re-arranging units in such a way as to highlight their interconnectedness and ultimately render the descriptions more coherent, but remained faithful to the data themselves, offering nothing in the way of interpretation, and resisting the temptation to omit points which seemed less significant, or elaborate on and possibly add to those which seemed more so. I omitted repetition, and included biographical information which occurred in the interviews only where it helped in the explication of perceptions. Naturally - as has been mentioned - biographical detail would remain important, but only in so far as it might scaffold the structures of the leaders as these emerged. I have, for the sake of convenience, prefaced each description with a thumb-nail sketch of the participant.

4.1 Brief biographical sketch of Simphiwe

Simphiwe is the rector of a teachers' training college in the Eastern Cape. He started his professional career as a teacher, and was soon promoted to a headship of a senior secondary school. From here he moved to a training college, where he soon became rector. Simphiwe is also a trained pastor, and is active in his local church where he occasionally preaches. He lives with his family in Bisho, a small town in the Eastern Cape Province.

4.1.1 Description of the structure Simphiwe as leader

Simphiwe experiences the context in which he serves as Rector of a Training College as a bureaucracy, characterised by hierarchical structures in which power is concentrated at the top. He describes himself as a bureaucrat. He makes reference to "rules and regulations" **(A1)** which he must obey, and to the fact that the department could discipline him ("you get a rapping for it" **A4**) if he does not follow the laid down procedures. He calls it a "very autocratic hierarchical structure" **(A12)**, and sees himself accountable to his immediate superior, the chief education specialist. From there the chain of command runs in clear lines through the deputy general director, the director general, and finally the minister of education. Problems have a tendency to move up the line of command almost immediately; it seems as if there is little attempt, at the various subordinate levels, to solve problems.

Simphiwe is not comfortable in this system. Although he is mindful of the need to "stick to ... rules" **(A1)**, he prefers at times to use his discretion when he disagrees with the rules, even though he knows this could lead to a "rapping". This means that he consults his senior staff, and then informs the rest of the staff of their joint decision and obtains their views. He feels, however, that he needs to make decisions on his own most of the time, because he is the one who is accountable.

Another facet of Simphiwe's discomfort in this bureaucratic context is made manifest

in his interaction with people. He enjoys sharing ideas with his colleagues. He believes he does not have the right to impose his ideas onto others. He likes to get feedback on new ideas. He values others' input. This respect for others reveals itself as a caring attitude. He believes that staff are keen to bring their problems to him because he is not just sympathetic, but empathetic; "there" **(A17)** with them. Some see this as "the ministry" **(A17)** coming through him. This tendency is potentially problematic, however, because some see it as weakness. Rather than follow rigid disciplinary procedures against students or staff - "report that thing upwards" **(A19)** - he tries to talk to the offenders to understand why they are behaving in this way. Some would then accuse him of "bending over backwards" **(A18)**. He believes in counselling, rather than punishment, but in the context of his work this attitude is interpreted by some as weak leadership.

Comparing himself with other principals, he believes he is less formal and less subject to officialdom. He thinks this may be a personality difference. He tries to be himself, "not to wear a mask" **(A14)**, which allows people to accept him for what he is. He perceives himself as being very approachable; people do not try to avoid him. However, the fact that he insists on being himself may lead others to regard him as rigid and inflexible. His strong moral principles are an essential part of who he is, and cannot therefore be compromised. He believes moral standards generally have declined; people are reluctant to say "No" these days. Simphiwe trained to be a pastor, and he believes this has played a determining role in his leadership. He was given leadership positions as part of his training. He was strongly influenced by the "prayerful nature" **(A23)** of his pastorship.

Yet he is also wary of the notion of democracy. He believes the concept is poorly understood, and indeed abused. He cites examples of students who demand democracy but make decisions without consulting any other stake-holder. He believes students want to have "their views prevailing over everything" **(A6)** under the guise of democracy. His view of the prevailing conditions in South Africa is that they resemble "anarchy" **(A6)** which people think is "democracy". Because the word has

so many negative connotations for him - such as "buying cheap popularity" **(A7)** - he would prefer not to be thought of as democratic. He stresses, however, that democracy is not bad *per se*.

Another strong influence in his life is his family - his "backbone" **(A21)** - especially his mother, for whom he has enormous respect and love. He admires her strength - "I've got a rock behind me" **(A21)** - and he needs to spend time with her regularly. Thus he touches base regularly and frequently - about once a month - and finds it really painful to leave.

He also ascribes most of his success as a leader to God. He does not believe that he himself possesses the ability to lead; his achievements are entirely due to God. Thus when he is commended for saying or doing the right thing, he thanks God for helping him.

Other strong influences in his life have been Martin Luther King - whom he "used to adore" **(A31)** - and Nelson Mandela. He particularly admires Mandela for never even alluding to the fact that he was in prison for so long. In these times political prisoners make much of the fact that they had been in prison, even if it was only for a few days. But Mandela has never used this as his "trump card" **(A32)**.

Simphiwe perceives his self-concept as having improved along with his gaining knowledge and experience. He had a poor self-concept when he took up his first principalship, but found that when he discovered he could do the work, his concept of himself improved. This has also influenced his response to failure, which he now views as positive. His self-concept can now embrace the reality of failure.

Much of what he describes as his natural leadership behaviour - such as his sensitivity to other people, and his Christian attitude to people, believing that they are all "images of God" **(A27)** - he is beginning to regard as weaknesses. He has found that "People can take you for a ride" **(A25)**. Experiences of people taking advantage of

his trusting and naive nature have made him respect leaders who have an uncompromising attitude to others; "tough" leaders who have "got this cut and dried" and allow "no exceptions to the rules" **(A25)** Often when he has tried to be particularly helpful to the community this has led to problems; so he now regards these attitudes (of helpfulness and trust) as potential weaknesses.

4.2 Brief biographical sketch of Michael

Michael is principal of an independent primary school in a town in the Eastern Cape. He started his professional career as a teacher of English at secondary school level. He is married to a primary school teacher and has a family of three sons. Michael has managed to combine running a school with professional/academic pursuits, such as publishing articles in journals and delivering papers at conferences, both in South Africa and abroad.

4.2.1 Description of the structure Michael as leader

What characterises Michael's interaction with his world are the notions of challenge and risk. His decision to apply for the principalship he now holds was prompted by his need for a new challenge, for "something different" **(B1)**. He applied for the post "without thinking of the implications" **(B2)**, which indicates his willingness to take risks. Michael deliberately takes on new challenging ventures, such as overseas trips, speaking at conferences, and doing the Master's course at Rhodes. He has a strongly positive attitude to risk: "I thrive on it" **(B47)**. He remembers, as a child, taking on challenges such as swimming across a river or diving off a pier. He associates challenge with risk, and acknowledges that there is a certain amount of fear involved, but that this barrier of fear can be overcome when he knows he can do what he has undertaken to do. He also believes people see him as one who enjoys taking risks. Thus applying for a headship would have been one of those risk-taking ventures.

Michael believes that his family has played a significant role in his development as a leader. He describes his family as "close" and "supportive", a source of security and values **(B26)**. His father had been a strong role model, perhaps a little "intimidating" **(B27)**, a recognised leader in the national sports arena. Michael feels his family was influenced to achieve at sport, which his brother and sister accomplished successfully. He concedes it is possible that he feels a sense of

inferiority, since he has not excelled at sport to the same extent. He feels he has little natural sporting ability.

For Michael, growing up in the turbulent 60s was a factor in his development. He believes he was an awkward and moody teenager, an "Elvis Presley" **(B32)** figure. His distaste for "senseless authoritarian structures" **(B32)** - which he still has - stems from his schooldays, and his military training. Although Michael occupied leadership roles through childhood and adolescence, he did not think of himself as a leader. Often he was encouraged by others to take on leadership roles. He describes these early leadership experiences as difficult ones: "Every step was kind of, quite agonising" **(B38)**.

University was a political and social awakening for Michael. For the first time his conservative political and sociological notions were challenged. He was influenced by Kennedy and Martin Luther King. It was a social awakening in terms of the different people he met and mixed with. He remembers in particular two people who had encouraged him to become involved with the Student Christian Association (SCA). He served as a counsellor in the SCA and gained leadership experience in this way.

Reading has always played a key role in Michael's development as a leader. Being an English teacher, he believes reading came naturally to him. His exposure to English literature, and his experience of teaching it, have been very formative influences. As a principal he attributes much of his growth as a leader to the fact that he reads in the field of leadership in order to be in touch with the latest thinking. He mentions that some may criticise his academic leaning, but he feels comfortable with the balance he achieves between theory and practice.

There are instances, early in Michael's teaching career, of his readiness to take on challenges, some of which probably led to his securing the position of headship. While teaching English at a previous school Michael was involved in several "high

profile" **(B3)** activities which he ran successfully. These were activities such as coaching the First Rugby Team (an important job in the traditional boys' school at which he was teaching), running huge fund-raising drives and organising the audio-visual department. These achievements, together with his success as a teacher of English, considerably enhanced his image within the school community and therefore counted in his favour for gaining the headship.

In the initial years Michael found principalship difficult. He remembers it as a period of struggle:

> I really struggled to survive in my first three or four years ... I look at it now as almost a nervous breakdown kind of [experience] **(B10)**.

Several factors contributed to Michael's struggle. He had no formal training for the job; he had not even gone through the usual steps (promotions posts), but moved directly from teaching secondary school pupils to running a primary school. He was also perceived as very different by the staff, who were used to a more authoritarian principal. He remembers having the support of one or two staff members only, but accepting their help and encouragement led to his being accused of favouritism.

The most significant clash that occurred in these early days was between Michael and the controlling body of the school. This involved a fundamental difference of opinion regarding management practices at the school. The controlling body of the school were "traditional" and "formal" **(B11)** in their approach, often making important decisions about the school's future in the principal's absence. Michael wanted a more open, less formal approach, one which, in particular, involved himself as principal. Ultimately things came to head, a "huge confrontational thing" **(B12)** which could have resulted in Michael losing his post. Fortunately he had staff support, which helped him win the day. Today the management style of the school is the way Michael wants it: open, friendly, informal and inclusive.

Significantly the clash described above coincided with Michael's return from a two-month visit to the United States, which he identifies as "the one event" **(B6)** which changed his educational thinking forever. In his visits to American schools, his interaction with other educationists, and also through extensive reading Michael found his perspective on education becoming enriched. He attributes this to the variety of different people and new ideas he met. It was an educational awakening for him: "It really got me going saying, 'Hey, there's a lot of other things happening in the educational world'" **(B6)**. In the States he was encouraged by others to act boldly, such as to write for *Phi Kappa Delta*, and to deliver a paper at a conference for the education of gifted children at Salt Lake City. He also began to read more widely, including authors such Buscaglia and Enzuli. These experiences changed his attitudes significantly, and played a role in his readiness to take on the management challenge which awaited him on his return.

Much of the struggle Michael experienced as a young principal stemmed from the fact that he was trying to be a principal, i.e. to fit into the mould of principal that had been established at the school. He thought being authentic was playing the part that everyone expected of him. He found this stressful and gained little personal satisfaction as a result. It was only much later in his career as principal that he became more comfortable with who he was, and could be content simply to be himself. This has made a huge difference to his state of mind and self-confidence. He stresses, however, that it was possible for him to adapt his style because his working environment was supportive; the private school situation allowed him the freedom to explore his resources and develop as a person.

A similar pattern is evident in Michael's spiritual life, and in his and the school's association with the church. The school is a church school, and formal religion is an important element in the school ethos. Michael himself has always been uncomfortable with formal religion. Early in his career as principal both Michael and his wife lost their fathers, and the family went through "a traumatic period" **(B54)**. They found the people at St Paul's very supportive. This, together with Michael's

perceived need to be a Christian headmaster, led him to do what he thought was expected of him, thereby embracing formal religion for himself and the school. Here too, though, Michael has successfully redefined his role as a Christian principal, and changed the format of school services, which are now more informal and, he believes, more meaningful. This serves as an example of how Michael has been able to re-model aspects of the school to fit more comfortably with his own style and personality.

Because he now works hard at not fitting into the mould, Michael sees it as his responsibility to try to change parents' perceptions of the principal. He relates the story of how he overheard a mother telling her daughter that his (Michael's) office was the place she would have to come to when she had been naughty. He appeared from his office and told the pupil that she would also visit his office when she had been good. He regards this - changing people's perceptions of the school, and in particular the principal - as one of his most important tasks. He believes most parents see the principal as a stern, unapproachable authority figure; exactly the kind of picture the school had projected to him. As a principal he believes in communication, accessibility and projecting a friendly and approachable image.

Michael does not, however, see himself as a natural leader. He thinks of himself as one who keeps to himself and "bottles up" **(B48)** emotions. He is particularly critical of this, and is aware that his appearance (facial expression) can sometimes betray his emotional state. Thus a problem he may be wrestling with will be evident in his facial expression, which others notice and comment that he seems to have "the world on [his] shoulders" **(B49)**. He believes that this alienates him from others. He is, however, aware of this problem and is addressing it by trying to be more comfortable showing his true feelings, and simply admitting that he has a problem. He is becoming more comfortable with who he is. He also believes that he needs to work at looking happy.

Michael describes himself as an "individual", an "introverted person" **(B18)**, preferring private activities such as reading and doing research to socialising.

4.3 Brief biographical sketch of Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a Curriculum and Training developer for NECTA (Network of Educare Training Agencies) which she helped to found. She has taught at secondary and pre-primary school levels, and has extensive experience of early learning teacher and leadership training. She has served on numerous committees and consultancies with a view to establishing early learning and adult education on a sounder footing in the Eastern Cape Province. She is married with three children.

4.3.1 Description of the structure Elizabeth as leader

A major turning point in Elizabeth's professional life came when she left the organised teaching profession to join a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO). It changed her "whole view of life" **(C1)**; she describes it as "a huge learning situation, an absolute mind-opener" **(C1)**. Elizabeth believes NGO's more accurately reflect society as a whole. They are "microcosms of exactly what South Africa is about" **(C2)**. This is because NGO's, unlike most other formal educational institutions, have heterogeneous populations. She believes they are far richer by comparison.

Elizabeth thinks of herself as an "influencer" **(C9)**, rather than a leader, someone who "leads from the back" **(C8)**; and she believes this style of leadership has been largely shaped by her experience in community based NGO organisations. She remembers being very happy in a "calm, whole sort of way" **(C4)** in her teaching post; she taught Art to pre-schoolers, and enjoyed the freedom to be creative and relatively undisturbed by inspectors. But in the last six years in an NGO she needed to be far more innovative, "making something new" and seeing "what you're doing come to fruition" **(C5)**. Thus the challenge to be innovative and creative has been greater. The chief difference seems to lie in the way in which new ideas are implemented. In the NGO she has learned to consult and negotiate. It is impossible to work in an NGO without consultation. Consultation has become part of her life: "So much so

now that I find now that I actually can't work now without consulting" **(C6)**. In this way she sees herself as an influencer rather than a leader.

Elizabeth has also come to believe in the importance of having a vision, "a far-seeing view of what could be" **(C7)**. Her personal vision of early learning is a very big picture, a global vision. For her, pre-school is about every kind and level of education. She does not see boundaries and divisions between pre-school, primary, secondary and so on. She believes, paradoxically that having a global view enables one to identify the centre of one's vision, from which one moves out to other related areas.

Despite her view of her leadership as being "from the back" and unobtrusive, she acknowledges the fact that it embraces a manipulative element. She thinks a Machiavellian element is unavoidable in leadership:

> If you know where you're going and you have this vision, then you've got to take people along with you and the methods you use to take people along with you are essentially manipulative **(C13)**.

Even if you are open about what it is you are trying to achieve - "declaring your bias" **(C12)**, which she believes is essential - that in itself is manipulative. Yet this is not to say that she lacks integrity. She has known very few leaders who have integrity, which she believes is an essential ingredient of successful leadership. She believes that being upfront about her motives and position is proof of integrity. She relates her thoughts on integrity to a notion she read somewhere, about two kinds of leaders: "driven" and "called" leaders **(C18)**. Driven leaders are people who address personal problems through their leadership; this is a selfish kind of leadership.

Called leaders, on the other hand, are at peace with who they are and can lead with integrity. She thinks of John the Baptist as a called leader.

Elizabeth believes she has attributes that reveal themselves in physical ways which contribute to her leadership. She is uncertain whether to call this "charisma" **(C14)**, but she nevertheless recognises the fact that she is successful because people find her enthusiasm attractive; she is able to

> whip people up into enthusiasm ... By being enthusiastic ... myself and by having a mad look in my eye ... and by being fairly unconventional **(C16)**.

Other characteristics of her personality which are reflected in her leadership style are adaptability, spontaneity and flexibility; she likes to "stay open to new experiences" **(C24)**. She concedes that these tendencies make her impatient, so that she is inclined to "let somebody else do the bits" **(C24)** (i.e. see to the finer details). Her drive towards creativity and innovation is what keeps her going. She experiences creative periods as stressful, and finds it hard to sleep when she is engaged in a project. But she thrives on this:

> You're constantly taking huge risks ... mm ... it's nice, it's lovely, the adrenalin just flows, but boy are you burnt out at the end (laughs) **(C31)**.

When opportunities for new posts arise, the most important criterion she applies is to ask which will be the most stimulating. She is surprised that people do not see her as ambitious; she believes she is extremely ambitious, but not for positional power. Her ambition is her drive to be involved in new projects to help solve problems.

Having been appointed to the position by the whole staff, "not just three or four bosses" **(C25)**, Elizabeth believes she has a mandate from her co-workers and a high level of credibility. Her technical authority stems from her considerable knowledge of the field, all of which she has learned in practice rather than in theory. She sees NGO's operating from a "broad power base" **(C26)**; the culture of such organisations is characterised by a high degree of soul-searching, where everyone is expected to justify his or her presence on an almost daily basis. This becomes so much part of the organisational culture that she feels insecure when it does <u>not</u> happen. She is

conscious of the fact that accountability is "to people, downwards, rather than upwards" **(C29)**. Unlike state-run organisations, NGO's do not report to "bosses". This has the dual effect of allowing greater freedom to act, but increasing the risk of failure.

Her leadership style (or life-view) can, she believes, be traced back to her childhood. She grew up on a forestry station in Zambia, near the Congo border. She describes the environment as "safe", but also "wild" **(C33)**. They were allowed enormous freedom, as children, to roam and explore the natural environment. She believes that her own free and unrestrained style of life was shaped by these childhood experiences:

> If you grew up in a town or whatever there are many more rules guiding you, so perhaps it's a narrower, you can only think in this narrow sort of way because we didn't have those sorts of rules, but there were ... there was not so much red tape perhaps **(C34)**.

Thus her life-view, and therefore her leadership style, was shaped in an environment where there were few rules, and much freedom. She specifically does not attribute her leadership style to the fact she is female. She does not believe that leadership is "a gender thing" **(C35)**, but stems directly from one's life-view. She believes most people incorrectly think stereotypically of male and female leadership, which prevents them from looking at what is really happening.

A key aspect of leadership for her is the influence of moral principles. She sees herself operating within a deeply spiritual context. She thinks it would be impossible to manage without bringing in the spiritual dimension:

> Not a church dimension or a Christian dimension at all, but a spiritual dimension. Now it it's your spiritual self ... ja it's yourself and that's not about systems **(C37)**.

She believes a characteristic feature of the organisational culture of NGO's is that they spend so much time talking about principles. She finds her own leadership

strongly guided by principles. She has recently read two books on spirituality. John the Baptist seems to be a strong role model for her of a spiritual leader.

Elizabeth is less confident about herself as a leader than she is about her ability to do things. It seems as though she is too busy doing things to stand back and objectively assess her success as a leader. She is ambivalent about her self-concept: she believes it is "pretty much on the down side" **(C40)**, matching her leading from the back style. But at the same time she is confident in her ability to do certain things successfully.

4.4 Brief biographical sketch of Jim

Jim teaches English at a secondary school in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Jim has been very active in civic, political and educational affairs, and has served on some 18 committees. He is currently on the executive committee of the local ANC (African National Congress) office, and chairman of the local branch of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) in South Africa. He is married to a primary school teacher, and has a family of two children. Jim has also attended and delivered papers at numerous conferences, chiefly of a political/educational nature.

4.4.1 Description of the structure Jim as leader

Jim has always been a leader. He describes himself as a natural leader; others recognise his leadership potential and are keen to load responsibility onto him. He does feel, however, that people often do this because they themselves do not want the responsibility.

He believes the church was instrumental in his early leadership training. He gained experience as a youth leader and Sunday School superintendent. Here he was exposed to public gatherings where he needed to address people, or enact scenes from plays. From there the move to leadership at school and university, and thence to leadership in civic matters seemed natural. In community organisations he gained further experience of speaking in public. He also attributes his skill in this area to his love of English, drama in particular. He still enjoys acting.

The kind of leadership skills others recognise are his commitment, experience and knowledge. He believes his ability to chair a meeting is one of his greatest strengths. In meetings he is a good listener, adept at throwing questions back to the questioners rather than answering them himself. He believes this to be an essential skill. He recalls that his greatest achievement was his successful chairing of a people's forum

with Nelson Mandela. He had to address and take questions from a crowd of 40 000 people. Mandela himself complimented him on how well he had done.

Jim enjoys a high profile in the community. The fact that he serves on so many committees has turned him into a public figure. He places great store by being known, physically recognised, believing that this enhances his authenticity. He enjoys the solidarity that protest marches bring, and is often one of the few Indians toyi-toying in mass rallies and demonstrations.

He describes Mandela as one of the strongest role models in his life. He has admired Mandela since he was at school. He wrote to Mandela while he was in prison, and wrote poems about him. What he admires most about Mandela is that, despite having been a political prisoner for 27 years, he shows no bitterness. He has only heard Mandela make a racist comment on one occasion, during a television interview. Mandela was also not content to languish in prison, but took the struggle with him:

> He was telling us how in prison people thought that they were in prison, so where is the struggle, you know? And he said the struggle was in prison itself... to change the hearts and minds of those prisoners, to organise, to uplift the morale of fellow-prisoners, to organise study classes, and he was the key person behind all that ... organising inside you know, organising inside... ja, it's amazing **(D16)**.

Jim believes that people's attitudes to Mandela are undergoing a transformation:

> But the kind of mysticism that was with him when he in prison is slowly translating itself into a real kind of worship for a man like Jesus who walked on the earth, you know **(D17)**.

Another early influence on his development was his mother, "a very dominant woman" **(D21)** whom he describes as the "push" **(D22)** behind his own success as a teacher. His mother dominated over his father; it was due to her that he could attend university. He believes he is very like his mother. While still a young teenager, he

naturally assumed leadership of the family after his father died.

A feature of Jim's leadership is a tension he experiences between the need to be democratic, and fully allowing the democratic process to take its course. He wants others to take on responsibility, but finds it difficult to allow them to complete tasks without some form of intervention on his part. His own input is a crucial factor in "tying up the package" **(D1)**. He maintains that this is not because he doubts their competence, but because he suspects most people are in a hurry to get things done, often overlooking small but important details in the process. He refers to people's tendency to leave meetings before they have raised all the points he considers important.

He has similar unresolved feelings about compromise and conflict. He naturally seeks compromise, and tells of how he has frequently disappointed colleagues by leading them to defy school authorities, and then encouraging them to settle for a compromise at the last moment. Just as he is beginning to question the efficacy of compromise - where both parties lose - so too his attitude to conflict is changing: "I firmly believe conflict is a more positive thing. I'm slowly changing my attitude about the whole compromise" **(D34)**.

Jim's career has been fraught with conflict. He has, on a regular basis, opposed and disagreed with school principals, usually on ideological issues. He has frequently led student protests at school. On one such occasion his principal threatened him with a firearm. These clashes are usually brought about because of Jim's sense of justice and morality: "I guess it's just in my character that I can't keep quiet over injustices ..." **(D37)**. Jim experiences morality as a strong force which "pushes" **(D27)** leaders into making better decisions. Leaders are often tempted to make the quick and expedient decision, often one which does not serve the interests of all the stake-holders. In these cases, Jim believes,

> if the leader wants to be true to that wider community then the decision he makes must be pushed by his morals. Otherwise, quite

> conveniently, he could just slip into that very easy mode of making decisions **(D29)**.

Jim's life-view is one which acknowledges the basic goodness of people. He regards this as a strong motivational aspect of his leadership: "I think it's a belief I have that given the chance people will be able to bring out the best in themselves, whoever they are" **(D39)**. There is good in everyone; the leader's task is to identify it. He insists that this is not meant "theologically" **(D40)**. In fact Jim is uncertain about his faith, and finds it difficult to talk about. There was a time when he thought he was a born-again Christian, but his subsequent exposure to Marx and socialism led him to believe that to be socially concerned meant more than "just going to church and that sort of thing" **(D31)**. He is, however, not clear on this issue; part of him believes there is a higher power, but he cannot claim to believe in it because he does not feel its power. Church attendance has now become a social obligation; he plays the guitar for chorus singing and enjoys this role.

Jim does not see himself as a leader of an organisation, e.g. a school principal. He doubts whether he would be comfortable in rigid hierarchical structures. He sees himself more clearly as a manager on perhaps a regional basis, managing several schools. Not does he want to become a paid politician. He had, in fact, turned down an offer of a position within the ANC. He needs to be positioned outside party politics, so that he can continue the struggle:

> And I can see myself in a two or three years in time possibly going marching down the street against the present government saying 'Please we demand compulsory free education for 10 years or 12 years ...' **(D42)**.

Jim describes his leadership as "quasi-legal" **(D43)**. He derives his authority from his position in organisations, but believes people identify with him as a leader, and thus show allegiance to the organisation he represents. It is important for him to be able to convince those who doubt his authenticity and thus that of the organisation.

4.5 Brief biographical sketch of Phindiwe

Phindiwe is a lecturer at a teachers' training college in Esikhawini, Kwa-Zulu Natal, where she teaches school management and microteaching. Although she does not hold a promotion post she is a senior member of staff, occasionally acting as Head of Department. She started her career as a teacher of history and English at a secondary school. Phindiwe is unmarried and has a teenage daughter.

4.5.1 Description of the structure Phindiwe as leader

Phindiwe describes herself as a "democratic" **(E1)** leader. Although she has little opportunity for leadership in a broader organisational sense, she regards herself as a leader in the lecture room context, a leader of students therefore. She believes students should know what the limits are. She has never found students taking advantage of her democratic style of lecturing. She finds a democratic approach in the classroom easy to apply, and appreciated by the students. Essentially it means she needs to give reasons for everything they do, and allow the students to express their opinion. She believes her students enjoy this approach because "students now are crying for democracy ... so that's what they'd like to have" **(E6)**. She adds, however, that they need to recognise that the lecturer has some authority. Phindiwe also believes in leading by example, and feels committed to behave in this way even sif he does not want to.

She does not think that her own leadership style is in any way a result of her upbringing. She says it is a known fact that Black parents (especially two or three decades ago) were particularly undemocratic in their style of rearing children. She remembers having little or no input into important decisions that would affect her life. This she says has been typical of the style of parenthood among Blacks, though she believes it is beginning to become more democratic. She is committed to a democratic approach because she believes in it, and because it is the way she would like to treated.

A feature of Phindiwe's teaching and leadership is care. She is able to care personally for her students because of the way in which the college classes are organised: they are divided into smaller groups. This allows her to give individual attention to students. But her caring extends beyond the formal classroom setting: she also spends time counselling students and helping with problems. They would, for example, ask to speak to her when they had failed a test. In these situations she is careful to give encouragement and advice that will have a lasting effect, rather than "easy marks" **(E9)**.

Phindiwe's attitude to work influences her teaching and leadership significantly. Her working day is a full one: she believes time at the college must be spent working. This frequently causes conflict with some of her colleagues, who regard her as a "workaholic" **(E11)**, so much so that she frequently has to take her work to a quiet place, such as the library, because the atmosphere in the staffroom is not conducive to work. At the same time, though, she believes she has a sound sense of humour, and that learning should be "fun". This is clearly communicated to her students: she remembers getting a card from a student in which he thanked her for making classes so much fun. Here again, her manner "allows" students to initiate much of the fun that occurs:

> Sometimes the fun does not come more from me. It's just that I allow them... to make jokes or to ... make examples that perhaps other people wouldn't allow them to **(E10)**.

Phindiwe identifies strongly with her mother, also a single parent, who had to raise three children single-handedly. She admires the fact that her mother could achieve this, though there is note of regret in her recollection: her mother had to work long hours and therefore had little time for the children. Her mother found it less easy to show that she cared. Phindiwe says that she now realises that "she [her mother] was probably most of the time very stressed" **(E12)**. Phindiwe herself is finding motherhood challenging. She experiences her teenage daughter as "challenging" **(E13)**; her daughter often confronts her on fundamental issues. Phindiwe regards this as an important facet of her leadership.

For Phindiwe, Jesus Christ has been a strong role model. She admires the way

> He stuck to what he believed in. So, if he thought something was right, he wouldn't do something because he wanted to please people. He would do something just because he thought it was right **(E14)**.

Nelson Mandela is another of her inspirations. She admires the fact that he pursues his goal, despite his advanced age, his flexibility and the fact that he "gets what he wants" **(E15)**. She also admires the fact that

> you don't see any ... resentment from him. So it tells me that even if people treat you badly, it's part of life ... you don't stop being a leader, you find other ways to solve the problems **(E15)**.

On a personal level Phindiwe regards herself as a private person, one who does not "easily open up" **(E17)** to others. She seems to be nervous of being labelled by colleagues, and feels uncomfortable being herself in their presence. With her students, on the other hand, she feels perfectly confident to be herself. She also thinks of herself as a poor listener, a fault she wants to correct because "if people are saying something I should listen ... it's important to them, that's why they are saying something" **(E20)**.

She believes authority should be earned, rather than officially vested in one. This she feels she has done with her students. If she had to lead her colleagues, she would have to earn their respect and not depend on legal authority.

Phindiwe's self-concept has not always been strong. She sees herself as being "in transition" **(E22)** at this point. Her students are affirming her belief in herself, thereby challenging earlier feelings of inadequacy. She feels she is growing at this particular stage: "I think I am getting to be more positive about myself but not as much as I'd like to" **(E22)**.

CHAPTER FIVE

Exploring the *lebenswelt*

A different description

To attempt an interpretation of the descriptions presented in Chapter Four would be premature at this stage. For all that I believe these descriptions to have succeeded in capturing the essence of what it is to lead for each of the participants, I doubt whether they provide a sense of the participants' **being**-in-the-world, their concrete *there-ness*. Heidegger's notion of *dasein*

> holds that, not only are we unique (as far as we know today) in our ability to be aware of our existence, but this awareness reveals an inseparable relationship between existence and the world. Our awareness is not solely subjective, but rather, intersubjective (Spinelli 1989:108).

One of the reasons why this element is largely absent from the structure descriptions is that I deliberately asked for perceptions rather than lived-world experience. This position has already been defended (see Chapter Two) and I still regard it as valid; I am simply acknowledging its shortcomings. Another reason is that I dealt rather cursorily with material which gives perhaps the best sense of *dasein*, viz. anecdotes. All five participants - in varying degrees - are story-tellers and fell easily into a narrative genre, particularly when illustrating a point or giving an example. These stories added considerably to the length of the protocols, and I typically reduced them to a line or two in the structure descriptions. But they need to speak for themselves, for they are more likely to give a sense of concrete *there-ness* than the more reflective body of opinion, attitudes and feelings. For these reasons I sensed the need for a more general approach, a different description, for which I have drawn on Van den Berg (1972) and Binswanger (Spinelli 1989).

As discussed in Chapter Two, Van den Berg's description of his patient's unique relationship with his world - expressed in terms of 'world', 'body', 'others' and 'time' - has the potential for adding considerably to the researcher's understanding

of participants' *lebenswelt*. Ludwig Binswanger's identification of three dimensions of an individual's *lebenswelt* - *Umwelt, Mitwelt,* and *Eigenwelt* - and Van Deurzen-Smith's subsequent addition of the *Überwelt* (Spinelli 1989), may profitably be considered alongside Van Den Berg; the two together present a comprehensive network of routes through the uncharted terrain of the individual's being-in-the-world.

Consistent with the phenomenological stance of viewing an individual holistically and fully contextualised, Binswanger argued for an examination of a patient's "unique meanings and interpretations of the **physical** world" [my emphasis] (Spinelli 1989:128). This he called the *Umwelt*. In terms of Van den Berg's categories, *Umwelt* would include 'body' and 'world'. Binswanger's notion of *Mitwelt* corresponds roughly with Van den Berg's 'others' category: it is the world of **people** around us, our public, everyday interaction with others. *Eigenwelt* refers to "the private and intimate relations each of us has with **ourselves** and the **significant others** in our lives" [my emphasis] (Spinelli 1989:129). The dimension of one's relationship with "significant others" is included in Van den Berg's 'others' theme; and though Van den Berg has no distinctive category for relations "with ourselves", it is clear that this dimension is **the** unifying theme in his work: it is only through examining the individual's relationship with 'world', body', 'others' and 'time' that the therapist begins to understand the patient's world, and therefore the patient's 'self'. These are the dimensions though which we relate to ourselves.

Überwelt is a dimension not explicitly dealt with by Van den Berg, though it may by implication be subsumed under the 'world' or 'others' themes. It refers to "a person's connection to the abstract and absolute aspect of living" (Van Deurzen-Smith 1988:97, cited in Spinelli 1989:120). These are fundamental positions we hold about life and death, beliefs that overarch all other beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes. *Überwelt* includes ideological and, by implication, spiritual beliefs.

By the same token, Van den Berg's notion of the individual's temporality - our

situatedness in time - is not explicitly included in any of the four dimensions identified by Binswanger and Van Deurzen-Smith. I do, however, imagine it to be integrally part of the *Überwelt* dimension: a belief in an eternal after-life, for example, will surely colour the way one experiences the temporary nature of this life.

It is along these routes, then, that I undertook a second description of the worlds of my participants. I could, however, not ignore my research interest, and the key issues raised in my research question - leaders' perceptions of themselves, their contexts, and the people whom they lead and with whom they interact - served as signposts for this new journey.

Mindful, too, of Van den Berg's insistence on the inter-relatedness of the dimensions he identified (Giorgi 1984), I decided against presenting the descriptions under sub-headings, e.g. 'World', 'Body', *Umwelt*, and so on. Presenting a single, coherent description of each participant would enable me to make explicit the extent to which speaking of one dimension "always implies reference to the others" (Giorgi 1984:25).

Simphiwe

Simphiwe experiences his world as confusing, contradictory and perhaps even threatening. At the heart of his uncertainty lies the fact that he finds it difficult to live out his life-view in the context in which he works.

Simphiwe's life-view - a composite and inter-related picture of his *Überwelt* and his view of other people - is essentially driven by humanist ideology, though he believes he owes everything he achieves to God, that people are essentially created in God's image, and are therefore deserving of his help and support. He draws strength also from significant others, his mother in particular, with whom he must spend time on a regular basis. The pain he experiences when his visits with his mother must end

is well captured in the physically felt exclamation: "It's eina!" [It hurts!]. In terms of his situatedness in time, events from his past - such as his pastorship training and his mother's abiding influence and strength - are strongly present in his leadership. Although no clear vision of a different future emerges, Simphiwe mentions "new ideas" he shares with staff, indicating how future plans influence his present being.

This life-view suggests the approach he would like to take with staffmembers, students as well as parents. His caring quality is apparent in his stories of dealings with people. In one case he tells of how a white female member of his staff came to him with a problem. When he asked her why she had come to him, she replied that the staff sensed that he could empathise strongly with their problems. She felt he was "there" with them. A strong physical and emotional presence seems to characterise his dealings with people. This feature is further evidenced by the fact that people seek him out, and are not afraid to confront him; likewise he would rather confront and reason with aggrieved students or parents than simply apply rules mechanically. This, in essence, is how Simphiwe would like to lead. He likes to be visible, accessible, "there". He enjoys sharing professionally.

Yet, as I have said, Simphiwe is unable to live out this life-view. Discouraging and destructive experiences have coloured his view of others, of his context and most significantly, of himself. An example of how *Mitwelt* has affected *Eigenwelt* is the criticism he has received from colleagues for his willingness to talk and listen; to try to resolve problems through discussion rather than by reverting to rules. Colleagues have seen this as "bending over backwards" and "weak" leadership. In similar vein, he has had bad experiences of parents and students taking advantage of his generosity and willingness to help, "taken for a ride" as he puts it. These experiences have seriously damaged his faith in people, and in his chosen leadership style.

Simphiwe sees his organisational context as a rigid, hierarchical structure. This is clear from the way in which he depicts the four tiers of authority between himself and the minister of education. He clearly has the classical pyramid-image in mind.

Working in this context has adversely affected his leadership. He seems resigned to be a "bureaucrat", one who will "stick to rules and regulations", accept punishment ("a rapping") when one breaks the rules, and is accountable to his immediate superiors. He has become cynical about "democracy", believing it to be a euphemism for "anarchy". In other words, Simphiwe has little faith in his ability to rise above the system of which he is part, and do things his way. He is a victim of the system that produced him, and which he now serves.

Michael

Michael perceives his world as an environment that needs constant change and improvement. He feels - has always felt - himself to be constantly challenged by opportunities and problems, often resulting in radical, risky intervention and behaviour on his part. His working context is therefore a constantly shifting, unsettled and dynamic environment. The guiding force in this change process is Michael's sense of himself as a leader, his vision of his school as an organisation, and his notions of what education is. This complex and composite picture combines *Umwelt, Mitwelt, Eigenwelt* and *Überwelt* elements in a unique way.

Past experiences are strongly influential in how Michael experiences the present. He recognises the security a sound and nurturing family background has provided. At the same time, though, he experienced the intellectual and social awakening provided by a university education as a radical departure from the conservative upbringing at home and school. Michael grew up during the "turbulent 60s", and sees himself as a product of a period in social history characterised by the liberation of the adolescent. He still sees himself as a "rebel". Several significant others - such as university mentors and lecturers - played an important part in his development during these years. He acknowledges the crucial role reading and teaching English literature has played in his development, referring in particular to his HDE (Higher Diploma in Education) year at university, and to his teaching of English at secondary school. What characterised these experiences was the "enormous freedom" the subject

allowed. Notions of "freedom" and creativity strongly characterise Michael's view of education, as well as his view of management and leadership. Other experiences - such as his military training and experience of teaching in a state school - contributed to his distaste for "senseless authoritarian bureaucratic things". In this way - through exposure to elements of 'world' and 'others' - his perception of himself (*Eigenwelt*) as a free, creative individual led to the consolidation of an *Überwelt* characterised by humanist ideology and the power and freedom to act. This position would only have been fed and strengthened by his visit to the United States, where he was exposed to an even greater range of new ideas and creative solutions to problems.

Against this background, the story Michael tells of his clash with the governing body of his school obtains central significance. It was clearly more than a difference of opinion on management procedures; underlying this superficial tension was a more fundamental difference in ideologies, a clash of life-views. The distance between himself and the staff who supported him on the one hand, and the board of governors on the other, is anecdotally captured by Michael in physical terms:

> Meetings started with you being left outside while they chatted about ... you ... the whole thing built up halfway through my career there into one huge confrontational thing, where it was touch and go whether I was nearly kicked out ... And it ended up with a board meeting announcement, and the staff came, they sat there, we sat there and ....

The above description may well convey a picture of Michael as a supremely confident and perhaps aggressive leader; but this is not the case. Indeed, his *Eigenwelt* reveals an introverted, private person. He seems often to have been thrust into leadership positions; overcoming his introversion and social awkwardness was "quite agonising" for him. And yet, paradoxically, he has always risen to challenges and "thrives on" risk-taking behaviour.

What emerges clearly is the fact that it is Michael's environment, rather than himself, that has had to change and adapt to his style. Thus he describes his relationship with his governing body as "totally relaxed, it's all friends, and therefore I feel of course

much happier ... it fits in with my style now." Similarly, staffmembers who were of "the old school" had either to change or move on ("you know, somebody had to move"). School church services, too, have had to change to suit Michael's style.

He has, in a nutshell, "remodelled" the school so that he can be himself comfortably, rather than try to fit into a mould of what a headmaster ought to be.

This is the essence of Michael's story: an initial period of unhappiness and tension ("almost a nervous breakdown ...") during which he tried to be 'the headmaster' according to previously established guidelines, followed by a period of struggle during which he accepted that he would never be comfortable working within those guidelines and learned to accept himself, followed by a period in which the school had to learn to accept him for what he was. In the entire on-going process of change and development at the school, Michael's role has remained as the key factor and guiding principle.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth's world is perhaps best characterised by how she experienced her childhood. She tells this story vividly, with a strong emphasis on physical surroundings and experiences:

> I think it was where we lived, and how. My father was a principal of an adult training thing in forestry in Zambia, and we lived right out of town, far away from anywhere. And it was on very small settlement near the Congo border. We used to have to go 30 miles to school every day in a Landrover on horrible roads, and we were just very isolated and hm ... ja it was very safe ... it was very safe there and we were able to ... my mother and father were not hm ... they guided us but they didn't overtly sort of teach us as it were. My mother particularly was very sort of laid back and said "There you are my dear, do have a lovely day" and hm ... we had huge freedom to roam properly, I mean go right through the bush to the water gorges miles away on a bike and to go on a canoe in a dam, through the reeds by ourselves without ever saying anything to anybody. And it was very

> ... it was quite wild I suppose and we didn't ever notice dangers.

References to "horrible roads", "go right through the bush to the water gorges", "miles away on a bike", "on a canoe in a dam, though the reeds" indicate how Elizabeth remembers the feeling of freedom and excitement in terms of concrete, sensory experience. There is, of course, also the freedom resulting from her parents' lack of "overt" teaching, and their ability to let the children run free. In a sense, Elizabeth experiences her organisational life in the same way: she still has "huge freedom", she can "roam properly"; she seems still not to "notice dangers". In terms of her situatedness in time, it is clear how strongly her past lives in her present.

Elizabeth's perception of her world is thus of a place without boundaries and limits. Her vision of education, for example, is a "global" one, in which she does not like to draw distinctions between the various levels and kinds of schooling. Similarly her role in the institution defies definition: she sees herself as an "influencer" leading "from the back", but at the same time speaks of how "innovative" she has to be, and how it is impossible not to be "manipulative" when one tries to involve others in one's vision. She expresses the excitement (and anxiety) of the risk-taking nature of her work in physical terms:

> To do with the creativity and innovation, you're constantly taking huge risks ... mm ... it's nice, it's lovely, the adrenalin just flows, but boy are you burnt out at the end.
>
> I don't sleep at night easily. I find for myself if I'm very happy and calm I'm less creative.

She resorts to the same kind of language when she tries to capture her success as a leader:

> I think it comes from hm ... being able to whip people up into some enthusiasm ... Charisma is being able to whip people up. By being enthusiastic ... myself and by having a mad look in my eye.

Elizabeth's bodily, physical presence is thus a strong element in her leadership role.

Her perception of other people, whether colleagues or recipients of the service she provides, is closely linked with how she perceives her leadership and authority. She perceives herself as having no "legal" authority: she was appointed by the entire staff, and thus operates from a broad, all-inclusive power base. Thus everyone is a colleague, equal in terms of power and authority. Her work is therefore characterised by extensive consultation and sharing. There is no point in carrying out projects unless everyone owns it and gains as a result. She regards this as a way of life, rather than a feature of her work. She does, however, have "technical" authority, stemming from her considerable knowledge which is recognised and respected by colleagues. This, along with qualities such as flexibility, openness to new ideas and the "charisma" discussed above enables her to "influence" others, making things happen. What this reveals of her *Überwelt* is an ideology with emancipatory leanings:

> I don't think that I'm ambitious for positional power in that way but I'm jolly ambitious to be involved in things or to be part of a solution in things.

Another significant *Überwelt* element is her acknowledgment of the guiding role played by moral values. Talking about principles is in fact a characteristic of her work. From her readings, and from her admiration of "called" leaders (such as John the Baptist) Elizabeth draws on a strong spiritual life to guide her morally in her leadership:

> now I don't think you can do those things [e.g. counsel people] unless you bring in the spiritual dimension of that, not a church dimension or a Christian dimension at all, but a spiritual dimension. It's your spiritual self ... ja it's your ... ja it's yourself and that's not about systems.

Jim

For Jim the world is a site of struggle. Appalled by social injustice, especially the inequalities bequeathed by apartheid, and fired by Marxist notions of socialism and

a belief in the fundamental goodness of people, Jim usually finds himself at the head of initiatives to correct social imbalances. His leadership is thus not confined to an organisation, in the strict sense of the word, but is more prominent in the community at large where he occupies many key positions. His *Überwelt* is characterised by a strong emancipatory need: his desire to empower others is central to his very existence.

Jim's past is strongly present in his life. The leadership roles he held as a boy, in the church and at school, seemed to lead naturally to leadership positions at university and in the community. His love of English - drama in particular - manifests itself still in the way he experiences leadership: he enjoys playing roles and addressing crowds. He expresses his inner feelings in verse. Perhaps the most abiding influence in his life has been his mother. Though deceased for some years now, she still seems to be strong role model in his leadership; he describes her as a dominant figure, who sacrificed much to give him an education. He believes he is like her, and thus sees himself living out her life to some extent. Another powerful influence has been the life of Nelson Mandela, whom Jim has admired since he (Jim) was at school. Mandela is more than a significant other in his life. Jim's admiration for Mandela is an *Überwelt* element:

> But the kind of mysticism that was with him when he was in prison is slowly translating itself into a real kind of worship for a man like Jesus who walked on the earth ...

Mandela epitomises the leader who is so committed to leadership that even a prison cell could be a site of struggle:

> In prison people thought ... "Where is the struggle," you know? And he said the struggle was in prison itself... to change the hearts and minds of those prisoners ...

Jim's description of himself as a leader is cast in strongly physical terms. He has a high profile in the community, and regards being known (by name) as an important

criterion for success. He believes this gives him authenticity. He also believes he is a natural leader, since he has, "from a tender age", been identified by others as a leader. He tells the story of how a fellow Master's student sought out his advice on a task she had to prepare for class:

> I was having breakfast at the cafeteria. Someone from the EE [Environmental Education] group ... I don't have much of a relationship with her ... but I just met her and got talking. She's from Namibia. She came up to me and said "Jim will you do me a favour? Will you read ... will you listen to me ... will you listen to my assignment ... my seminar I'm going to present this evening?" So I said "Hey, I don't know a damn thing about EE." She says "I know that but I want you to listen anyway. So I said "OK ... lunchtime."
>
> Now she waited for me lunchtime, she got hold of me, we sat under a tree, and she just rattled her assignment, I listened to her (humour in his voice here), I made a few comments, I chopped and changed a couple of the things for her and so on... but I asked her "Why did you come to me?" She said "I don't know why but I just wanted to come to you." But I felt so good ...

Clearly this kind of incident affirms Jim's strong sense of self, his confidence in himself as a leader who can help others: he felt "so good". It is this strong sense of self that introduces a contradictory element into Jim's view of others; for while he is committed to democratic leadership, he finds it difficult to allow others complete freedom to act and take a project to finality without his own contribution. Others need to be empowered; he is driven to ensure that this happens.

For Jim, then, it is the <u>doing</u> of leadership that makes him successful. Thus he singles out his ability to chair meetings as his strongest leadership quality. He speaks with pride of his successful chairing of a people's forum at which 40 000 people were present. He is proud too of often being one of few Indians taking part in demonstrations, "amongst this mass of township people, toyi-toying in the streets ... that came naturally to me." The physicality of his leadership is striking. He is a

strong bodily presence, chairing meetings, addressing crowds, demonstrating against injustice. Jim's *Überwelt* is further characterised by a strong sense of morality, which serves, not merely as a guideline, but as a physical force in helping leaders to make morally sound rather than expedient decisions:

> I can't see a leader not being pushed into decision-making by certain morals, the morality that he has grown up with. Morality helps leaders make the right decisions.
>
> I use the word 'pushed' because I think sometimes you comfortably get into a position which is convenient at that point in time. But morality pushes you. I think it does ... in my case it does.

Jim is not comfortable in bureaucratic, hierarchical structures. He has frequently been at odds with the authorities at schools where he has taught, usually over ideological issues. He also does not see himself, at some future time, as a principal of a school, because of his aversion for hierarchical management structures. Nor does he see himself as a politician, because aligning himself professionaly with any political party would prevent him from playing his role in the ongoing struggle for justice.

<u>Phindiwe</u>

Phindiwe experiences her organisational life as two distinctly different environments. In the classroom, as a lecturer, she is able to live out her life-view fully. Here she is able to lead democratically, show her caring nature and allow her sense of humour and fun to show through. She feels confident in this environment. In the wider context of the college, however, she is reluctant to be herself and "open up" to people. She mistrusts colleagues who are keen to "label" her. She experiences tension between her need to work hard and her need to be accepted by the rest of the staff. She believes the staff would regard her as a "workaholic". She appears apprehensive about the prospect of leading colleagues.

Following naturally from this dichotomous experience of her context, Phindiwe has mixed feelings about her self-concept. She describes it as being "in transition". She has not had much confidence in herself as a leader, but her success with her students is making her re-evaluate this.

Phindiwe's past informs her present life-view in a number of diverse ways. Though she describes herself as "democratic" she is adamant that this attitude is <u>not</u> as a result of her upbringing, which was particularly "undemocratic". Rather, it stems from her own desire to be treated in this way. Her respect and admiration of her mother is ambiguous. She admires her for having raised three children single-handedly. She can identify with this as she herself is single parent of a teenage daughter. She acknowledges the huge sacrifices her mother had to make to educate her children. But she also experienced her mother as "strange", and distant. She seems not to have had a very close relationship with her mother.

Phindiwe's *Überwelt* is fed by her admiration of Jesus Christ and Nelson Mandela. The qualities she admires in both are their determination to stick to what they believed in spite of hard circumstances.

CHAPTER SIX

From the specific to the general

6.1 Methodological considerations

In one of his early explications of the phenomenological method, Giorgi (1975:88) distinguished between two ways of bringing together the essential themes emerging from data:

> One is a description of what we can call the situated level which means one includes the concreteness and specifics of the actual research situation employed. The second one is a description at the general level. The general statement leaves out the particulars of the specific situation and centers on those aspects ... that have emerged which, while not necessarily universal, are at least transituational or more than specific.

The descriptions I have presented in Chapters Four and Five are clearly at the situated level. In fact, to obtain the structure descriptions in Chapter Four, I went to considerable lengths to root every one of my own descriptive statements in the original protocol data. In this sense the descriptions are faithful to the data. The descriptions in Chapter Five were added because I sensed the need to contextualise each participant more strongly within his or her *lebenswelt*. As a result these are even more situated than the descriptions in Chapter Four, reflecting the essence of what leadership is for each participant. What emerges is the uniqueness of the phenomenon as experienced by each leader.

Following Giorgi (1975) quoted above, my next logical step would therefore seem to be to reduce the situated descriptions to a general statement which attempts to answer the question: "What is leadership?" rather than "What is leadership for Michael?" Giorgi (1975), in attempting to explain how learning takes place, demonstrated the importance of this step in the methodological procedure. His research participant's protocol was reduced to meaning units, themes were explicated, and a situated

description of the learning phenomenon was given. Finally, he produced the following general statement:

> Learning is the ability to be present to, or exhibit, the "NEW" according to the specific context and level of functioning of the individual. This awareness of the "NEW" takes place in an interpersonal context and it makes possible the sustained appreciation of a situation in a fuller way, or the emergence of behavior that reaches a different level of refinement in a sustained way or both (Giorgi 1975:94-95).

Quoted out of context in this way, this statement sounds like a definition of learning. It has a ring of finality about it: the researcher is saying, "Here it is, then. This is what I have discovered about learning." And, as such, it seems disappointing, particularly if one assumes that a general statement of this kind represents all that the researcher has discovered. But this is not the case. A general statement is, of necessity, a cryptic summary, a crystallised bringing together of the significant themes uncovered in the long and rigorous process of identifying meaning units and creating situated descriptions. To obtain an understanding of the true richness of the phenomenon one would have to read the entire research account. How else is one fully to understand what Giorgi meant by the "NEW", or "specific context" and "level of functioning"? A general description is thus ideally viewed, not as a discrete and independent statement, but as the culmination of the descriptive stage of the research process: for while its effectiveness does, to a large extent, depend on the descriptive skill of the researcher, it relies equally heavily on what has come before to convey its complete meaning.

But a summary it must be, and therein lies its usefulness, or what Giorgi (1975:97) referred to as its "nomothetic value". Findings presented in this way are more easily compared to the findings of other researchers in the same or related fields. In this way Aanstoos (1983), in the example referred to in Chapter Three, was able to make sense of what his research participants were saying about the process of thinking. Listing meaning units and identifying themes were crucial stages in his

methodological approach, but only when he was able to produce a general statement about thinking was he able to point up some of the flaws in existing theories of the process of thinking (Aanstoos 1983:250-252). Since one of my aims, in the next Chapter, will be to compare my findings with what other researchers have said about leadership, it follows that I shall need to produce a general statement.

The process of producing such a statement is, however, complicated by the fact that I have used five research participants. To produce five general descriptions would clearly be defeating the aim of having such statements at all; the quest now is for statements about leadership generally, as opposed to what leadership may mean for individuals. Clearly, one general description is what is required, as has been demonstrated in the numerous examples of multiple participant phenomenological studies at our disposal (see, for example, Stones 1982; Lambie 1987; Aanstoos 1983; Kruger 1988, and Giorgi 1992b). But this raises the question of selection: on what basis should material be included or rejected for the purpose of producing a single general description?

Commonality seems to suggest itself as the most obvious criterion for selection. As has been argued in Chapter Three, phenomenology insists on the uniqueness of each individual's dialogue with his or her world. Our worlds are "only partially sharable" (Spinelli 1989:14). But sharable they are, and it is the task of the researcher to explore commonality as well as uniqueness (Spinelli 1989). The task, according to Colaizzi (1978:59) thus becomes one of organising "the aggregate formulated meanings into *clusters of themes*" [emphasis in the original] allowing for "the emergence of themes which are common to all subjects' protocols." For all that Colaizzi's explanation sounds sensible as well as feasible, I would question his insistence on using themes that are common to "all" participants' protocols. Is a theme necessarily more significant because it occurs, say, five times, rather than twice? I would suggest that there are several criteria for significance, of which frequency of occurrence is only one. Frequency seems to me to be primarily the concern of quantitative research, where statistics may help to prove an hypothesis.

The qualitative researcher needs to be open to the demands of other, less measurable criteria, such as whether a theme, regardless of the number of times it occurs, resonates with what the researcher knows to be generally valid and true in terms of the phenomenon. Or whether a theme, which may occur once only, is clearly an integrated element in the participant's *lebenswelt*, and therefore significant.

One would, of course, have to concede that the application of criteria such as these assumes a level of expertise and knowledge on the part of the researcher. But this is hardly an unusual or unrealistic concession to make. For while the actual content - the raw data - is provided by the research participants, themes can, of course, only be articulated by the researcher. The research participants are, in a sense, indifferent to the researcher's need to make sense of (or thematise) their responses. This task is solely that of the researcher, who has complete control over what is produced. Yet the control is tempered, or monitored, by the participants' protocols; that is, the researcher does not have complete freedom to do with the data what he or she will. Colaizzi (1978:59) drew pertinent attention to the need to "refer these clusters of themes back to the original protocols in order to *validate* [emphasis in the original] them." Giorgi's (1975:96) comments on the notion of control would be helpful here:

> the control comes from the researcher's context or perspective of the data. Once the context and intention is known, the divergence [such as a different interpretation] is usually intelligible to all even if not universally agreeable. Thus, the chief point to remember with this type of research is not so much whether another position with respect to the data could be adopted (this point is taken for granted beforehand), but whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it. That is the key criterion for qualitative research.

In the light of these comments I would therefore choose to use the word "dominant" rather than "common" as a descriptor of the kinds of themes that constitute a general description.

While the use of more than one research participant complicates the task of the researcher - particularly at this stage of producing a general statement - the practice also has significant advantages. One would, for example, expect a general description that draws on "aggregate meanings" (Colaizzi 1978:59) to be richer, more comprehensive, and self-evidently transituational. Stones (1988:154) argued that researchers may want to make use of several participants:

> not only to obviate possible undetected idiosyncrasies of an individual subject, which would obviously make it more difficult to arrive at a general description of the phenomenon, but also to facilitate greater fluency with the phenomenon, given the greater variability provided by several subjects.

Two points emerge from Stones' comment. The first relates to "idiosyncrasies", which need to be contrasted briefly with what one might call unique responses. I take "idiosyncrasies" to refer to responses reflecting perceptions so personal to an individual respondent as to have no possible resonance with the other respondents' experience. Idiosyncratic responses may be interesting to the researcher, but must in the end be discarded if the researcher fails to recognise them as generally valid and meaningfully part of the respondent's *lebenswelt* vis a vis the phenomenon under investigation. Clearly the use of more than on participant will indeed highlight such idiosyncratic responses so that they may be set aside for the purpose of writing a general statement. Unique responses, on the other hand, are responses which may occur once only, but are valid since they resonate, perhaps by implication, with what the other respondents have said, as well as with what the researcher knows to be generally valid in terms of the phenomenon. Unique responses could therefore be included as themes in the general statement.

The second point arises from Stones' (1988:154) reference to the "greater variability" which several participants provide, thereby giving the researcher "a greater fluency with the subject". This comment signifies what I would regard as a fundamental position for qualitative researchers, which is that findings are arrived at cumulatively, rather than analytically. The researcher who homes in on commonality only has

perhaps adopted too analytical an approach, in an attempt to get the heart of the phenomenon under investigation. But the researcher who remains open to the "greater variability" in a multiple case-study - and therefore includes unique responses - is more interested in constructing a picture that reveals the multi-faceted richness of the phenomenon.

This chapter, then, explores themes that emerge strongly in the participants' responses. Before presenting these I shall comment on some of the procedural decisions I needed to make.

Firstly, I returned to the original lists of meaning units (see Appendix) in order to identify dominant themes. This was, again, an attempt on my part to be true to the data, i.e. to present the themes as the participants felt and expressed them, and not as I may be interpreting them.

Secondly, the specific meaning of the concept 'theme' needs to be explicated. It is clear from the literature (Giorgi 1975, Colaizzi 1978) that phenomenologists use the word 'theme' to suggest a central idea, a core topic, expressing the essence of one or more meaning units.

A comparison of this notion of the concept of theme with that found in literature and music would be both interesting and helpful at this point. In literature, 'theme' is understood to mean "the central and dominating idea in a literary work" (Shaw 1972:378). Similarly, in music, the word 'theme' indicates the "main subject of a composition" (Scholes 1970:1011). It should be immediately evident that the phenomenological researcher does not - initially, at any rate - aim at uncovering the "central and dominating idea" of the protocol(s). This would imply a level of intentionality on the part of the participant that is impossible to contemplate; protocols are, after all, <u>not</u> literary works of art but, at best, unstructured, natural utterances. The researcher does not, therefore, look for one "central and dominating idea", but

rather for a series of units of meaning, or multiple themes. It is only much later - as has been shown - that the researcher may attempt to articulate the essence of what the protocol conveys in the form of a general statement. This statement does, in fact, display some of the characteristics of the literary notion of theme. Another interesting parallel is that literary scholars have a similar kind of tempered freedom to describe themes in the work or works under scrutiny: what literary scholars find to say is largely a result of the quality of their response to these works, but they, too, need to substantiate claims by close reference to the text.

Finally, a comment on the paradoxical and contradictory nature of qualitative data. As I have argued in Chapter Two, researchers who choose to conduct their research in a naturalistic, qualitative framework should expect to find data which are chaotic, inconclusive and often contradictory. These qualities characterise life itself; data possessing these same qualities will therefore have a ring of authenticity and validity about them. Wolcott (1994:162) went so far as to advise researchers to "look for contradictions or paradoxes", as these are regarded as potentially rich opportunities for discussion and for what Peterson (1994:183) referred to as "reflective analysis." The situated descriptions in Chapters Four and Five are fraught with unresolved and conflicting themes: How is it, for example, that Michael, who is capable of re-shaping his environment to suit his own style and is a leader who thrives on risk and challenge, describes himself as reserved, introspective, and lacking in confidence? Why does Simphiwe, a devout Christian who believes that all people are made in God's image, regard this very attitude as a weakness?

How is one to respond to such paradoxical findings? One kind of response - retreating into a position of despair - has already been described in Chapter Two. But another kind of response is that suggested by Colaizzi (1978:61):

> At this point discrepancies may be noted among and/or between the various clusters; some themes may flatly contradict other ones, or may appear to be totally unrelated to other ones. Here again the notion of approach comes to the fore because the researcher must *rely upon his*

> *tolerance for ambiguity* [emphasis in the original]; he must proceed with the solid conviction that what is logically inexplicable, may be existentially real and valid. He must refuse the temptations of ignoring data or themes which don't fit, or of prematurely generating a theory which would merely conceptually-abstractly eliminate the discordance of his findings thus far.

Even now, at the stage of producing a general description - where the emphasis must be on what is transituational rather than individualistic - Colaizzi's advice should be uppermost in the mind.

6.2 Dominant themes

In identifying dominant themes it must be stressed that they are presented separately here for the sake of convenience only. Indeed, the extent to which the themes are all facets of the same phenomenon has made the task of separating them difficult, often leading to what may appear to be needless repetition. I nevertheless believe this to be a necessary step in the data analysis, since it makes for easier comparison among the five participants, and because it is likely to facilitate the task of producing a general statement.

6.2.1 Perception of self

To refer to the extent to which the participants reveal a sense of self in their responses as a theme is virtually tantamount to using the word in its literary sense. Nearly everything they say in one way or another illuminates the self. I shall, however, restrict myself to themes which more obviously throw light on the *Eigenwelt* dimension of their lived-worlds, some of which were highlighted in Chapter Five.

6.2.1.1 Playing a role / being oneself

This tension occurs prominently in **Simphiwe's** response. He is anxious to be himself as a leader, not to "wear a mask" **(A14)**. He believes he is able to do this as a leader, and this makes him more approachable to staffmembers **(A13)**. He thinks he is perceived as being caring; people say the "ministry" comes through him **(A16)**. But he also perceives it as a problem, because it leads to criticism; some see it as "weakness" **(A17)**, particularly when he deals with student problems in a sympathetic way instead of taking punitive action **(A17)**.

Michael began his career as principal by trying to fit the mould which the traditional school he runs had established **(B38)**. Gradually, however, he was able to remodel **(B55)** the school to suit his style. Today he is more comfortable with his own style **(B38)**; he has gradually discovered who he is **(B38)**. But he still tries hard not to be the "typical" principal **(B41)**. This suggests that he is still consciously playing a role - though the role is now himself. This is also apparent in his references to making conscious efforts to appear happy and confident in his daily work **(B48, B49)**.

Jim experiences no tension between role-playing and being himself. There is, however, a strong public element in his leadership: he regards his ability to chair meetings as one of his most important leadership attributes **(D8)**. He refers to this skill with obvious pride, and is particularly proud of the fact that he chairs meetings efficiently, quickly but thoroughly, and that he has a reputation for being good at this **(D9)**. He recalls with pride his successful chairing of a people's forum attended by 40 000 people **(D14)**. Jim also takes part in visible, public leadership acts, such as political rallies **(D15)**. He regards being popular, and being recognised (as Jim, chairman of NECC) as very important **(D19)**. It seems that for Jim his role-playing as public leader has become a way of life, and he is perfectly at ease with this.

Elizabeth similarly experiences her leadership as "a way of life" **(C2)**. Whilst there is no tension between being a leader and being herself, she is conscious of having to carry out NGO procedures, such as consultation **(C6)**. She also perceives leadership inevitably to have a Machiavellian quality: all leadership is manipulative **(C11)**. Even when one declares one's position up front one is being manipulative **(C12)**. Unlike Jim's public and visible leadership role, she sees her own role as one of influencer, leading from the back **(C9)**. Thus, whilst being conscious of acting in specific ways to be an effective leader, there is no conflict between what she needs to do and who she is: indeed, they seem to be the same thing.

Phindiwe is able to be herself in the classroom only, where she can relax and let her "fun" attitude to life and work characterise her style **(E10)**. In the wider context of the college staff she feels more vulnerable and is therefore more withdrawn and reserved **(E11, E18)**. This is because she is afraid of being "labelled" by her colleagues **(E17)**.

6.2.1.2 The influence of significant others: family members

All five participants pay tribute to the role played by their families, their parents (usually mothers) in particular, in their development as people and leaders.

Simphiwe expresses this theme very clearly, emphasising that his family is his "backbone" **(A20)**, and that his mother in particular is "a rock" behind him **(A20)**. Simphiwe is still very dependent on his mother's counsel, and her physical and emotional support; he needs to visit her frequently and finds it hard to leave **(A21)**.

Michael seems to have mixed feelings about the important person in his life, viz. his father. He experienced his father as a strong role model, "a really strong personality" perhaps a little "intimidating" **(B26)**. His father was an influential leader in the national sporting arena **(B26)**. Michael himself was not a natural sportsman, unlike his brother and sister, and thus believes he could have experienced feelings of

inferiority in his relationship with his father **(B29)**. Michael draws enormous spiritual and emotional strength from his family; he refers to his family as "nurturing" **(B25)**.

Elizabeth believes that her love of freedom and sense of adventure stem from her parents' ability to let their children run free. Her mother allowed her great freedom as a child, partly also because of the fact that they lived in Zambia, 30 miles away from school **(C33)**. She and her sister roamed freely and were allowed to explore and enjoy nature **(C33)**.

Like Simphiwe, **Jim** believes that he owes everything to his mother; she sacrificed much to give him an education **(D21)**. She was a very strong person, dominating the home **(D21)**. She was a strong formative influence, she was the "push" behind him "as a person really" **(D22)**. He believes he takes after her **(D23)**.

Phindiwe identifies strongly with her mother, who was a single parent, like herself **(E12)**. She admires the fact that her mother was able to raise three children single-handedly **(E12)**. There is a degree of ambivalence in Phindiwe's feelings towards her late mother; she experienced her as "strange", but insists that she was able to show that she cared, despite the fact she saw little of the children because of having to work long hours **(E12)**. Phindiwe is probably not modelling herself on the example provided by her mother, despite the fact that she admired her greatly.

6.2.1.3 The influence of significant others: 'Heroes'

The larger-than-life role model, serving almost the purpose of spiritual hero, featured markedly in all five protocols.

Nelson Mandela is most frequently mentioned as a source of inspiration and a leader worth emulating. For **Simphiwe**, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela are strong role models. He admires the fact that Mandela never refers to his years in prison, while other political prisoners use this to gain sympathy and recognition **(A31)**. He

is also struck by the fact that Mandela reveals no bitterness about how unjustly he had been treated **(A31)**.

Michael's notion of role models is vaguely tied up with the social awakening of the 60s. He speaks of "that Kennedy stuff" and Martin Luther King **(B35)**.

Elizabeth's most significant role model, John the Baptist, represents her idea of a "called" leader **(C19)**. She distinguishes between "called" and "driven" leaders; the latter are essentially driven by a need to solve problems within themselves (and use organisations to this end) while the former are at peace with themselves and serve the needs of others **(C18)**.

Jim's admiration of Mandela takes on mystical and strongly spiritual overtones. Jim wrote to Mandela while he (Jim) was at high school **(D14)**, and wrote poems about him **(D15)**. He greatly admires the fact that Mandela continued the struggle for justice and equality in prison **(D16)**. He believes that Mandela had mythical greatness while in prison, but since his release people's feelings have become a kind of "real worship for a man like Jesus who walked on the earth" **(D17)**.

Phindiwe regards Jesus as her strongest role model. She admires his integrity, the fact that he stuck to what he believed in despite opposition and danger to himself **(E14)**. These are also the qualities she admires in Mandela: despite his age and suffering, he still follows his dream **(E15)**.

6.2.1.4 A perceived difference from other people

All five participants see themselves as somehow different from other people, other leaders in particular.

Simphiwe thinks of himself as "different" from most other heads of schools and

Simphiwe thinks of himself as "different" from most other heads of schools and colleges because he is less "official" than they are **(A15)**. He thinks it may be a "personality difference" **(A15)**, but he mentions how he treats staff and students in a personal, caring way **(A16)**, not hiding behind "officialdom" **(A15)**. He tells of how staff are surprised by his empathetic understanding of their problems **(A16)**.

Michael describes himself as a "rebel" **(B32)**. This image seems to stem from his adolescence - "growing up in the 60s" **(B30)** - where experiences such as his military training encouraged him to question authority, especially "senseless authoritarian bureaucratic things" **(B31)**. He is also criticised for some of the positions he takes on school matters, such as his relatively uncompetitive sports philosophy **(B27)**. He was - and still is - perceived as "different" in terms of the kind of headmaster the school had been accustomed to **(B15)**. His different approach to school management led to a clash with his school governing body early in his career as principal **(B11)**.

Elizabeth's "difference" seems to be rooted in her need for change and adventure. She describes herself as "unconventional" and "having a mad look in [her] eye" **(C16)**. These are attributes she associates with charisma, the ability to "whip people up" into enthusiasm **(C15)**.

Although not explicitly stated, the fact that **Jim** regards himself as different colours his entire description of himself. He refers in particular to people's tendency to hurry through meetings before all the important issues have been discussed **(D2)**. He often tries to ensure that everything of importance has been raised before the meeting is closed **(D2)**. He comments on how other people seem eager to appoint him into leadership roles, giving him "responsibilities they didn't want to take on" **(D5)**. As a political activist he seems proud of the fact that would often be "one of few Indian

people amongst this mass of township people ... toyi-toying in the streets" **(D15)**. He describes his political and ideological involvement with students during his early years of teaching, leading students in rebellious deeds which resulted in serious conflict situations with the authorities **(D36)**.

Phindiwe thinks she is different from other lecturers as she allows her classes more freedom, she allows the sense of fun to emanate from the students **(E10)**. She is also different in the sense that the staff see her as a "workaholic"; she frequently needs to work in venues other than the staffroom because people "get irritated" **(E11)**.

6.2.1.5 Morality

In one form or another, the question of moral principles and values emerged strongly in four of the participants' responses.

For **Simphiwe** his moral principles are integrally part of his general outlook on life and his Christianity, which will be discussed later. His strong sense of what is morally right and wrong appears to be problematic to him, as others perceive him as rigid in his thinking **(A25)**. He does, however, believe that there are principles he cannot sacrifice; he must do what is "right" **(A29)**.

Michael refers to his family as the source of "values" **(B25)**.

Jim focuses clearly on how morality "pushes" leaders into make the right decisions. He believes leaders may be tempted to make expedient decisions, but an understanding of what is beneficial to all concerned (or to the majority) will help to guide leaders into making morally sound decisions **(D27)**. He perceives himself as one who "can't keep quiet over injustices" **(D37)**, a tendency which has caused considerable conflict between himself and the principals he has served under **(D36)**.

For **Elizabeth** morality has a similar practical role; she sees an important part of a

leader's functioning as "counselling and listening and conflict managing" **(C37)**. She believes leaders cannot perform these functions unless they are spiritually involved; the "spiritual self" helps to guide leadership **(C37)**. Leaders need to have "integrity" **(C17)**. She also sees principles as in a functional way in terms of how NGOs operate; she believes the feature that characterises her leadership style is "always talking about principles" **(C38)**. Elizabeth is also drawn to writers who write on spiritual themes **(C39)**.

Phindiwe values the quality of integrity in Jesus and in Nelson Mandela **(E14, E15)**. She admires the fact that Jesus did what was "right", regardless of whether it pleased people or not **(E14)**. She tries to follow the same kind of moral principle in her classroom, where she displays a democratic style of management **(E1 - E5)**. In her guidance of students, she does what is morally sound; she will not, for example, give marks away easily to an unhappy student; she would rather "encourage him to do better" **(E9)**.

6.2.1.6 Early formative experiences

The participants all refer to early experiences, either in childhood or early adulthood, which played a role in their development as leaders.

Simphiwe trained as a pastor, and he ascribes his personally involved, caring and empathetic approach to leadership to this influence **(A22)**. He has God to thank for what he has achieved **(A23)**, and regards people as "images of God", which makes him want to work with people in a "harmonious and warm type of relationship" **(A26)**.

Michael believes his love of challenge and risk-taking behaviour stem from his childhood. He recalls how, as a child, he enjoyed challenges like "swimming across the Buffalo River, or diving off the pier" **(B45)**. During his formative years at university he was frequently challenges by others to take up leadership positions

(B34). It was also at this time that he became "politicised ... having come from a family that was politically very conservative" **(B35)**. Michael's headship is now characterised by risk-taking, and he "thrives on challenges" **(B46)**.

Elizabeth similarly relates her love of challenge, risk and adventure to the freedom she experienced as a child **(C33)**. She thinks growing up in rural environment with the freedom she was allowed gave her a distaste for "red tape" **(C34)**. This is why she thrives on the kind of freedom allowed in the NGO environment.

Jim's leadership experience began at a "tender age" **(D3)**. He was a youth leader in the Baptist church, and from there seemed to move naturally to positions of leadership on campus, and in civic life **(D3)**. He believes the church was an early training ground for him, as this was where he was exposed to speaking to and performing for large groups of people **(D12)**. Another deeply formative experience was Jim's exposure to Marx and socialism, which he came to embrace as an ideology **(D31)**, replacing Christianity **(D30)**. These influences are both strongly present in Jim's leadership; his leadership has a strong public as well as an emancipatory element.

Phindiwe tells of the autocratic style of upbringing she was subjected to **(E4)**. Her own style of raising her daughter, as well as her style of classroom management, seemed to come about as a negative reaction to her own upbringing, where she was not allowed any input into decisions that affected her **(E4)**.

6.2.1.7 Reading and literature

Reading generally, and reading literature in particular, is emerge strongly as a theme in some of the protocols.

Michael feels that his love of English literature, as a student as well as a teacher, gave him a sense of freedom; he believes he was "to a large extent formed by those sort of experiences" **(B24)**. His love of reading also flowed naturally into his work,

as he has continued to read to keep abreast of developments in educational management and leadership. He believes this has had "a profound effect" on his leadership **(B3)**.

Elizabeth is too busy to read; she has not "read anything for five years" **(C22)**. But books that have had a profound influence on her are books of a generally spiritual kind, rather than academic texts on management **(C39)**.

Jim pays tribute to the formative role literature (and drama in particular) has had on him. He describes this as "a love for English" **(D11)**. He enjoys reading aloud and dramatising **(D11)**. His readings in socialism also had a profound influence on his ideological outlook on education and life generally **(D31)**.

Without being specific, these respondents quite obviously view books as powerfully formative agents in their lives as leaders.

6.2.1.8 Self-concept

Of the five participants, only Jim projects a strong self-concept. Jim believes he has clearly observable leadership qualities, and that people recognise these **(D4)**. He mentions qualities such as knowledge, experience and commitment **(D5, D6, D7)**.

None of the other four participants exhibit quite so strong and confident a view of themselves. **Simphiwe** remembers feeling insecure and experiencing a "negative" self-concept, particularly when he took on the position of rector of a training college **(A19)**. He feels that his confidence grew as he began to discover that he could do the work **(A19)**, and as he began to experience failure as positive learning experiences **(A19)**.

Michael has never thought of himself as a leader; he has always been encouraged and prompted by others to take up leadership positions **(B34)**. He recalls how as a

younger leader he was lacking in confidence **(B37)**. He still regards himself as an introverted and private person, but is more comfortable with who he is now **(B38)**.

Elizabeth is uncertain about her self-concept. She describes it as being "on the down side", like her leadership style, which is leading from behind **(C40)**. She feels confidence in her ability to do things, but unsettled as far as self-concept is concerned **(C40)**. Yet she concedes that she has attractive qualities as a leader, and that people experience her as charismatic **(C15, C16)**.

Phindiwe's self-concept is not strong. She experiences herself as being uncertain, a withdrawn and private person **(E17)**. She does, however, feel that the positive feedback she is getting from her students helps to affirm her perception of herself as a leader **(E22)**. She thinks of herself as being "in transition" **(E22)**.

6.2.2 Perception of others (followers)

Simphiwe's perception of others springs from complex and paradoxical attitudes. Simphiwe is a devout Christian, a trained pastor, one through whom the "ministry comes" **(A16)**. That he cares deeply about people, is prepared to serve them, and that he regards them as equals in the sense that he "hates to impose" himself **(A8)** is markedly evident throughout his protocol **(A8, A9, A13, A14, A16, A18, A28)**. People to him are "images of God", endowed with talents **(A26)**; he wants to have a "warm type of relationship with them" **(A26)**. He also acknowledges that his authority as a leader springs from others' trust; they see him "in terms of his personality" and not in terms of position **(A28)**. Thus it is not the position, but the man whom they respect.

But at the same time Simphiwe is deeply suspicious of people's motives, suspicious of his own caring attitude, suspicious of the notion of democracy and even of his Christian view of people **(A4, A5, A6, A7, A24, A26)**. His suspicion of democracy

stems from his dealings with students, who demand democratic procedures but do not follow these themselves **(A6)**. He believes what is happening under the guise of democracy is really anarchy **(A6)**. He would not like to be known as a democrat; it is a way of buying "cheap popularity" **(A7)**. Similarly he distrusts his caring attitude to people, who can "take you for a ride" **(A24)**; even the community can take advantage of his willingness to help **(A24)**. He no longer trusts his Christian attitude, because "you may find that you have misplaced your trust sometimes" **(A25)**.

Simphiwe's perception of others - students, staff, and community - is therefore characterised by a fundamental and unresolved tension between how he would ideally like to view people, and how experience has challenged this position.

Michael's perception of others is inextricably part of his view of the school as an effective organisation. He describes himself as one "who strives to empower other people to develop their talents to the mutual benefit of themselves and the school" **(B57)**. He believes staff and pupils can be challenged "to extend themselves beyond their perceived boundaries", and should be led to reflect "a positive, energetic and enthusiastic attitude within the school community" **(B57)**. Thus people are capable of improvement, of developing their talents, and being positive and energetic; he sees in everyone the potential for change and improvement. People are, in a sense, a challenge to his leadership skill and his personal vision. Their development is thus seen as instrumental in the sense that the school, and the school community, also benefits.

Elements of this perception occur throughout Michael's protocol. Early in his career as principal Michael experienced the governing body of the school as threatening, "very formal ... very old-school" **(B10)**. It was not so much the people themselves he struggled with, but their notion of management: "... it brought to a head this whole management style which operated" **(B12)**. The confrontation which followed led to the establishment of a different kind of management style, "totally relaxed", one that, in Michael's words, "fits in with my style now" **(B14)**. Similarly some of

the staff he "inherited" were "of the same school"; some changed, and stayed. Others left; "somebody had to move" **(B21)**.

Michael sees the task of "changing people's perceptions" about the headmaster as one of his most important roles **(B44)**. He is particularly concerned that parents still think of the headmaster as an unapproachable figure **(B43)**.

Elizabeth's perception of others is similarly coloured by her view of the organisation and her role in it. Thus she has to "very formal" about the practice of "consultation" **(C6)**, because that is what the NGO ethos demands. She suggests that being "autocratic and bossy" is perhaps a more natural state, so that "it's a constant struggle to be democratic and objective ..." **(C13)**. Nevertheless, she has accepted the culture of consultation to the extent that she can no longer operate in any other way. She therefore experiences other people as essential partners in the enterprise, who have to be included every step of the way:

> If you know where you're going and you have this vision, then you've got to take people along with you... **(C13)**.

But at the same time she admits that the methods used to include them are "essentially manipulative" **(C13)**. It is, however, her dedication to a broad and general educational ideal that drives her relations with others:

> I don't think that I'm ambitious for positional power in that way but I'm jolly ambitious to be involved in things or to be part of a solution in things **(C23)**.

Jim's perception of others is perhaps best understood in terms of his ideological position. Inspired by the example of people like Nelson Mandela, who continued the struggle for human rights even while in prison, Jim sees the people he leads as needing his leadership and help to be empowered.

On the few occasions when Jim clashed with school authorities it was on

"fundamental issues that affect children, children's decision-making ... that sort of thing" **(D37)**.

He believes it is "something in people that actually brings out the leadership" in him **(D4)**. This seems to happen quite naturally; "It's not as though I've learned it" **(D4)**. People are also deserving, because "given the chance people will be able to bring out the best in themselves, whoever they are" **(D39)**. Jim is heavily influenced by Marx and other socialist literature **(D31)**; his concern is for "the wider community"; he believes leaders are pushed into making decisions that benefit the community as a whole by their morals **(C29)**. He is also dedicated to democratic principles:

> A successful leader has to maintain participation. I insist on ownership of the problem. As long as the group believes the problem is theirs, we are on our way **(D10)**.

Jim demonstrates this ideal when he chairs meetings, a skill he is very proud of. As chairman he is able to

> listen to somebody and take the same question the person is posing and throw it to the same person for a response from that person and it's amazing, the same person will be able to provide an answer to the question he or she raised **(D10)**.

But even in Jim's perception of others there is a paradoxical element. Whilst passionately espousing democracy, he nevertheless finds it hard to allow people to make decisions or carry out tasks without his intervention:

> It's as if my input, if it's not there it's not going to make that decision complete...I often fear that tasks allocated would not be completed by those who took responsibility for them and therefore I end up doing too much myself **(D1)**.

There is also a strong theatrical and public element to Jim's leadership; he clearly enjoys being in the public eye, stemming also from his love a drama **(D11)**, and being popular and well-known **(D19)**. Yet he admits that he finds it hard to remember

others' names, something he finds embarrassing because he believes it to be "so important" **(D20)**.

The best picture of Jim as leader of the people is provided by himself:

> And I can see myself in a two or three years in time possibly going marching down the street against the present government saying "Please we demand compulsory free education for 10 years or 12 years ..." **(D43)**.

Phindiwe's perception of others falls into two distinctly antithetical positions. She accepts her students for who they, and is able to run her classes democratically **(E1, E5)**. Here she is able to be "easy-going" **(E1)** and make classes fun **(E10)**. She enjoys the personal contact with them, and shows her care and real and lasting ways **(E9)**.

But in the context of the staff as a whole she does not "easily open up" **(E17)**. She fears criticism or victimisation. She is clearly not comfortable with her colleagues **(E17, E18)**. She fears that she would be pre-judged because she might be the principal, and perhaps classified as "not very approachable" **(E18)**. She does seem to be withdrawn in her relations with colleagues; she often works in the library to escape their comments **(E11)**. She also regards herself as a poor listener **(E19)**, indicating that she does not give her colleagues the kind of attention she is prepared to give her students.

6.2.3 Perception of environment/organisation

From the participants' descriptions of how they experience organisational life it is possible to construe their perceptions of the environments in which they operate.

Simphiwe sees the college, and its broader organisational setting, as a rigid and autocratic hierarchy **(A12)**. He sees himself as being accountable to his immediate superior, the Chief Education Specialist, who in turn is accountable to the Deputy

Director, and so on up to the minister **(A11)**. He refers to the "Department" as a body whose chief functions seem to be control and punishment **(A4)**.

Michael has a very different view of his organisation. Initially he struggled with the "very formal" ethos of the school **(B10)**. His own less formal approach to management, and his need to be consulted on important decisions led to a clash between himself and the governing body **(B11)**, after which the school began to take on the ethos he felt comfortable with **(B14)**. Michael therefore views the school as plastic and fluid, capable of change; he has, to a large extent, "remodelled" the school **(B55)**.

Elizabeth regards the NGO in which she works as a "microcosm of what South Africa is all about" **(C2)**; its population is "heterogeneous in every sense of the word", and she experiences it as "very rich in comparison" with more formal organisations, such as schools **(C3)**. This environment challenges her to be more creative and innovative, "making something new" **(C5)**, and taking "huge risks" **(C31)**. It has also taught her the importance of consultation **(C6)** and of having a vision, a "global" view of education **(C10)**. She sees her own work as an integral part of education as a whole **(C10)**. Because she does not feel a sense of accountability to a "national or provincial boss" **(C29)**, she feels a greater sense of freedom; but the fact that she is "accountable to people, downwards" makes her work stressful **(C29)**.

In **Jim's** case it is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of organisations: the first one, in which he functions strongly as a leader, is the community. Here the organisation consists of a number of committees which he chairs where he is able to give expression to his leadership through chairmanship **(D13)**. Referring to Mandela's role in prison as one of "organising inside", taking the struggle "inside", Jim sees his role as one of fighting against injustice **(D37)**. In this sense, Jim views the community as fluid and constantly changing; he sees his role in shaping its future

as central. He regards his authority as "quasi-legal" since he is the mouthpiece of the organisation, but has to earn the respect of its members **(D43)**. Jim's view of the school as organisation is very different. He does not see himself fitting easily into the "hierarchical structure" of a school **(D41)**. In fact, he seems to have clashed with all the principals he has served under **(D37)**. He is often perceived as leading contrary or challenging movements among the staff of the school **(D35)**. Thus the school is perceived as more rigid, operating with structures of which Jim is suspicious **(D41)**.

For **Phindiwe** her classroom is the organisation in which she feels comfortable and which she can manage to her satisfaction **(E1-E5)**. She is able to run the classroom democratically, and therefore experiences it as an environment which she can shape, to some extent, without denying students their right to contribute **(E5)**. She believes she has earned her authority in the classroom **(E21)**. Phindiwe plays hardly any role in the organisation and management of the college as a whole. Her perception of the college can only be deduced from her attitude to colleagues, which is one of suspicion and reserve **(E18)**.

6.3 General statement

> The general statement leaves out the particulars of the specific situation and centers on those aspects ... that have emerged which, while not necessarily universal, are at least transituational or more than specific (Giorgi 1975:88).

I have repeated Giorgi's description of what a "general statement" is in order to emphasise the point that the general statement which follow is not to be regarded as universally, or generally, true of leadership. It does, I believe, capture and faithfully reflect the essence of my five participants' perceptions of themselves, those whom they lead, and the environments in which they lead. To what extent the statement is more broadly or generally applicable is a question I believe readers will have to answer for themselves.

6.3.1 How leaders see themselves

A **sense of self** appears to be a key element in educational leaders' perception of themselves as leaders. There are several factors contributing to the sense of self.

One of these is the extent to which the leader thinks of him- or herself as **playing a role** as opposed to simply **being yourself** in a leadership position. It seems that an element of role-playing is always present in leadership, though not always to the same degree. Some leaders experience the environment and/or their followers as potentially problematic or even hostile, and as a result are more consciously playing a role which may not reflect who they want to be. Others have been able to shape their environment, or are able to identify so strongly with it that they experience the role they play as a natural extension of who they are. In these cases there appears to be less tension.

A second factor is the influence of **significant others**. It seems that parents, mothers in particular, are perceived as having been - or as still being - highly influential in how leaders perceive themselves. Mothers are seen as providing, in varying degrees, guidance, support, and direction; they are strong role models even to the extent where leaders feel they are like their mothers. In other cases, parents have apparently provided a spiritual or emotional framework from which leaders have consciously deviated in the quest to find themselves.

Leaders are also strongly influenced by the example provided by larger-than-life **significant others**, figures that have attained mythical proportions in history and seem to resemble the archetypal hero. These figures include Jesus, John the Baptist, Martin Luther King, and

Nelson Mandela. The influence these figures' lives have on leaders seems to be of a spiritual and moral nature. They are admired for their dedicated pursuit of their goals, in the face of considerable opposition. In the case of Nelson Mandela, leaders identify with his continued dedication to 'the struggle' - freeing South Africa - and his Christ-like acceptance of his years of suffering apparently without bitterness.

A third factor is that leaders perceive themselves to be somehow **different from** peers, colleagues and followers. This difference manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as being especially caring in a bureaucratic system, being unconventional in terms of risk-taking, or simply being more committed and publicly active than others.

Morality or a sense of values is a fourth factor which characterises educational leaders' sense of self. Values can be instrumental in the sense that they direct and shape what leaders actually do, or they can act as moral guidelines for how leaders ought to behave. Morality can, in some cases, be so closely associated with ideology as to be inseparable from the leader's ideological identity.

A fifth factor is the importance of **early formative experiences** in the lives of leaders. Naturally these will vary from leader to leader, but the fact that such experiences remain influential, regardless of how long ago they may have occurred, is invariably true. Some refer to the lasting effect of childhood experiences - such as the circumstances in which they grew up, or the leadership opportunities they had as children. Others refer to new insights gained as adolescent students.

The sixth factor that emerges is the role that **reading** generally, and reading **English literature** in particular, has played in forming the

sense of self. Again, the specific experiences vary greatly, but it seems as though literature - imaginative works of fiction as well as non-fiction - is regarded as having played, and as still playing, an important role in leaders' perception of who they are.

The final factor is educational leaders' notion of **self-concept**. What emerges is that leaders find it difficult to talk about themselves in an objective way. They seem more able to talk about what they do, and what they believe, and how others possibly see them. They seem reluctant to commit themselves as far as their view of themselves is concerned. Most appear to be less confident than one would have expected. It seems that they regard themselves as becoming rather than being. Leaders appear to be in a state of flux; they seem to regard themselves as one of the variables in their environments.

6.3.2 How leaders view others (followers)

There seems to be something fundamentally paradoxical or, at best, antithetical - about the way in which educational leaders perceive those whom they lead.

On the one hand, concern for the rights, power, and freedom to act on the part of followers emerges strongly. This is variously expressed as the importance of consultation, of empowerment, of democratic procedures, of ownership and care. Educational leaders seem strongly motivated to lead in such a way as to live out these principles in their leadership. For some these principles are deeply felt ideological positions, suggesting that to lead in any other way would be a betrayal of who they are.

On the other hand, it seems as though educational leaders find it

difficult to live out these principles. In some cases the difficulty is explicitly expressed as reservations they have about human nature, or fears of possible unpleasant repercussions if these principles are acted upon. In other cases it seems as though the importance of the individual has come to be subordinate to the goals and values of the organisation, or of the leaders themselves. The notion that all leadership is virtually by definition manipulative emerges as strongly characteristic of the leaders' sense of others.

6.3.3 How leaders perceive their environments (organisations)

Educational leaders do not view the contexts within which they operate in the same way. It seems their view of organisations can vary from the perception that organisations are rigid, inflexible and not capable of change, to a perception of organisations as flexible and plastic - i.e. able to be reshaped. The former view seems to arise from a perception of the organisation as a rigid bureaucracy, with strict rules and regulations, controlled by a hierarchically arranged line of officials in such a way that the organisation is rendered impersonal. In such cases the individual - even the leader - is felt to have no potential impact on the life of the organisation. The organisation seems to have acquired a life of its own, controlling the lives even of those who would seem to be running it.

The latter view - that organisations can be remodelled - encompasses both the idea that the leader may do the remodelling, as well as the notion that remodelling cannot occur unless everyone concerned plays a role in the process. Central to both ideas is the existence of a vision (or simply a different picture of how things may be), originating with the leader and passed on to others.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion of findings

In Chapter Two I expressed the belief that my findings would, to some extent, articulate with what other researchers have found, and also the hope that this study would shed light on previously unexplored or under-explored aspects of leadership. In this Chapter I attempt to establish to what extent I was justified in harbouring such ambitions.

It may, however, be helpful if I first presented a very brief overview of my study up to this point.

7.1 Different questions

The thrust of my argument in Chapter Two was the virtual absence of the personal element in leadership research. I argued that the trait approach, in concentrating on such behavioural, physical and psychological traits as could be commonly observed in leaders, produced a summarised and generally unhelpful description of the typical leader. Situational approaches, on the other hand, negated the importance of the individual to the extent that the person all but disappeared, even as a variable in the leadership dynamic. Contingency approaches attempted to find a synthesis between situation and person, but were so intent on simplification, classification, and producing recipes that the complexity of personality (or personal traits) was reduced to a task-person dichotomy or continuum. Transformational leadership theory seemed promising at first glance. With its emphasis on values and the moral transformation of followers it seemed as though the person - in the full and rich sense of that word - was bound to feature more prominently as both the agent and subject of change. But the notion of morality acquired a disappointingly thin and instrumental interpretation. Leadership research, which had been intent on answering questions such as "What are the characteristics of effective leaders?" and "What do effective leaders do?" seemed, for the past few decades, more interested in answering the question "What <u>should</u>

leaders do in order to be effective?" Numerous answers have been suggested, many of which have turned into best-selling guides to leadership (such as Max de Pree's *Leadership is an Art*, Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*, to name but a few). Indeed, answering this question has given birth to what Huey (1994:24) has, a trifle cynically, described as "The leadership industry": best-selling how-to-lead and how-to-live books, hugely expensive leadership seminars and training sessions with guest appearances by gurus like Tom Peters; an example of "late-20th-century academic avarice" according to American professor of English, Benjamin DeMott (cited by Huey 1994:24). The leadership industry then, for all its intentions, be they honourable or not, is still trying to answer the question "How should/do effective leaders perform?", and is thus unlikely to provide more than a superficial understanding of the *being* of leadership. Consequently the person has remained obstinately beyond the scope of enquiry.

This research can be said to have arisen out of my need to ask different questions, ones which probe leaders' perceptions of who they are as people, how they have come to be who they are, how they perceive others, and how they perceive the environments in which they function. I hoped that what would emerge would present the leader-as-person in his or her inherently complex, paradoxical and indefinable state.

Yet research cannot be driven simply by asking "different questions". These questions have to come from somewhere; they need to be philosophically grounded in a life-view that provides a framework for understanding the answers. I believed that phenomenology would provide the framework against which the questions I asked make sense. This argument, set out in some detail in Chapter Three, rests on the assumption that a dichotomous or analytical view of phenomena which seeks to examine the person as a separate entity from the world he or she inhabits - such as the classical task-person dichotomy in leadership thinking - is inherently flawed, since there is no world other than that constituted by the individual. Or, if there is, it is not open to scrutiny. Thus, if the object of my research is to describe how someone

perceives his or her reality, I can only gain access to that reality by examining that person's perceptions of it. A phenomenological view of organisations, for example, will hold that organisations cannot be understood apart from the people who constitute them and give them meaning. It is against this understanding of reality that I was able to ask different questions of my research participants.

7.2 Different answers

The answers I received - interview protocols which were later reduced to meaning units and thematised (see Appendix) - enabled me to probe the special and unique meaning that each of the participants constructed of his or her reality. Thus I was able to write situated descriptions of how each of the five leaders interviewed experienced his or her leadership. These descriptions are recorded in Chapters Four and Five. I then isolated dominant themes from all five descriptions and used these to produce a general description, or statement, capturing the essence of how these leaders perceive themselves, others whom they lead, and the environment in which they operate. These findings are recorded in Chapter Six.

It is, of course, hardly surprising that these answers are different from the kinds of answers mainstream leadership research has provided. I did, after all, ask very different questions, and I asked them differently, i.e. from a different methodological position. It is also true that they are not necessarily different in substance; it might justifiably be claimed that the essential components of leadership had been successfully isolated in the decades of leadership research referred to in Chapter Two. The difference lies in the way in which these components present themselves, and how they are perceived by the leaders who participated in this study. The nature of that difference needs now to be more fully explored; in other words, to make sense of what has been gained, I need to discuss the findings in terms of how they differ, and what the implications of this difference may be for our understanding of leadership.

There is another kind of difference that needs to be addressed. The general description in Chapter Six, in which dominant themes are emphasised, may give the impression that the five participants have very similar perceptions of themselves as leaders. But this is of course not the case: there are fundamental differences in the way the participants view themselves, others and organisations, as should have become apparent from the situated descriptions in Chapters Four and Five. Whilst it is clearly impossible for me to comment fully on all such differences, I do think it necessary that those that are unique or particularly striking receive some attention.

At various points throughout the following section, therefore, I shall highlight these unique findings, and hold them in abeyance, as it were, so that I may address them with more single-minded attention later in the chapter.

7.3 My findings compared: New questions emerge

The chief points emerging from the general description presented in Chapter Six may be summarised as follows:

- **A strong sense of self**, derived from a variety of elements, including
  - **the extent to which leaders feel that they are playing a role as opposed to being themselves**
  - **the influence of significant others, notably parents**
  - **the influence of larger-than-life significant others**
  - **the sense of being different from others**
  - **the role played by morality (principles or values)**
  - **the importance of early formative experiences**
  - **the role of literature**
  - **an awareness of self-concept**

○ **A fundamentally paradoxical perception of others (followers)**, underscored by

○ **ideological positions**

○ **the need to manipulate**

○ **the needs and values of the organisation**

○ **Fundamentally different ways of viewing organisations**, manifested in

○ **whether organisations are rigid and exist outside their sphere of influence, or**

○ **whether organisations are fluid and expressions of themselves**

7.3.1 The person emerges

Free people write, as it were, their own histories; they are the authors of their own lives (Maxine Greene 1974:65).

The freedom of the self to tell its own autobiography at any stage is an important part of its feeling of self-worth and authenticity (Morwenna Griffiths 1993:153).

The emergence of the self is, as I have noted, perhaps the strongest feature of the findings of this study. This was, in a sense, to be expected since many of the questions I asked were designed to prompt the respondents to talk about themselves, about their strengths and weaknesses, and about how they perceive themselves as leaders. In another sense, though, there is no guarantee that certain kinds of questions will produce certain kinds of answers. Bennis and Nanus (1985), in their classic study of 90 American leaders, asked questions that sound very similar to the questions I asked of my five participants. But their answers - which they presented as four "strategies" - are nothing like mine at all. The reason for this is that their research was driven by different underlying questions and assumptions, a different

methodological stance - though the authors themselves self-deprecatingly doubt whether they applied any "methodology" at all (see p.23) - and a very different handling of the data accumulated. This paragraph of freely mixed metaphors from *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* (1985) is how they describe what they did with their interview data:

> However, determined to get our "conceptual arms" around the leadership issue, we vigilantly trolled these disparate powers [the data] for uniformities, a process that took about two years. And we did this much the way one decants wine or pans for gold, by continuously (and monotonously) going over the interviews and notes and trying out one concept to see how much of the data it could screen out and how much it could hold. Then another. And another. We looked to see if there were any kernels of truth about leadership - the marrow, if you will, of leadership behaviour. Perhaps others would look elsewhere; for us, four major themes slowly developed ... that all ninety of our leaders embodied (Bennis & Nanus 1985:26).

A fundamentally different position from the phenomenologist, who approaches his data without *a priori* concepts, with "conceptual arms" folded, as it were; who revels in and tries to capture the "disparate powers" in description to highlight the uniqueness of the experience; and who probably dismisses the notion that there are universal "kernels of truth" about anything; and who resorts to "major themes" only when the essence of each experience has been captured. Thus the identical questions can, indeed, produce very different answers.

It is also true, however, that my five participants' answers exceed the expectations of the questions. Put differently, the participants have done more than simply talk about themselves. It is the extent to which they try to make sense of elements such as the people they lead and the contexts in which they lead **in terms of who they themselves are as people** that makes these findings fundamentally different from mainstream leadership research findings, and lends credence to Greenfield's notion of "organizations being expressions of 'will, intention and value'" (Cahill 1994:253). In terms of Griffiths' metaphor, cited above, there appears to be a need, on the part

of the educational leader, for the self to attain authenticity and enhance feelings of self-worth by telling "its own autobiography" (Griffiths 1993:153). Thus leadership becomes an extension of who one is; one's daily work is a manifestation of one's self. The poet D.H. Lawrence saw this notion of harmony and holism in work clearly:

> When a man puts his own self into his work
> he is living, not merely working (quoted in Stones 1982).

Lawrence went on to compare someone working to a tree putting forth leaves: both are natural acts, a celebration of being human, or of being a tree. He was, of course, talking in existentialist terms of the 'human-ness' of the working human, and the 'tree-ness' of the tree putting forth leaves. While serving to make the point, however, Lawrence's comparison fails to account for the fact that, unlike trees, people have choices. People are, as Greene (1974:65) has put it, free to "write ... their own histories; they are the authors of their own lives". But people are also "condemned to meaning" (Valle & King 1978:102) and thus to Greene's next point: "... [people] must act and choose in terms of the reality given to them by way of consciousness" (Greene 1974:102). It goes without saying that we are not all "given" the same "reality"; indeed, each of us constructs his or her own reality. The extent to which our reality allows us the freedom to be "the authors of [our] own lives" (Greene 1974:65) will therefore vary from person to person, as I hope will become clear in the following discussion of my findings.

7.3.1.1 Playing a role and being yourself

There appears to be an element of role-playing - i.e. assuming a personage that is not essentially yourself - in all leadership. But the extent to which leaders feel it necessary to play roles varies from person to person. So Simphiwe, for example, is very conscious of the fact that he is not fully accepted for who he is; he would have to "wear a mask" in order to be an effective leader. Michael, Elizabeth, Jim, and Phindiwe, on the other hand, perceive their leadership largely as almost natural

extensions of who they are. Though each is conscious of having adopted behaviours and styles - Michael's attempts to look happy, Elizabeth's conscious commitment to NGO principles, Jim's need to be publicly recognised, Phindiwe's conscious commitment to democratic procedures - reading their protocols gives one a growing sense of the extent to which these adopted behaviours and attitudes have become so assimilated as to be part of who they are.

Leadership literature seems not to have commented on this phenomenon. While role-playing seems to have provided a rich source of research - see, for example, Bass (1990) for extensive accounts of research into role-theory - such research seems always to have proceeded from the assumption that leadership is role-playing.

It is possible that educational leaders are more able to be themselves in their leadership. But in order to make this suggestion one would have to submit that education is, somehow, different from business; that schools, colleges, NGOs are driven by different needs and goals, different, that is, from those that drive profit-making organisations. I believe they are fundamentally different, and that it is this difference that helps to account for the fact that educational leaders more readily integrate learned or adopted behaviours into their personalities. Bush's (1986) attempt to highlight these differences serve as a useful starting point.

Bush isolated six areas in which the management of schools differs from the management of other organisations. These may be summarised as:

1. the difficulty of defining educational objectives
2. the difficulty of measuring outcomes
3. the fact that people (children or young adults) are both the clients and the outputs of schools and colleges
4. the fact that teachers and lecturers come from a common professional background
5. the fragmented, *ad hoc* nature of decision making and planning

6. the fact that administrators have little time to devote to administration (Bush 1986:5-7).

There is no need to dwell on all of these. It seems to me that the common factor, contributing in one way or another to these and other perceived differences, is the people-centred nature of education. There is no way in which a teacher - or an education administrator/leader - can escape daily dealing with values. Schools are essentially normative institutions. Whatever the ideological position of the teacher or leader - whether one is driven by the need to inculcate values; or, in the liberal tradition, to promote opportunities for children to unfold naturally into who they are; or in a more post-modern paradigm, to adopt the stance of critical pedagogy (Simon 1992) or "border pedagogy" (Aronowitz & Giroux 1992:114) - the need to engage personally with other people's value systems lies at the heart of education. Working with people, through people, for people, the educator must needs be so personally involved as to make role-playing enormously stressful. And this is precisely the case for Simphiwe who experiences the expectation that he should assume a different role if he wants to be accepted. I shall return to this key issue later.

7.3.1.2 Mothers

The influence of parents - mothers in particular - emerged as a strong theme in my findings. Research has produced little in the way of conclusive findings, but there appear to be grounds for believing that strong mothers serve as strong role models, especially for sons (Bass 1990:809). On the other hand, Hartman and Harris (1991) found diminishing signs of influence where the role model was female, lending support to the Western notion of leadership being a masculine activity (Hofstede 1980). However, since their research was conducted among white American college students it is hardly surprising that results favoured the perceived (and received) cultural notion of leadership.

Three of my participants perceive their mothers as having had - or still having - a profound influence on their lives. One could of course put this down to the fact that all three were raised by their mothers; Simphiwe and Jim lost their fathers when they were very young, and Phindiwe's mother remained unmarried. But this in itself does not necessarily account for the admiration - an admiration that amounts to reverence - that Simphiwe and Jim have of their mothers. Both speak of their mothers' strength and self-sacrifice; their mothers seem to be moral touchstones for them, providing the impetus for their leadership. Jim believes he is like his mother; and what he admired her for most - giving him opportunities to study and improve his life - is precisely what drives his own leadership. Simphiwe's mother is "a rock" behind himself, as well as his own family; his faith in her is complete and unshakeable. He also finds it essential to have regular contact with her, as if to recharge his psychic and spiritual batteries. Significantly, there is something of the earth-mother in his leadership too, as he sees to the emotional and spiritual needs of his staff, students and parent-body. In both cases, these leaders' mothers are <u>present</u> in their leadership.

Whilst it is clearly possible to speculate - in so small a sample -that both men just happen to have strong mothers, there are cultural-historical factors that tend to support the likelihood of mothers providing stronger leadership role models.

Jim, for example, explains how, in South African Indian culture, the mother is usually the dominant figure in the household. He describes his own mother as being entirely dominant over his father; it was she who kept the family together and saw to the children's education.

A recent study by Buiys and Atherfold (1995) of rotating credit schemes colloquially known as *umgalelo* (Xhosa for 'to pour') or *stokvels* (Dutch/Afrikaans for 'stockfairs') in the Rhini (Grahamstown) and Zwelitsha (Kingwilliamstown) areas provides interesting and, I think, significant insights into Black community life, particularly as far as the role of women is concerned.

Firstly, their sample bore out what seems to be becoming a trend elsewhere in South Africa, and indeed worldwide, namely the move towards "female-headed or -centred families" (Buiys & Atherfold 1995:2). There are obviously many reasons for this phenomenon, and one may be inclined to regard it as a symptom of an unwell society. But Buiys (1996a pers. comm.) believed that Black women often chose not to marry; nor did this mean that they would remain childless. In fact:

> Current thinking has moved away from the premise that the female-headed household is a symptom of social malaise or decay, and this structure has instead come to be regarded as a commonplace social arrangement in many societies throughout the world ... (Buiys & Atherfold 1995:1).

Secondly, *umgalelo* and other micro-entrepreneurial activities that arise in poor communities with high unemployment are almost exclusively controlled by women. Some of the women interviewed by Buiys & Atherfold (1995:61) specifically wanted men excluded because they were not "trustworthy". The study refers to a case of an all male *umgalelo* which failed after four months because members refused to keep up with regular payments. The organiser said he would start a new club "but this time with women members, since he considered them to be more reliable" (Buiys & Atherfold 1995:64.

What may be learned from this? Firstly, that women are likely to play a role of increasing importance as heads of families. This can no longer be regarded as unusual, but the implications for the raising and education of children in terms of role-modelling need to be carefully considered. Secondly, women seem less likely than men to exhibit the kind of thinking and behaviour described by Lewis (cited by Buiys & Atherfold 1995:21) as typical in a culture of poverty, viz.

> a strong present-time orientation which refers to an inability to defer gratification as well as a sense of resignation and fatalism.

Indeed, the picture of women that emerges from Buiys & Atherfold's study - strong,

motivated mothers who are committed to saving and small business in order to provide for their children's education - fairly accurately describes the mothers that have been - and continue to be - such a strong influence in the lives of Jim and Simphiwe.

For me, however, the unusually strong and physically experienced bond between Simphiwe and his mother retains something of a mystical quality, an enigma that is perhaps best viewed in the light of similarly enigmatic (and elusive) but nevertheless profound unconscious needs, such as those preserved in myths, fairy-tales and legends. But I shall delay these tentative probings to the following section which deals with an equally enigmatic phenomenon.

7.3.1.3 Heroes

Whilst role-modelling on parents (Bass 1990:809) as well as on mentors (Bass 1990:836) seem to have received considerable attention as subjects of enquiry, the notion of leaders being strongly influenced and driven by examples provided by larger-than-life heroes seems to be largely unexplored. Yet it emerged so strongly in my own findings that it cannot be ignored.

The hero that features most prominently in my findings is Nelson Mandela. It is perhaps hardly surprising, in the light of political developments in South Africa after decades of oppression, and especially in the light of Mandela's role in the liberation of this country, that he should be viewed as a hero. His name occurs alongside other great liberators, such as Martin Luther King and Jesus Christ. It is also perhaps to be expected that we are naturally drawn to revere those who fight for our freedom, who seem to epitomise the liberal yearnings that we harbour amidst largely conservative societal pressures. But these bland explanations do not even begin to account for the kind of hero-worship encountered in my findings, especially in Jim's responses. There is, one suspects, something almost unaccountable at work here, something akin, perhaps, to Simphiwe's reverence for his mother. Yet an attempt

must be made to find a basis even for the unaccountable, particularly since these perceptions are so fundamentally expressions of these leaders' *lebenswelt*.

I must at the outset confess that it is beyond my power - and probably beyond the scope of this study - to attempt a comprehensive account of this phenomenon. I believe such an account might be possible for one well versed in the notion of archetypes, and in mythology. I am not, but nevertheless feel it necessary to attempt such an explication, however naive it may appear to the reader. My hope is that my efforts may at least have the effect of highlighting new and fruitful fields of study in the ongoing leadership enquiry.

Why mythology? There are many ways of answering this question, none of them easy, and none of them self-evidently open to empirical enquiry. I ask it only because it may be regarded as unusual that I draw on the realms of fantasy and the imagination to address so concrete a phenomenon as leadership. If this dissertation were on literature I would not be asking this question at all. Poets, novelists and dramatists draw freely on the storehouse of fantasy that exists in stories, legends and myths (including the Bible) that has been in existence for centuries, sometimes explicitly (as in Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Joyce's *Ulysses)*, or more implicitly (as in Lawrence's *The Rainbow*). Eliot's poem would make little sense to the reader who has no knowledge of ancient Babylonian and Egyptian christ-figures and certain key texts in the Bible. These writers have, in other words, proceeded on the assumption that their readers will have such knowledge, and by blending elements of mythology into their work they are consciously invoking powerful analogies with the stories they have to tell, resulting in enriched meaning and understanding. Their use of - and reliance on - these ancient sources is also an acknowledgement of the latent power contained in each. But what exactly is this power?

It seems significant that every culture, in every time, has produced a body of such tales. What is even more remarkable is that the tales reveal so many similarities,

across cultures and across eras. Campbell (1988:51), commenting on this phenomenon, suggested that:

> the human psyche is the same all over the world. The psyche is the inward experience of the human body, which is essentially the same in all human beings, with the same organs, the same instincts, the same impulses, the same conflicts, the same fears. Out of this common ground have come what Jung has called the archetypes, which are the common ideas of myths.

There is, in other words, a limited (limited, that is, by the precepts of being human) number of fundamental concerns or preoccupations that have mystified and intrigued civilizations of all ages. Every age, every civilization, every tribe or group of people, and, indeed, every individual has confronted the same imponderable issues of human existence: birth, death, gods, the search for the self or the journey to adulthood, good and evil, and so on. Mythology addresses these very issues, which largely accounts for its influence in our lives.

Myths originating in pre-enlightened (or pre-scientific times) were also human attempts to explain the occurrence of natural phenomena. So the story of Persephone, for example, who has to spend six months in Pluto's underworld during which time the earth 'dies' because of her absence, is a mythical explanation of the seasonal cycle (White 1959). It is interesting how writers of children's stories have resuscitated this genre. Kipling's *Just So* stories - tales which explain phenomena such as how the leopard got its spots - tap into this same need to know and sense of wonder at the mysterious diversity of living things. The renewed interest in indigenous culture in this country has led to the resurrection of African legends (Greaves 1990), many of which address similar issues, such as why lions roar (a Batonka story), how the cheetah got its speed (a Bushman story) and why the cheetah's cheeks are stained with tears (a Zulu story).

Another interesting development over the last few decades has been the proliferation of fantasy novels. The modern fantasy novel - in which intelligent dragons

communicate with people through thought-speech, and magicians pit their mysterious spiritual powers against unthinkable forces of evil - probably took its lead from the work of J.R.R. Tolkien, whose *Lord of the Rings* (1954) trilogy enjoyed (still enjoys) astonishing popularity among readers of all ages. But there is, in a sense, nothing new even in this great work. It is about heroes, quests, magic, great battles between good and evil forces, love and hate. Why, one might ask, does the modern, enlightened mind find itself fascinated by such extravagantly fictitious work? Some may argue that these stories offer the reader the opportunity to escape from dreary reality - rather like television soap-operas and situational comedies - and are therefore pure entertainment. Whilst there may be an element of truth in this argument, it ignores what seems to me to be the essence of our experience of stories: the fact that in every case it is we ourselves we are reading about. In this sense fiction is like a "mirror" (Greene 1974:83) in which we find reflections of our multiple selves. In simple terms, we identify with the hero, live his or her experiences, and are, in the process, led to reflect anew on who we are. Far from being an escape from reality then, stories lead us, again and again, to confront our reality. The reason why this is possible lies in the fundamentally allegorical nature of stories. Even children - perhaps especially children - grasp this intuitively. No child ever wonders how it is that the wolf can speak to Little Red Riding Hood. The wolf is intuitively recognised as the arch-villain, just as we accept the talking serpent in the Garden of Eden as Satan.

Thus the Jungian notion of archetypes - mentioned in passing by Campbell (quoted above) - seems to lie at the root of mythology, and is in fact, the very stuff of which myths are made. Jung (1959:5) would probably only partly agree with this claim:

> Another well-known expression of the archetypes is myth and fairytale. But here too we are dealing with forms that have received a specific stamp and have been handed down through long periods of time. The term "archetype" thus applies only indirectly ... since it designates only those psychic contents which have not yet been submitted to conscious elaboration and are therefore an immediate datum of psychic experience.

But it nevertheless seems likely that stories, novels, poems, dramas, even when they do not explicitly allude to mythological figures or plots, draw on this same "reservoir", as Bly (1990:xi) has called it.

This (admittedly sketchy) background may be sufficient to provide a framework for understanding the cases highlighted earlier: Jim's hero-worship of Nelson Mandela, and Simphiwe's reverence and physically felt need of his mother.

Campbell's (1988:123) description of the archetypal hero's adventure provides a useful point of entry:

> The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken, or who feels there's something lacking in the normal experiences available or permitted to the members of his society. This person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life-giving elixir. It's usually a cycle, a going and a returning.

There is an almost uncanny resemblance between this description and the life of Nelson Mandela. He begins with "something" that "has been taken" from him: his liberty. And clearly he felt there was "something lacking in the normal experiences ... permitted to the members of his society." This is precisely why his freedom was taken. The injustice of apartheid had denied his people basic human rights, as a result of which he led resistance movements under the banner of the African National Congress. Since this was a banned organisation under National Party rule, he was jailed as a political prisoner. And so his series of "adventures" began. For those who may find it difficult to equate a 27 year prison sentence with "a series of adventures", I would recommend Mandela's book, *Long Walk to Freedom*. Or we can look again at what Jim has to say about Mandela's time in prison:

> He [Mandela] was telling us how in prison people thought that they were in prison, so where is the struggle, you know? And he said the struggle was in prison itself... to change the hearts and minds of those prisoners, to organise, to uplift the morale of fellow-prisoners, to

> organise study classes, and he was the key person behind all that ... organising inside you know, organising inside... ja, it's amazing.

As for "recovering what has been lost", who can fail to acknowledge his heroic role in bringing about democracy in South Africa, granting his people that which none of them had ever known. Thus it is not difficult to see how Mandela takes on mythically heroic proportions in Jim's *lebenswelt*. "A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself" (Campbell 1988:124). This is precisely what Nelson Mandela has done. He is the archetypal hero. What is significant, though, is that Mandela is more than simply an idea, or symbol to Jim. Jim himself explains the alchemy through which the image becomes real':

> But the kind of mysticism that was with him when he was in prison is slowly translating itself into a real kind of worship for a man like Jesus who walked on the earth, you know.

Jim has, in a sense, mythologised Mandela. But in the same way that myths speak to us in real terms about fundamental issues, the life of Mandela informs Jim's leadership in real and concrete terms. It is clear, from Jim's protocol, that he sees himself as the potential hero, the leader who is prepared to dedicate his life to something bigger than himself.

The same may be true - to a lesser extent - of Simphiwe and his reverence for his mother. Jung (1959:81) wrote extensively on the mother archetype. He described the personal mother and grandmother as "first in importance", and went on to describe what he called mother "in a figurative sense", by which he meant the earth-goddess (as discussed by Campbell 1988:165), the mother of God and the Virgin. The extent to which this archetypal notion of mother has been adopted by us hardly needs to be dwelt upon here. We instinctively think of the earth as our mother, and language abounds in idioms capturing that unique experience of mother love. Indeed, the theme of mother love - sometimes represented as abnormal - has received numerous fictional treatments, as in the Oedipus story, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*,

Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, to name but a few. Jung (1959:165) listed some of the archetype characteristics:

> The archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness: the cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden. It can be attached to a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring ...

Let us return to Simphiwe's description of his feelings for his mother:

> You know my father passed away at 67 ... I was still a young boy. I've got a <u>rock</u> behind me, that's my mother. And of course with my wife and my kids and ... my mother is a rock behind us ... Very strong. Very strong personality. And sometimes you go there downhearted and say I just want to be here for a week. But when you leave that ... whoa! it's eina! [It hurts!] At least a month I must see her. A month I must see her even if it's twice or ... and she often comes to us.

It seems feasible that Simphiwe is perceiving more than the flesh and blood of the person who bore him. He endows his mother with almost superhuman qualities, particularly those of stability and permanence ("a rock") and the power to revitalise the waning spirit. She seems to have become the earth-mother. Again, though, as in Jim's case, it is the extent to which her power is physically felt ("its eina!") and therefore the way in which she is present in his leadership that makes the association phenomenologically significant. And, as I have mentioned, it is interesting how Simphiwe perceives his role as rector of a college as one of caring and seeing to the emotional needs of his staff.

7.3.1.4 On being different

This, too, emerged as a strong theme in my findings. All five leaders perceive themselves as different from peers, colleagues, and those whom they lead. They use words like "unconventional" and "rebel" to express this difference. This is of course hardly a novel concept. Indeed, our collective notion of leadership, built on the metaphor provided by larger-than-life, charismatic world leaders, includes the

assumption that leaders are, somehow, different from ordinary people. In a sense, the thrust behind trait research (which dominated the early decades of this century) was fed by exactly that notion. More recent trait research - such as that conducted by Bennis & Nanus (1985) referred to above - is driven by a similar need, though the emphasis might have shifted from discovering traits that are inborn to kinds of behaviour and values that are acquired and learned.

On the whole, though, the literature seems to prefer a kind of fence-sitting position on this issue. On the one hand, writers stress the central role of the leader in creating vision and giving birth to the particular culture of an organisation (Senge 1991, Schein 1992), a position which seems to imply the possession of extraordinary qualities, such as those possessed by the charismatic figures Burns (1978) used to illustrate the concept of transformative leadership. There appears to be a grudging acknowledgement, in other words, of the fact that "leaders are by no means ordinary people" (Bennis 1989:5). So, Deal & Kennedy (1982:37) talked about the corporate leader as a "hero ... the great motivator, the magician ..." And De Pree (1992:94) felt sure that "Leaders stand out from the rest of us." But there seems to be an even stronger drive towards tempering this belief, reminiscent of Weber's description of how charisma is routinised (Eisenstadt 1968). "The truth is that major capacities and competencies of leadership can be learned ...", said Bennis & Nanus (1985:222). And it is <u>this</u> belief that has given rise to the proliferation of leadership literature, all designed to explain to readers what it is they need to do, or believe, in order to become leaders themselves (Bennis & Nanus 1985, Peters 1987, Adair 1988, Covey 1992, De Pree 1992, Bennis 1994, to mention but a few).

The question does not, of course, really need to be resolved. It is quite possible to contemplate the apparently paradoxical truth that many leaders seem to have extraordinary qualities that set them apart from others - whether these are endowed by nature or nurture - and that leadership skills can be learned, or improved. My findings clearly show that leaders perceive themselves to be different, and that difference manifests itself in their leadership. So Elizabeth, for example, believes

that she possesses qualities of enthusiasm, a "mad look" in her eye, an unconventionality that makes her attractive to others. It may be that leaders need to believe that they are different in order to fulfil their roles as innovators and shapers of new futures.

7.3.1.5 Values and principles

In Chapter Two I noted Deal & Kennedy's (1982:22) distinction between "particular" and "ultimate" values. Their argument was that "ultimate" values were too elusive to be considered as playing a role in leadership, whereas "particular" values were those held in common by members of a group or organisation, not unlike Schein's (1992) notion of espoused values. Particular values were thus more instrumental, rather like operational guidelines for an organisation. In titling this section "Values and principles" I am taking my lead from Covey (1992) whose distinction, for all that it is fundamentally flawed as I shall show, is instrumentally useful.

For Covey (1992:94), values are "subjective and internal", whereas:

> Principles are like a compass. A compass has true north that is *objective and external*, that reflects natural laws or *principles* [emphasis in the original].

My findings indicate that educational leaders' practice is heavily shaped by principles, and that values (in Covey's sense of the word) play a less significant role. Jim, for example, talks about how morality "pushes" one to make the morally correct decision. Simphiwe talks about declining moral standards, and his refusal to relinquish his stand on what he regards as morally correct. Perhaps this is another way in which educational leadership is different. As suggested earlier (in 7.3.1.1), leadership positions that involve intense and prolonged contact with people seem to involve greater moral demands. Principals of schools, for example, must regularly be confronted with situations where they need to ask: Is this the right thing to do?

Not right in terms of the school's goal and mission (i.e. in terms of values) but right in a more absolute moral sense.

There is, I think, a fairly simple explanation for the relatively unimportant role that values (in Covey's sense of the word) may play in educational organisations. This is that educational institutions generally do not think of themselves as organisations, as having a culture, or corporate identity. The kind of thinking that has influenced the business world over the past few decades - such as Deal & Kennedy's (1982) notion of corporate culture - has simply not taken hold in schools, certainly not in most of the schools in this country. There are exceptions, of course, as the studies by Smith (1995) and Carlson (1996) have shown; and in these cases there is indeed much talk of the kind of instrumental values that characterise many organisations in business.

While finding Covey's (1992:94) distinction useful, I can also leave neither this nor his assumption of the existence of "natural laws and principles" that are somehow universal and unchallenged. My findings lead me to suspect that the line between what Covey would call values and principles is a fine one indeed, so fine that it may at times be invisible. Elizabeth is a case in point. The extent to which she has adopted the values according to which the NGO operates - such as consulting, ownership, defending one's right to be there - is such that these values seem to have become principles. It is, for her, a "way of life"; she cannot imagine doing things in any other way. The same applies to Jim, who lives out his socialist-democratic ideals to the point where they are himself. What shall we call the rules by which they operate: values or principles? Again, hardly a question that really needs an answer. The significant point is that leaders personalise values - which may emanate from ideological positions or organisational culture - to the extent where they become principles.

In postulating the existence of "natural laws and principles", Covey is writing from a Western, liberal humanistic, Christian position. This is clearly evident in his text

which ranges from leadership in organisations to marriage counselling. I think Covey's position is open to question, and I base this belief on my findings. Let us take Simphiwe and Jim, for example. Both speak passionately about the importance of morality, of doing what is right. But do they have the same criteria in mind? I think not. Simphiwe, a trained pastor through whom the "ministry comes", devotes his life to caring for the individual; he models his life on Jesus' example of loving your neighbour. For him, there is no greater good than serving your fellow-person. Jim is a socialist. He goes to church to play guitar and keep his wife happy. He is passionately convinced that the purpose of his life is to empower, to emancipate, and to improve the lives of others on a grand scale, not spiritually so much as economically and politically. Which of these leaders is more principle-centred?

Again, hardly a question that needs an answer. The important question is: Are both "expressing *themselves*" [my emphasis] (Bennis 1994:5) to the same extent through their leadership? For that is what morality is to the educational leader.

7.3.1.6 Early formative experiences

Research on early experiences in the lives of leaders seems to have centred largely on family influences, such as birth order, size of family and treatment by parents (Bass 1990:807-811). As may be expected, studies in these areas have been almost exclusively confined to white Americans, and little is known (empirically) of what the position may be for Black South Africans.

Phindiwe's case is an interesting one, worthy of some attention here. It appears that one of the strongest influences in her childhood was her mother's authoritarian style of upbringing. Phindiwe tells of how she was allowed no input whatsoever into decisions that affected her own future, such as which school to attend or which courses to follow. This she describes as "typical" of Black culture in South Africa. What makes her case interesting is that she has modelled her professional as well as domestic life on exactly the opposite principle. She prides herself on being

democratic in her classroom management, because that is the way she would like to be treated. She admits, too, that her daughter constantly challenges her authority; she clearly accepts this as part of motherhood. She is, in other words, living out an ideology that appears to be in direct contrast to what she experienced as a child. But there is something more fundamental represented in this single example, a transition of a cultural nature, that deserves more attention. Since the notion of culture is particularly relevant to many aspects of my findings, I shall return to this point in some detail later in the chapter.

Early leadership opportunities are generally acknowledged as potentially formative experiences in the lives of leaders (Bass 1990:810). This has certainly emerged as a theme in my findings too, applicable in particular to Michael and Jim. Michael frequently found himself occupying leadership positions, usually as sports captain, at primary and secondary school. At university this trend continued, and he again captained sports teams, and was a member of the Students Representative Council. He was, however, pushed into these roles by others' encouragement. Quite unlike Jim, who, from a very early age, naturally began to assume leadership roles, even in the home after his father had died. Leadership opportunities provided by the church and, later, in student and civic affairs no doubt contributed greatly to Jim's perception of himself as a leader, and to his mastery of leadership skills. Indeed, in Jim's case his very early and extensive exposure to leadership seems to have resulted in his thinking of himself as a "natural" leader.

Other, less obvious early influences - such as Michael's love of risk-taking behaviour, and his social and political awakening at university; and Elizabeth's free and rule-free childhood; and Simphiwe's training as a pastor - have been discussed in some detail, and need not be laboured here again.

Generally speaking, my findings tend to convey the sense in which these past events (or influences) are present to leaders in their leadership.

7.3.1.7 Literature and reading

Although this theme - the role played by reading and studying literature - emerged from the data, it was difficult to gain an understanding of precisely what this role could be. Jim and Michael both speak passionately about literature. Michael refers vaguely to the sense of freedom studying and teaching literature has given him. Jim talks about literature generally, but also specifically refers to his love of drama; it is easy to see how playing roles in dramatic productions feed directly into leadership, particularly for Jim whose leadership has a strong public dimension. But of the role literature itself plays, nothing by way of explanation is offered by either Jim or Michael. Yet I cannot ignore the theme on these grounds, for Michael's perception that studying literature has contributed largely to who he has become deserves to be taken seriously.

I am also not aware of any research into how reading fictional literature may influence leadership. There is, however, a point worth making in this regard, one which provides an explanation for how it is that Michael and Jim both experience reading literature as having been (and still being) a strongly formative experience.

The point is highlighted in a study conducted by Colaizzi (1978). Colaizzi (1978:57) investigated what he called the "reading-change structure", that is, the phenomenon of being so deeply affected by what one reads that "existential change" results. Colaizzi interviewed 12 subjects, and used a phenomenological approach similar to that which I have used in this study to analyse his data. Among his many and varied findings, the following seems of particular significance:

> Regardless of the book's content, it ultimately refers back to the reader himself; each and every area illuminated by the book illuminates the reader; and in no case, regardless of the joy, pain, struggles, threats, or guilt of this self-illumination, can the reader, in good faith, deny or ignore these self-disclosures (Colaizzi 1978:65).

Maxine Greene (1974:83-84) expressed a similar view:

> The language of imaginative literature is like a mirror. The reader does not look through it to referents in the external world. He finds in it reflections of his own feelings and perceptions. He finds pointers to the interior silence, the original self.

What emerges here is a sense of the way in which reading literature inevitably involves the self, engages and challenges the self in an evaluative, critical role. Literature initiates a dialogue between reader and text, of which the subject is the self. Such arguments are hardly new. The notion that literature has something spiritual to contribute to the education of the reader is probably as old as the study of literature itself. In Mathew Arnold (writing in 1869) the idea found expression in a belief that literature itself inherently possessed qualities of "sweetness and light" (Dover Wilson 1960:43), waiting to be discovered by the reader. The idea that reading was an interactive process, in which the reader actively constructed meaning from text was first clearly expressed by Louise Rosenblatt (1969), who began to develop her reader-response theory in the 1960s. Today few literary scholars would argue with this notion; but a post-modern attitude places greater stress on the role of readers, who deconstruct texts in critically active ways, alert to means by which the writers may be manipulating responses and attitudes because of assumptions about power and ideology from which their writing emanates (Aronowitz & Giroux 1992). Whatever one's position, the fact that the reader is actively involved in a process in which he or she is confronted with "the original self" (Greene 1974:84) can hardly be denied. Michael's reference to the role of literature - "the kind of person I am was to a great extent formed by those sort (sic) of experiences" - can thus be understood in these terms. It seems reasonable to accept that a self that is constantly challenged and illuminated in this way is a self that is more conscious of its being, more capable, perhaps, of telling its own story.

7.3.1.8 Self-concept

It is difficult to talk about self-concept as an isolated element in the psychological and social make-up of educational leaders. My findings indicate that notions such as confidence and belief in oneself emerge from a variety of sources; all of those discussed so far under 7.3.1 are significant. Respondents' own explicit comments on their self-concepts are perhaps the least helpful. Certainly, in terms of what they explicitly say, none is presented as particularly strong and positive in terms of his or her assessment of him/herself. Even Elizabeth - whose confidence is virtually tangible - describes her self-concept as "on the down side".

But what characterises all of the responses is the perception of a self-concept that is in a state of becoming, something in transition, a constantly changing, dynamic entity. Perhaps this is particularly true for educational leaders, and even more so for educational leaders in South Africa at this time. Certainly some of the most radical and fundamental changes that have occurred and are still occurring, are in the field of education. It would seem reasonable to assume that educational leaders' sense of who they are - and what their roles might be - would have been, and would still be, constantly challenged by these changes. Could the same be true of their sense of self-worth?

Leadership research into concepts of self seem chiefly to have centred on the notion of self-actualisation, the highest motivator on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs (Bass 1990). Maslow's model is sufficiently well-known to obviate the need for a complete explanation here. Suffice it to say that the model postulates a hierarchy of needs, from the lower levels - which are largely biological, such as concern for safety and security - to higher levels - such as self-esteem and self-realisation. The argument that leaders are more likely to be people who attain the highest level (Bass 1990:150) - i.e. to be themselves - seems a sound one, and supports what I have found. So too, Burns (1978) has suggested a connection between the ability to be a transformative leader and the extent to which one is able to attain self-actualisation.

Moreover, Loye (1977) has noted how Maslow's levels represent a development, not only in terms of low- to high-order needs, but also in terms of conservative to liberal values. Thus the need for security and safety is a "defense" value, while the need to self-actualise is a "growth" value (Loye 1977:71). Loye's suggestion lends credence to my suggestion - made in 7.3.1.3 - that we are drawn to heroes because they represent our liberal longings in a conservative world. Heroes are self-actualised people *par excellence*.

Bennis & Nanus' (1985:55) notion of a "positive self-regard" provides similarly useful insights into leaders' self-concepts. Their survey of 90 American leaders led them to identify what they called "the *creative deployment of self*" [emphasis in the original] (Bennis & Nanus 1985:56) as a characteristic of the successful leader. The idea is not very different from Maslow's notion of self-actualisation, though it does imply a stronger sense of striving towards such deployment. The idea also seems, at first glance, to be commensurate with the metaphoric framework of an autobiography as outlined at the beginning of this section. The successful leader, then, is one who is able (free) to tell his or her own story, one who is self-actualised, and one who creatively deploys him- or herself.

Yet there are differences. It is, in one sense, hardly surprising that there are major differences between Bennis & Nanus's findings and my own. The two studies are, as I have pointed out, fundamentally different from each other. One is not surprised, therefore, to find that all of the 90 leaders interviewed by Bennis & Nanus exhibited a "positive self-regard"; their respondents were, after all, recognised successful leaders in their fields. I make no such claims for my participants. Indeed, I would be hard-pressed to explain what I mean by "successful". The fact that I have found varying degrees of a "positive self-regard" among my participants reveals itself in other ways too. Bennis & Nanus (1985:57) claimed that their respondents "emphasized their strengths and tended to soft-pedal or minimize their weaknesses." My participants gave their weaknesses as much attention as they gave their strengths.

But in another sense I find the differences significant. Focusing briefly on Bennis & Nanus' (1985:57) "*creative deployment of self*" should help to highlight these differences.

I find this a particularly useful description, though perhaps not for the reasons the authors had in mind. For me the word "creative" effectively indicates the way in which leaders need to respond to changing demands and circumstances, as I have discussed above. But this is not what Bennis & Nanus had in mind. In isolating the elements of self-regard they (Bennis & Nanus 1985:58-60) discussed the importance of *"recognizing strengths and compensating for weaknesses", "the nurturing of skills with discipline"* and *"the capacity to discern the fit* between one's perceived skills and what the job requires." Naturally these are all crucial abilities; but what, in my opinion, will give a leader the freedom to write his or her own story is a sense of control over the environment, an understanding of the complex and ever-changing forces that operate in the field of education, both institutionally as well as nationally.

What has become patently obvious in this discussion of my findings is that leaders do not all experience themselves as having this freedom, or control. Since this is a key issue, closely related to other crucial questions, I shall address it more fully later in the chapter.

7.3.2 Leaders' perception of others: a fundamental paradox

As described in Chapter Six, my findings reveal a fundamental paradox in educational leaders' perceptions of their followers or co-workers. In essence, the paradox lies in the extent to which leaders perceive it to be difficult - impossible, perhaps - to lead in accordance with declared ideologies. Michael describes himself as one who seeks "to empower" others, and seems committed to a democratic style of leadership. But this empowerment occurs along lines that have been clearly defined and envisioned by himself, and ultimately he has shaped followers in his own image, as it were. Jim speaks with some frustration of how, in spite of his commitment to democracy and

faith in the abilities of others, he finds it impossible to hand over responsibility entirely. He feels his own contribution to be essential to ensure success. Elizabeth lives out the democratic principles of her organisation on a daily basis, but acknowledges that leadership is, to a large extent, manipulation of others' feelings and attitudes. In Simphiwe and Phindiwe's case, this problem is perhaps more accurately described as an antithesis: both would like to be democratic, but neither is allowed to be. Simphiwe's attempts at democratic leadership are ridiculed by his staff, or taken advantage of by students and parents; so much so that he is beginning to doubt his positive and idealistic attitude to people, and beginning to admire leaders who lead more autocratically. Phindiwe seems reluctant to exercise leadership amongst colleagues, for fear of being misunderstood.

For the behaviouristic leadership model builders - Fiedler, Hersey and Blanchard, Blake and Mouton and others - the notion of leaders' perceptions of followers was hardly an issue. Their reduction of this dimension to the simplistic task-person dichotomy (or continuum) is simply too crude and over-generalised to provide any useful insights, a point on which I shall elaborate later in this chapter.

But the role and nature of followers - indeed, the very issue of <u>followership</u> - features prominently in the work of contemporary writers. It is as if the move towards transformational leadership - with its concomitant emphasis on values, principles, and especially power - has led researchers to focus more clearly on the relationship between leaders and followers. It is perhaps especially in considering the role of power that one is likely to approach a more complete understanding of this relationship.

Burns (1978:13) described power as:

> a *relationship* and not merely an entity to be passed around like a baton or hand grenade; ... it involves *intention* and *purpose* of both power holder and power recipient; and hence it is *collective*, not merely the behavior of one person [emphasis in the original].

This is a rich and helpful description. It immediately sets power apart from the more static concept of authority, frees it from its customary political or organisational context, and presents it as problematic rather than as a (usually sinister) given.

Most importantly, it highlights the dynamic and therefore human element in leadership, for, as Burns (1978:19) went on to explain:

> I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations - the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations - *of both leaders and followers* [emphasis in the original].

This is, of course, the very essence of transformative (or transformational) leadership. Unfortunately Burns was vague (perhaps even contradictory) on the question of the distribution of power. His descriptions of power and leadership quoted above give the impression - helped along by the word "induced", a word which Vaill (1984:91) also used in this way - that leader and follower somehow end up wanting the same thing, and thus work towards a common purpose. But this is misleading. Earlier in the same chapter of his book Burns (1978:19) wrote:

> I hold that it [power] must be relevant to the *power wielder's* valued things and may be relevant to the *recipient's* needs or values only as necessary to exploit them [emphasis in the original]..

"Exploit" and "inducing" do not lie easily together. Indeed, in the context of "exploit" one might more easily accept the idea of leaders "coercing" followers, rather than "inducing". Playing with words will not help us here, though. It seems that, as my findings suggest, we are faced with a paradoxical situation we will simply have to accept. In Chapter Two I commented on how numerous writers identified the central importance of the leader as the initial force behind organisational growth (Deal & Kennedy 1982:38; Bennis 1984:65; Bennis & Nanus 1985:95; Yukl 1989:95; Schein 1992:211; Smith 1995:297-298). It is naive to imagine that followers willingly subscribe to leaders' visions without some element of "manipulation", as Elizabeth calls it, on the part of the leader, whether it is sheer persuasiveness, or

charisma, or single-mindedness of purpose, or simply a passion for attaining goals. Smith (1995:298) in fact found that the founder principal of the school he investigated was experienced as "insistent to the point of being autocratic" by the staff.

But the effect of his leadership - however autocratic it may have been at times - was to inspire and em-power the teaching staff in an extraordinary way (Smith 1995:298).

Manipulation is, perhaps, a more important ingredient of leadership than we would care to admit. Few writers tend to acknowledge this, preferring the soft line evident in Covey's (1992:104) defense of "legitimate power" (his version of principled or moral power):

> The hallmark of legitimate power is sustained, proactive influence. Power is sustained because it is not dependent on whether or not something desirable or undesirable happens to the follower. To be proactive is to continually make choices based on deeply held values. And legitimate power is created when the values of the followers and the values of the leaders overlap. Legitimate power is not forced, it is invited ...

7.3.3 Leaders' perceptions of environments/organisations

My findings reveal that educational leaders perceive the contexts in which they operate in dramatically different ways. It is possible, however, to characterise two fundamentally opposed perceptions. The first is one which sees the context as fixed, rigid, and impervious to efforts to bring about change. This perception is best exemplified by Simphiwe, as has been shown. The second is a view which sees the context as fluid and malleable; this view occurs strongly in Michael, Elizabeth and Jim.

In very general terms, these two views reflect thinking about organisations over the last century. In Chapter Two I discussed the gradual transformation in organisational thinking in terms of a shift in metaphor, away from the machine-metaphor which

dominated thinking in the early decades, towards metaphors which stress the human elements in organisations, such as community. It is in this context that the notion of organisational "culture" found its way into the literature (Deal & Kennedy 1982; Schein 1985). And it is in the explication of this notion of culture that previously ignored intangibles, such as values, assumptions, and beliefs, received attention.

What is immediately evident is that Michael, Elizabeth and Jim -and to some extent Phindiwe - would align themselves with this contemporary view of organisations. The fact that they - in varying degrees - perceive themselves as having some measure of control over how the organisation is shaped suggests that they would agree with Greenfield's (1984:150) view of organisations "as nonnatural, as orders that are man-made and therefore arbitrary in some sense." They also seem to perceive that "organizations are therefore cultural artifacts; they are systems of meaning" that spring from the human "will and imagination" (Greenfield 1984:150-152). Equally obvious is the fact that Simphiwe does <u>not</u> share this view, and that Phindiwe has only partly bought into it. The machine-metaphor, the idea of the organisation as something out there that exists quite apart from the human "will and imagination" provides the framework for Simphiwe's perceptions.

It is clearly both possible and feasible to account for these perceptions by calling to mind the kinds of influences and past experiences that have contributed to the shaping of Michael, Elizabeth and Jim's leadership. This I have already referred to elsewhere, particularly in 7.1.3.6. So one could recall Michael's penchant for risk-taking behaviour and his loathing of rigid structures, Elizabeth's love of adventure and unrestricted childhood, and Jim's early leadership experience and his natural acceptance of the fact that he was regarded as a leader by most. And one could consider these leaders' ideological positions, and understand how Michael's liberal humanism lies at the heart of his need to be a motivational leader who empowers others, and how he will therefore remodel an organisation in such a way that makes this possible; or how Elizabeth and Jim are driven by emancipatory ideologies, and

how this results in their view of organisations as loosely organised forums for talking to people and negotiating principles.

These factors clearly help to show how it is possible for these leaders to exercise their particular view of organisations, but they do not explain how this happens. Nor do they account for the fact that Simphiwe has a dramatically different view, even though he too has had early leadership experiences (his training as a pastor) and is, ideologically, a Christian, a liberal humanist committed to caring for and helping his people.

There is a need, I believe, to delve a little more deeply into areas that are perhaps not explicitly apparent in the data. I stress explicitly, because I believe they are implicit in my findings; they are there for the taking, as it were, if one is prepared to approach the data with a mind attuned to possibility rather than probability. A mind focused on probability has closed itself off to readings which fall outside the limit of what it deems likely, or what it expects to find. By contrast, an openness to possibility lies at the heart of phenomenological investigation. This is not to suggest that speculative wanderings (and wonderings) beyond and around the route mapped by one's goals and data are permissable; I hope that I am not guilty of this. For, as has been stressed throughout this dissertation, it is relentless faithfulness to one's data that is the hallmark of rigorous research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The search continues

Like the Knight Errant whose home is the ceaselessly blowing spirit, the soul cannot settle or conform because it is driven to reform, reformulate and unsettle all forms (Avens 1980:253).

The answer is blowin' in the wind ... (Bob Dylan).

I am left, then, with a new set of questions:

1. How can I account for the fact that some leaders are less free than others to be the authors of their own autobiographies?
2. Why do some leaders experience a higher degree of role-playing in their leadership, with a resultant sense of tension?
3. What are the factors that prevent leaders from seeing organisations as anything other than machines with a life and will of their own?
4. What happens in the hearts and minds of leaders who view organisations as the expressions of "the will and imagination" (Greenfield 1984:152) of people?

Perhaps these are merely four ways of asking the same question. Questions 1 and 2 can, I think, be collapsed into one question. The extent to which leaders are forced to assume roles by organisational or other circumstances is, I think, a significant symptom of their degree of powerlessness to be authentic, to deploy themselves creatively, achieve self-actualisation, or tell their own story. And in answering questions one and two, one must needs consider factors - outside the realm of self - which may contribute to the problem. Thus Question 3 is subsumed under 1 and 2.

But Question 4 is, I think, a fundamentally different question, suggesting an enquiry into the creative and imaginal potential of the psyche. I shall therefore address it separately.

8.1 An unresolved tension

It is clear, from the descriptions provided in Chapters Four, Five and Six, that the research participants all experience tension in their leadership. However, the tension experienced varies considerably in terms of degree as well as source. In some cases - Michael, Elizabeth and Jim - the tension seems self-imposed, in the sense that they have set goals for themselves which seem difficult to obtain. This results in a kind of tension that is experienced as challenging and risk-taking, a tension which is likely to drive them to higher levels of achievement.

But Simphiwe and Phindiwe experience an entirely different kind of tension, and to a far greater degree. In their case the tension seems to be imposed from the outside, as it were, and manifests itself as a lack of fit between leader and organisation. Phindiwe does not experience this as a problem. She is able to withdraw from the management of the college; she insists, throughout her interview, that it is in her lecture room that she is leader. But Simphiwe is less fortunate since he is the rector of the college and can therefore not evade management responsibilities. In this role his aim is to be himself, to demonstrate his caring and empathetic nature to staff, students and the community alike. But this leads to conflict, because the staff regard his willingness to talk through problems and listen to offenders (instead of punish) as weakness, and many take advantage of his kind and generous nature, so much so that he has begun to lose faith in his personal ideological position. How is this predicament to be explained?

8.1.1 The grids again

In terms of the management and leadership grids and models discussed in Chapter Two, the explanation would be fairly simple. On the Blake and Mouton (1964) managerial grid, Simphiwe would be described as being too person-oriented: his concern for the well-being and happiness of his staff, his students as well as the parent community outweighs his "concern for production". In terms of the "Leader

Behaviour Description Questionnaire" (Bass 1990) he would no doubt score high on "consideration", and low on "initiating structure". This would be borne out by the fact that Simphiwe, by his own admission, abhors the bureaucratic structures that are in place within the education system and often chooses to ignore procedures and use his own initiative. Applying Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) situational leadership model, one would find that Simphiwe was perhaps over-estimating his followers' "readiness", and inappropriately using a "selling" rather than a "telling" style of leadership. On the basis of these (admittedly speculative) analyses, the implications for Simphiwe would probably be that he should change his behaviour, to become more "autocratic" and less "democratic", in terms of Lewin, Lippitt and White's 1938 leadership model (Sashkin & Lassey 1983:95).

Turning to Fiedler's (1963) contingency model the analyst has a little more work to do; not only must Simphiwe's personality be graded (in terms of how task- or person-oriented he is), but the favourableness of the situation must also be analysed in terms of three subscales: the extent to which the leader is accepted, the degree to which tasks are structured, and the positional power of the leader (Fiedler 1983:163). It is likely that Simphiwe would be found to be person-oriented, but since this is his style (as opposed to behaviour), the implication would probably be that he should change the situation to match his style.

The analyses presented in the previous two paragraphs are, of course, rather crude and simplistic, but I believe they do to some extent reflect the kind of findings one is likely to obtain when using models which isolate elements and attempt to measure them according to *a priori* expectations. The question is: Do they (can they) offer an acceptable explanation of, or a viable solution to Simphiwe's problem?

8.1.2 The complexity of person

I believe not. The first implication - that Simphiwe should change his leadership behaviour - arises from a traditionally held simplistic understanding of both leadership

and personality. Pervin (1985:96), reviewing research on personality, drew attention to the overriding concern "for research that appreciates the complexity of individual personality functioning." My research has shown that educational leaders' sense of self - who they are, and what they are as leaders - is a composite consciousness in that it derives from numerous sources, "a compound of multiple schema" (Pervin 1985:96). These include formative early experiences, relationships with significant others, the influence of role models, morality and ideology. It is also a restless consciousness, in the sense that it is always in the process of becoming. This idea resonates with Pervin's (1985:96) comments on cognitive theories of personality which emphasise "flexibility" rather than "stability and consistency". I have also found that leaders, to a large extent, perceive their roles to be extensions of who they are: Simphiwe is particularly insistent on "being himself" as opposed to "wearing a mask". To expect Simphiwe to change his behaviour as a leader is tantamount to expecting him to change who he is, to deliberately "wear a mask", or perhaps several masks. To expect him to be more autocratic cuts across his fundamentally Christian, humanist world-view. He cannot change in this way, and still be Simphiwe. Not that it is impossible for Simphiwe to alter his leadership behaviour. Few would argue with the notion that leaders should, through self-evaluation and reflection, constantly be ready to bring about such changes in their behaviour as will increase their effectiveness. But I am suggesting that change of the kind Simphiwe might be advised to undertake amounts to more than simply changing behaviour. Simphiwe does not see other people - staff, students, parents - as subordinates that need firm and autocratic handling. His being-a-leader incorporates a vision of people as images of God, people who need care and opportunities to use their talents. The fact that he has become suspicious of this view of people, and, to some extent, cynical of his Christian motives and critical of others' lack of integrity in no way implies a readiness on his part to desert his ideological position, and begin to treat people differently. What it does reveal is his internal struggle with external factors that challenge his ideological position.

8.1.3 The complexity of situation

The second implication - that he should change the situation to suit his style - raises several problems. Chief of these is the sheer complexity of the situation Simphiwe finds himself in. To appreciate this complexity one needs to know something of the history of Black education in South Africa - a story of injustice and discrimination of catastrophic proportions. This is not the place to recount this history; it has, in any event, been very competently chronicled by several writers, notably Kallaway (1984), Alexander (1990) and especially Hartshorne (1992) in his aptly titled *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*. Suffice it to say at this point that education generally - and Black education in particular - is in a state of crisis at the time of writing. Over several decades - especially since the Soweto crisis in June 1976 in which 176 lives were lost - student power has grown to the extent where incidents of students holding principals to ransom over matters ranging from how school funds should be applied to which teachers or other officials should be hired or fired have become commonplace (see, for example, Grocott's Mail 1995, No's 17, 44 and 46).

In such circumstances a principal would want to lean on the support of a dedicated and idealistic staff, but this is rarely possible. Teachers, too, embittered by decades of discriminatory treatment at the hands of the former Department of Education and Training, dispensing a commonly perceived inferior education, have grown militantly uncooperative. In my role as teaching practice supervisor I have, at first-hand, experienced such disregard of professionalism among teachers that I am no longer surprised when principals tell me their chief task is to get teachers to their classrooms and keep them there. Bolstered by the muscle and clout of the South African Democratic Trade Union (SADTU), formed in 1990, many teachers are more willing to declare allegiance to the kind of transformational power that can arise from unionist solidarity than to any lofty educational ideals.

What, then, of the parents? Of all the potential role-players in Black education, parents are the most marginalised and the least influential (Khumalo 1991). Much

of the success of historically White schooling in South Africa can be attributed to the fact that parents have played a key role in supporting schools in a variety of ways - including financially - resulting in a view of schools as extended families rather than isolated institutions of learning (Van der Mescht 1993). But this is not the case in historically Black schools. For a variety of reasons - such as illiteracy, lack of time because of long working days, distance from school, and a rejection of a perceived inferior education department, parents have remained uninvolved in their children's education (Khumalo 1993).

It would, of course, be possible to argue that Simphiwe's college need not be representative of the scenario outlined above; it is, after all, a distinct organisation and should therefore have distinct and unique characteristics. This would certainly make the possibility of bringing about change in such a situation seem more attainable. But the fact that Simphiwe himself refers to his students' demands for democracy when what they really want is to "have their own views prevailing over everything", and to the criticism he receives from staff who accuse him of "bending over backwards" when he treats student problems sympathetically, indicates the extent to which his college is caught up in the groundswell of dissatisfaction, anger and protest.

8.1.3.1 Of politics and ideology

This sketch will, however, not be complete without reference to broader political developments in South Africa, developments which make one seriously question any suggestion that the rector of a college should become more autocratic, and less people-oriented. I refer, of course, to the coming of democracy in South Africa. It would be difficult to convey the full impact, on the hearts and minds of people, of the momentous events which began with Nelson Mandela's release and culminated in South Africa's first democratic general election in April 1994. I do, however, need to refer briefly to how these events have shaped educational thinking, for this is fully

relevant to a more complete understanding of educational leadership in South Africa at this time.

The official coming of a democratically elected government, following in the wake of growing student power championed by bodies such as the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and of teacher unionism (SADTU), has endowed the concept of democracy with a symbolic significance that may either excite, confuse, or anger. Of the excitement we have almost daily evidence, as students (at schools, colleges and universities country wide) boycott classes and organise protests demanding transparency and transformation (Grocott's Mail 1995, No 62). There is certainly anger in Simphiwe's dismissal of the word as a cover-up for what is really anarchy; certainly he is both confused and angered by students who insist on democratic procedures but fail to follow these themselves. And he is adamant that he would not want to be described as democratic, for he has come to understand it as a way of gaining "cheap popularity". Yet the manner in which he enacts his leadership is nothing if not democratic: he consults, he shares decision-making, he shares ideas; indeed his leadership style is characterised by a caring esteem for others. Why, then, is this the very area in which he experiences difficulty, in the form of staff opposition and exploitation by students and the community?

The answer is, I think, a very complex one, deeply rooted in the political and cultural history of the country. Some of the issues have been touched on in preceding paragraphs, but the more fundamental question of democracy in education needs to be explicated more fully. For the sake of my argument I need to distinguish between what I shall call 'instrumental' and 'ideological' connotations of democracy.

The word democracy has - as has been suggested in Chapter Two - found its way readily into management and leadership literature. Bush (1986:48-50), for example, in describing five models of educational management, applied the term generically to indicate such models of management as exhibit "normative" qualities, acknowledge the "authority of expertise" of staff members, assume a "common set of values"

(Bush 1986:48), are dedicated to consultation, participation and power-sharing, and arrive at decisions through consensus. Thus the word has acquired an 'instrumental' meaning, clearly exhibited in the responses of all the leaders I interviewed. It refers to a way of doing.

But it also refers to a way of thinking, a way of being, in fact. Hartshorne (1992:94-95) is eloquent on this meaning:

> At its heart democracy is an attitude of mind, a way of thinking and acting, a way of working and interacting with others in society. Critical to the creation and survival of a democratic state is the exercise of tolerance of conflicting viewpoints, the right to independent judgment and the right to dissent; the ability to recognize that one may be wrong and that no one person or party has a monopoly of the truth; the capacity to enter into debate without hitting one another over the head ... While structures, processes and procedures can facilitate democratic action, it is the democratic spirit, fostered in the school and society, that will give substance and meaning to otherwise sterile forms and structures.

What appears to be happening in Simphiwe's case, and to some extent for Phindiwe too, is that democracy in its instrumental sense - instrumental also in bringing about reform and transformation - has been embraced as the panacea of the disempowered; but the essential and foundational "attitude of mind", the "democratic spirit", is either entirely absent or cloaked in such rhetoric as to be virtually meaningless. As a result one has Simphiwe's situation, where students demanding democracy seem merely to want their will to prevail, a fundamentally undemocratic position. Hartshorne (1992:94-95) saw this only too clearly:

> There has to be understanding of the harsh realities of the South African situation, and of those in our society who have been conditioned to violence and forced into it because they did not have access to democratic processes in the past. Nevertheless the violence of recent years has shown, in a stark and tragic manner, how far we all are - the State, its security forces, conflicting black political forces, left-wing and right-wing activists, township youth - from understanding what democracy is, in spite of all the rhetoric about it from all sides.

The full complexity of Simphiwe's position, and the rank inappropriateness of applying the American theories and models mentioned above to African situations and leaders, thus become evident only when these historical/cultural factors are taken into account. This is, of course, hardly a new thought. In a seminal paper on how American theories of motivation and leadership apply in other countries, Hofstede (1980) drew attention to the culture-bound nature of these theories. Hofstede (1980:55) pointed out that one of the most influential motivation theories, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, was not a description of "a universal human motivation process", but rather "of a value-system, the value system of the U.S. middle class to which the author belonged." Referring to the leadership theories of Likert (1961), Blake and Mouton (1964) and McGregor (1966), he noted that none of these takes into account the fact that cultural differences exist. So, for example, in countries where the "Power Distance" - i.e. "the extent to which a society accepts that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede 1980:45) - is greater than in the United States, one would expect an easier acceptance of autocratic leadership.

Unfortunately Hofstede's report is of little direct consequence for anyone trying to understand Black South African leadership; his South African sample, drawn from IBM employees in the late 1970s, included very few women and no Blacks. Some 14 years after the publication of the paper referred to above, Hofstede (1994) acknowledged this weakness, suggesting that Black South Africans may resemble other Black Africans more closely than they do white South Africans. So, for example, Black South Africa may be a "tender" rather than "tough" culture, perhaps more "feminine" as captured in the concept of "ubuntu" (Hofstede 1994:77). He concluded that "Western instruments cannot reveal all relevant dimensions of African cultures" (Hofstede 1994:28). My findings tend to corroborate this conclusion, as I have tried to show.

The situation is, however, even more complex than Hofstede has suggested. For if one accepts that Black South Africans are tender- rather than tough-minded, we are

back again to wondering why the staff at Simphiwe's college regard his tender-minded leadership as a "weakness". I have commented on how different -often contradictory - notions of democracy contribute to the problem; and Hartshorne (1992:95) is no doubt correct in concluding that all of us (in South Africa) have a long way to go in terms of understanding what democracy is. But even this insight begs the question: Why? It may help to problematise Hofstede's (1980:42) instrumental definition of culture as "the collective mental programming of people in different national cultures."

8.1.3.2 The culture crucible

Some would see the African's search for cultural identity as a return to a pre-colonial past, a reclaiming of traditions and value-systems marginalised by the oppressor:

> *But in the final analysis the shallowness of the imported institutions is due to that culture gap between the new structures and ancient values, between alien institutions and ancestral traditions. Africa can never go back completely to its pre-colonial starting point but there may be a case for re-establishing contacts with familiar landmarks of yesteryear and restarting the journey of modernisation under indigenous impetus* [emphasis in the original] (Ali Mazrui, cited in Mbigi 1995:5).

But this is a naive perception. It is difficult to understand how a nation (or an individual) can "restart" a journey that has never stopped. The "journey of modernisation" proceeds, whether we like it or not. The question is not whether we can "restart" the journey, but the extent to which we can give direction to the on-going journey, through intervention of some kind. As Frantz Fanon (1986:231) would have it:

> I should constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists in introducing invention into existence. In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself. And it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate my cycle of freedom.

Not that Fanon underestimated the importance of the past; he simply recognised the dangers of romancing its importance. Bhabha (1994:9) explained his position as follows:

> Fanon recognizes the crucial importance, for subordinated peoples, of asserting their indigenous cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed histories. But he is too aware of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures to recommend that 'roots' be struck in the celebratory romance of the past or by homogenizing the history of the present.

Thus a different notion of culture emerges, an understanding of culture as becoming, not the static "programming" that Hofstede had in mind. We move on, in the on-going journey, acting and reacting; and it is feasible that we may yearn for a past that, to all intents and purposes, never existed, rather like the protagonist in T.S.Eliot's (1969:23) *Preludes*:

> And when all the world came back
> And the light crept up between the shutters
> And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
> You had such a vision of the street
> As the street hardly understands; ...

Bhabha (1994) put the case as follows:

> The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition. This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a 'received' tradition.

Alexander (1990:219), addressing the question of African culture in a post-colonial Namibia, adopted a similar position:

> In the final analysis, we have to get back to the understanding of culture as a process, however and wherever initiated by whomever ... We have on the one hand to accept the tendency to retain that which is peculiar to our social groups and social formations because they

> deem it valuable, without on the other hand falling into the trap of believing that such 'cultural treasures' represent more than a passing moment in the history of a particular group of people which is itself changing rapidly.

Certainly the drive behind the publication of *Ubuntu* (Mbigi 1995) seems largely the need to "restage the past", to recapture that which was lost through colonialism and apartheid. This seems to be the driving philosophy for "African transformation management" as is captured in the sub-title of Mbigi's book. I would suggest, however, that the authors are trapped in a conception of culture similar to Hofstede's notion of a static mental programming. That contemporary Black South African culture would subscribe to - or even recognise - some of the ritualistic procedures and underlying ideologies outlined in *Ubuntu* is very open to question. (It has in any event been suggested that the central metaphor on which Mbigi draws - the village metaphor - is of Shona (i.e. Zimbabwean) origin and would be unfamiliar to South Africans (Buiys 1996b, pers. comm.).

I would agree, though, that the extent to which Black South Africans are struggling to emerge from post-colonialism has not been fully appreciated. It would be a mistake to imagine that colonialism died with the formation of the Union of South Africa or with the formation of the Republic of South Africa. The truth is that, until April 1994, the lives of Black South Africans were controlled - economically, culturally, educationally and in every other way that matters - by white South Africans. Now that the colonists have finally handed over, it is surely to be expected that Black South Africans will be struggling - far more than some of our neighbouring African states, such as Zimbabwe - to shake off some of the debilitating effects of colonialism, and begin the re-search for an African identity.

Until very recently that identity consisted largely in resistance and protest. As recently as three years ago, the rallying cry of the Pan Africanist Congress was "One settler, one bullet" (Adam 1995:472), a particularly unsettling warcry to white Eastern Cape dwellers, where the "1820 Settlers' Monument" has for some time

graced the hilly entrance to Grahamstown, the "Settler City". The monument - more of a conference centre really, which annually hosts the biggest arts festival in South Africa - was recently renamed and re-dedicated by Nelson Mandela (Grocott's Mail 1996); naturally, all references to settlers have disappeared. The full symbolic significance of this re-dedication has yet to be grasped, but it would be inappropriate to dwell on it here. What ought to be understood, in my opinion, is that renaming - which is happening frequently in post-apartheid South Africa - important as it is symbolically, is nothing more than that. Dropping references to settlers in the name of a monument does not eradicate the effects of centuries of colonial oppression; hearts and minds change more slowly than names.

But for Blacks in government service - and for school principals, rectors of colleges and others in senior educational management positions in particular - a position of resistance and protest would have been both inappropriate and unwise. They had schools and colleges to run, children to educate and jobs to retain. Their identity, their sense of self, was based rather precariously on an attitude of acquiescence in the authoritarian hierarchical bureaucracy of the now defunct Department of Education and Training. This is why principals (as well as teachers) were often targetted as the puppets of the State by dissatisfied youth. Nor is it necessarily true - as Hofstede's argument suggests - that an authoritarian, tough-minded mode of leadership would have been in any way foreign to them, or difficult to adopt. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the very opposite could be closer to the truth. Consider, for example, Phindiwe's comments on her upbringing:

> No ... as a black person I can't say [I am democratic] because that's how I've been led, but it's because that's how I would like to be led. We aren't very democratic. I think everybody accepts that. Growing up in a family you don't have a lot of say about quite a number of things. And in little things ... for example when I grew up I wanted to go to another high school. I wanted to do Home Economics. I couldn't make that decision. You know I wasn't allowed to make that decision. Although I realise that the decision that was made for me was probably a good one ... but you know ...(laughs) ... there was no discussion ... no explanation.

A recent study by Mahanjana (1991:213) in which she surveyed a large sample of principals in the former Ciskei area (now re-incorporated into the Eastern Cape) revealed that:

> Most of the headmasters seemed to harbour the philosophy that unquestioning authority is to be upheld. This is seen as a result of their upbringing which was to them an accepted traditional way of doing things.

Mahanjana (1991:335) concluded:

> It may therefore be that the basis of [the] authoritarian role played by the headmasters ... is rooted in tradition.

Another interesting finding is that produced by Makhokolo (1987), who investigated principals' responses and attitudes to "Top-Downs", a series of manuals outlining the managerial duties and responsibilities of the school principal designed and distributed by the Department of Education and Training. Proceeding on the hypothesis that most principals would object strongly to this top-down style of training and control, he surveyed a sample of Witwatersrand (Gauteng) principals, only to find that most principals welcomed Top-Downs and found them very useful.

This is hardly sufficient evidence on which to base conclusive comments on the predicament of Black identity in South Africa. I doubt whether sufficient evidence can ever be accumulated; and in any event, I would be suspicious of any attempt at defining anything that is in the making in the culture crucible, for this would be contrary to the very notion of what culture is, as I have argued. I nevertheless offer the following tentative suggestions, outlining the predicament in which the Black educational leader finds him- or herself in South Africa today:

> Traditionally Black educational institutions are run on authoritarian lines. Principals and teachers perceive their positions to be unchallengeably protected by a vast and powerful bureaucracy.

These attitudes and tendencies are, in part, the heritage of white apartheid domination. But they are also, in part, "an accepted traditional way of doing things" (Mahanjana 1991:213.)

A highly politicised Black student body demands participation, power and privilege, all in the name of democracry.

A highly unionised Black teacher corps openly challenges the authority of the principal, and rejects the authority of the very system that protects it.

A marginalised and disempowered parent body is almost entirely uninvolved in the education of its children.

If I have taken a long time to answer the question posed at the beginning of this section, it is because I believe that Simphiwe's inability to tell his own story, his perceived need to resort to a role-playing style of leadership that is not himself, and his perception of organisations as inflexible givens in a world characterised by uncertainty can only be understood against the background I have provided. I hope my overview has helped to reveal just how complex his situation is. And perhaps one can now more fully appreciate his suspicion of the concept of democracy, his cynical questioning of Christian leadership principles, and the futility of suggesting that he should change either his own style (to suit the situation) or the situation (to suit his style). Indeed, Simphiwe's own description of his situation - "a very autocratic, hierarchical system" - accurately reflects the misgivings of the present government. In an early attempt to address the question of how a more democratic system of education governance may be instituted, an ANC Discussion Document (1994:20) described the present system as "a large, top-heavy and badly co-ordinated bureaucracy", characterised by a "non-consultative, opaque and top-down style" of management.

8.2 It's all in the mind ...

I turn, finally, to the last of my new questions, which I framed as follows at the head of this section:

> What happens in the hearts and minds of leaders who view organisations as the expressions of "the will and imagination" (Greenfield 1984:152) of people?

What needs to be emphasised at the outset is that Greenfield's use of the concept of imagination bears little resemblance to our everyday use of the word. Indeed, in some respects it is the very opposite. Our inclination to dismiss what occurs in the imagination as far-fetched, or fanciful, or without substance is reflected in some of our pet sayings, such as "It's only your imagination", or, "You're imagining things". Or, if we begin to dwell on possible unwanted consequences we are accused of "letting our imaginations run away with us". Greenfield clearly intended a different meaning of the word; a brief look at Jung and Hillman should help to clarify this meaning.

Clarke (1992:97) has pointed out how Jung "consistently and throughout his life" took a stand against the prevailing materialistic world-view of this century, a view in which "matter is seen as the real stuff of the world, and in which we grudgingly find a place on its fringes for mind ...." The human psyche, Jung postulated, is a "microcosmos", as real and rich and complex as the "world at large - the macrocosmos" (Clarke 1992:97). Furthermore, the psyche and the world were not two different kinds of reality that existed side by side: Jung's notion of the mind which "participates in the creation of knowledge, and is in a sense a world-maker" (Clarke 1992:98) suggests a mutually dependent and inter-related co-existence, not essentially different from the phenomenological notion of co-constitutionality discussed in Chapter Two. Central to this co-existence is the creative psyche;

according to Jung, "every psychic process is an image and an imagining" (cited in Avens 1980:254.)

Hillman has made this point even more strongly, suggesting that "all human reality ... is derived from psychic images" and that "human nature is primarily imaginal" (Avens 1980:253-254). The image thus precedes all knowing; "and it is from the stuff of these images that we create our world, our 'reality'" (Avens 1980:254). For Jung and Hillman, then, as well as for Greenfield, imagination is the active agent that constructs our reality; our lives are imaginal, not imaginary. It is important to grasp this distinction. Our western intellectual history, characterised by an obstinate clinging to the Cartesian duality of a real world out there and a separate scientist who studies that world objectively, inclines us to regard poetry and rational thinking as entirely different activities. Brooke's (1991:7) comments on the poetic in Jung and Heidegger would be helpful here:

> The term 'poetry', if it is not to be merely a polemical slogan, needs tightening. It is used in the classical sense, derived from the Greek, *poesis*, which means 'to make'. To make involves both the 'thing' or raw material out of which *poesis* occurs and the one who works that transformation. Therefore, to say Jung was a poet is not to say that his psychology is merely a product of empty fantasy. It speaks, rather, to the intrinsic, irreducible, and mutually transformative relationship between him and his subject matter. If Jung's personal vision is present in his work, so too, and no less, is *the reality that gave that vision its place* [my emphasis]. There is a difference between poetic vision and hallucination.

The power of the imagination - in the poetic, Jungian sense of that word - seems to pervade contemporary leadership discourse. It clearly lies at the heart of Morgan's (1986) seminal work on images of organisations. It is central to Schein's (1992) exploration of organisation culture, and occurs again and again in the writings of people like Deal & Kennedy (1982), Bennis (1984), Bennis & Nanus (1985), Block (1987), Peters (1987), De Pree (1992), and Bennis (1994). They call it 'vision'.

Of course, the word 'vision' is rather like 'poetic', and is in danger of being similarly misunderstood as a fanciful, mystical, hallucinatory activity. Consequently writers have been at pains to stress the exact opposite, i.e. the very real and concrete nature of vision (see, for example, Block's [1987:108] insistence on keeping the vision "strategic").

But what appears to be overlooked or misrepresented in the work of most of the writers mentioned above is the more complex issue of how one's vision seems to be a manifestation of who one is. This idea is hinted at in Morgan's (1986:12) comments on the power of metaphor, viz. that is more than "a device for embellishing discourse", since it implies *"a way of thinking"* and *"a way of seeing"* [emphasis in the original]. I would want to add: A way of being. Peter Senge (1989) seems to see this point clearly. For Senge:

> Vision is not a thing, it's more of a force. It's not a good idea. It's a deeply-felt expression of who I am projected into what I'm intending to create.

The word "vision" occurs in only one of my participants' interviews. Elizabeth explains how vision, for her, is "having a far-seeing view", but also being who she is, or who she has become as a result of adopting the ethos of the NGO. Whereas none of the other leaders interviewed even mention the word, the concept is there all the time. It is there in Michael's perception of how he changed the school to suit his style, making it an expression of who he is. It is strongly present also in Jim, in the form of a clear picture of an empowered and liberated community, again an extension of himself. It is in Phindiwe's picture of her classroom as a democratically run organisation, an expression of her adopted democratic ideology. And it is there in Simphiwe's vision of his role as pastoral head of his college. For all of these leaders, their vision is "a deeply-felt expression" of who they are.

Not that this automatically guarantees success. We have seen how Simphiwe experiences frustration and tension as a result of what others may perceive as the

inappropriateness of his vision. Some of the external causes for this predicament have been discussed at considerable length. These are what Senge (1989) would refer to as "external forces shaped and moulded over time", which, in his opinion, could become internalised under the power of the vision. But I doubt whether Senge had forces of such monumental proportions in mind when he made this claim.

Nevertheless, Simphiwe's predicament raises important questions concerning the nature of leadership, the role of the imagination and creativity - "the essence of the organisation" according to Senge (1989) - questions I shall presently address.

To return, then, to the question posed at the beginning of this section, what happens in the heart and minds of leaders who see organisations as expressions of their will and imaginations is the poetic, creative transformation of images into reality, a reality which is theirs to the extent that it cannot be thought of as existing apart from who they are as people.

8.3 Finding the princess in the tower

What, then, may be said of my findings within the context of mainstream leadership literature?

I believe this study offers a new perspective for those who seek to understand leadership. This newness lies less in <u>what</u> has been discovered than in <u>how</u> these discoveries are to be understood. As I have mentioned earlier, my findings reveal little that is <u>substantially</u> new; I have drawn attention, at various points in this chapter, to themes in my findings that resonate with mainstream research. What this dissertation challenges is the tendency among leadership and organisational researchers to think analytically and dichotomously. For it is clear - even in some of the contemporary writing on transformational leadership - that researchers are wedded to a Cartesian view of reality. To give an example, morality is either reduced to a set of instrumental, operational principles, or elevated to exclusive

ideological moral strictures. Neither view is helpful, the first because it overlooks the essentially human, socially constructed and lived dimension of morality; the second, because in postulating a particular ideology (e.g. the Christian humanism in Covey's work), it effectively denies the existence of other, different world-views, again overlooking the fact that every value system is socially and culturally constructed and not universal.

Against this analytical and dichotomous approach I postulate a position which seeks to understand the individual - the educational leader in this case - holistically as well as situated within the context of the present. Thus in trying to determine the leader's sense of self, I have tried to stress the way in which various dimensions - such as role-playing, the influence of significant others, morality, formative experiences - are made manifest in the leader's perception of who he or she is at this point. To give an example, Jim's hero-worship of Nelson Mandela is not just an interesting feature of his personality: it manifests itself concretely in his present being-a-leader. Another example: the fact that four of my participants do not explicitly mention their vision as leaders does not mean they are not future-oriented; what it does mean is that their future-orientation is entirely absorbed into who they are now. One of Van den Berg's (1972) key questions in *A Different Existence* concerned the individual's relationship with time, i.e. how the individual experiences the past and the future. He concluded that past events were, as such, of little consequence; so too, the future is a dream-world, something which has not happened and may never happen. What mattered to Van den Berg was the extent to which events and experiences from the past, and thoughts or visions of the future, made themselves manifest in the present lived-world of the individual.

But to contemplate leaders holistically implies more than this: more, that is, than seeing the interconnectedness of the various dimensions of self that may be determined. One needs - as I have tried to show - also to see that leaders cannot be considered apart from the contexts in which they operate; organisations do not mean anything apart from the people who make them: leaders attain their meaning from the

organisations they make. In their efforts to appear scientific, leadership researchers have, for decades, been mesmerised by the task-person dichotomy, a view which effectively reduces the individual, the self, to nothing more than a variable in the leadership act. In this study I have proposed a view of leadership which begins and ends with the self, a view which I find most appropriately captured in the metaphor of autobiography, or story. It is not an extravagant view. It resonates with ideas found in the work of Greene (1974), Laing (1969), Dunne (1973), Griffiths (1993), Greenfield (1984) and Wolcott (1994), to name but a few.

Nor is it a particularly new idea. If we accept the condition that such a view cannot be entertained by a mind trapped in the Cartesian duality of body-mind, and mind/world, we find surprisingly early attempts at toppling that edifice of the natural sciences. One of the richest sources is the usually unacknowledged (but see Wilson [1965] and Clarke [1992]) existentialism of the Romantic poets/philosophers. It is difficult to ignore the voice of the "great intellectual satirist and ... fiercest apocalyptic among the Romantics" (Bloom 1963), William Blake:

THE VOICE OF THE DEVIL

All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors:

> 1. That Man has two real existing principles: Viz: a Body & a Soul.
> 2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body; & that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.
> 3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following contraries to these are true:

> 1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five senses, the chief inlets of the soul in this age.
> 2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body; and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
> 3. Energy is Eternal Delight.

(from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*)

Blake's concern about the moral "dis"-ease of a repressed and increasingly industrialised society - strongly evident in much of his work, notably the poems

London and *Jerusalem* - is echoed in the work of both Heidegger and Jung. In *Zein und Zeit*, published in 1927, Heidegger characterised the malady of the human condition as a consequence of "forgetfulness of being" (Kruger 1988:3):

> Man is prevented from seeing the world as something that is there for him. The world is stripped of meaning because a long tradition of rationalist positivist thinking has degraded the thing into a mere object.

The focus of Heidegger's critique - our growing dependence on technology - is strongly reminiscent of Blake's lament (in the poem *Jerusalem*) concerning impoverished spirituality among the "dark satanic mills" of 18th century industrial England. Our growing materialism is also, as has been pointed out, essentially what Jung concerned himself with. Celebrating and restoring the imaginal, creative individual to his/her rightful meaning-making role becomes the thrust of their arguments. And of course, one can hardly fail to recognise in these arguments the position of existentialist-phenomenological philosophy that gained currency in the early decades of this century, in Husserl's notion of intentionality (see Chapter Two).

The position I postulate, then, is commensurate with a line of thought that restores the person, the self, as the ordering, meaning-making agent in a changing environment: the teller of his or her own story. It is not, as I have shown, a new position. But newness is not, I think the point. The history of humankind's successive attempts to make sense of life reveals very little that is new. We have probably all had the experience of excitedly exploring territory we thought was new, only to find the footprints of those who have gone before in what we though was virgin sand. What <u>is</u> important is appropriateness to a specific context. And it seems particularly appropriate at this time that research in the human sciences aligns itself with those who sought, and still seek, the essence of what it is to be human in a world which seems forever to be closing in around us with increased bureaucratic and moralistic fervour.

This is precisely the quest academic enquiry has been on for the past few decades. The current swing towards a position of enquiry that admits to - and is happy to do so - the presence of the enquirer in the research process is in itself a re-affirmation of the primacy of human experience. Human experience, interaction, perceptions, feelings and attitudes can only be understood through human intervention, or, at least, mediation. It is in answer to this growing need that approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography and action research have got their houses in order, so to speak, and are arriving at cogently formulated procedures. Researchers no longer need to apologise for the fact that some (or all) of their findings may not be measurable, or quantifiable, or "value-free" (Giorgi 1994:204).

But it would, in my opinion, be a mistake to think of this trend as a discrete academic activity. It seems rather to reflect broader societal trends, stirrings within the collective psyche, as it were. It manifests itself in what we are experiencing as disenchantment with the natural sciences, and is evident in movements that seek holistic, natural cures to replace chemical medicines; movements which seek to understand our inescapably interrelated and interdependent relationship with our planet, and perhaps also our place in the universe; movements which set out to find fresh and meaningful symbols to replace the tired, worn out Christian symbols which, as Jung (1959:8) observed, "have stiffened into mere objects of belief." It is mystery that intrigues us; we are fascinated by the enigmatic. Thus we are drawn again to fantasy, myth and story. I have already referred to the growth of the modern fantasy novel, which frequently appears in a variety of blends with the science fiction genre, as in Ursula Le Guin, enabling writers to critique modernist attitudes in richly allegorical settings (see, for example, Le Guin's *Left Hand of Darkness*). There are other manifestations. Universities offer courses on stories, legends and myths. It is now possible to attend lecture series in which the significance of fairy-tales for the modern (and post-modern) reader may be explicated. Mythologist Joseph Campbell has produced one best-seller after another. Robert Bly's (1990) fascinating elucidation of the psycho-sociological implications of being-male in the myth of *Iron John* continues to head the best-sellers' lists. Contemporary film-makers now draw

freely and heavily on fantasy, and the modern viewer happily suspends his or her disbelief, sensing communion with primordial (and essentially enigmatic) origins. And even the keepers of the ivory tower of academic enlightenment are beginning to look for the princess locked inside rather than concern themselves with keeping the barbarians from the door, as more and more researchers turn to methodological approaches that look for answers in the stories people have to tell. What all of this amounts to is in large part a re-affirmation of the psyche, and a re-emphasis on the imaginal.

In this context, I find the story (or autobiography) a rich and powerful metaphor for the human condition. I can agree with Laing (1969:93) that "one's self-identity is the story one tells one's self of who one is". But I will also have to embrace Dunne's (1973:2) question: "What kind of story are we in?", for this presupposes a position of critical reflection, what Heidegger would call "authenticity" (Griffiths 1993:152). To repeat Fanon (1986:231):

> In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself. And it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate my cycle of freedom.

CHAPTER NINE
Final reflections

9.1 Phenomenology reconsidered

Since this has been a study of a research approach as much as of a field of interest, (insofar as these can be separated) I need reflect critically on the appropriateness of applying a phenomenological methodology to such an eclectic field of human endeavour. In plain terms, I need to answer questions such as: How well has it worked? What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? And I can hardly answer these questions without also addressing the question: What are the limitations of this study?

Since I have already described the characteristic features of the phenomenological method - see Chapter Three - I shall restrict myself here to commenting on how I have experienced the methodology. It is likely, therefore, that I shall have more to say about features I have found particularly helpful and/or particularly problematic.

The ideal of "reduction", according to which:

> the researcher (a) brackets or disengages from all past theories or knowledge about the phenomenon, and (b) withholds existential assent of the phenomenon (Giorgi 1994:206)

seems to me the most difficult to attain, but also the most significant and powerful. The difficulty lies in the fact that "bracketing" is not the same as "forgetting", or putting out of one's mind entirely. It goes without saying that one who is doing research in any field will have some pretty strong views on the subject; that is what draws one to the research process in the first place. But the researcher also has questions, questions which he or she genuinely cannot answer, and it is these questions that drive the research. It is within this attitude of genuine questioning, of virtual naivety, that the practice of bracketing plays a key role.

I found it extremely difficult to remain clinically disinterested, to pretend, as it were, that I knew nothing about leadership. This difficulty pervaded the entire research process. In the first place I needed to ensure that the original questions I asked (to obtain written protocols) were not designed in such a way as to steer participants towards expressing a particular view (my view) of leadership. Next, in conducting the interviews, I needed to guard against leading my participants towards expressing attitudes and perceptions I wanted to hear. The questions had to come directly from their written protocols, and were usually simply a request to tell me more about something they had written. For all that this may sound simple and unproblematic to carry out, the truth is that I was frequently tempted to focus interviewees on areas others had mentioned, or areas I thought should be important. I was already looking for themes and consequently tempted to steer discussion in such a way as to make themes leap out at the reader. Resisting this temptation was hard work. Thirdly, in writing situated descriptions I needed to remain faithful to the data, to all the data, not just those which gelled with my own perceptions of the phenomenon. It is at this stage that the phenomenological ideal of "description" provides yet another element of rigour. Giorgi (1994:206) explained that:

> the phenomena to be studied have to be described precisely as they present themselves, neither adding to nor subtracting from what is given.

This is a tall order, particularly for the western mind trained and encouraged to interpret and analyse. Not that description and interpretation are that easily separated; indeed, I have argued in Chapter Three that all forms of description are already interpretations of a kind. Nevertheless, the ideal is to refrain from explicit interpretation for as long as possible, to capture the nature of the experience as it manifests itself for the participant, to keep yourself out of the picture. This too, I found rigorously demanding and difficult. The temptation to interpret, to analyse - to compare findings with *a priori* notions which at times seem like great universal givens - is overwhelmingly strong. Certainly I was overwhelmed by it, and so were many of my descriptions which turned out to be less descriptive than interpretive and

had to be consigned to files whose names end in .dmp (for "dump"). The art of description, then, is a particularly rigorous one. Accepting all of one's data as equally valid is only part of the rigour; the balance lies with the inescapable necessity of knowing one's data as well as is humanly possible. This implies repeated readings, interspersed with reflection, to allow the structure of the phenomenon to take shape in one's mind.

As might be expected, it is these very features that account for the strength of the phenomenological method, and for the validity of one's findings. The attitude of reduction opens the mind to possibility, rather than probability. But once descriptions have been written and one can compare what one has found with received wisdom, the overwhelming feeling is one of surprise; surprise at what has emerged, as if for the first time, as significant elements of the phenomenon; and surprise at what has not emerged, despite its strong presence in mainstream literature. So, for example, the felt influence of the role of reading literature, or of heroic role-models, features strongly in my findings, but seems almost entirely neglected in the literature. On the other hand, the classical task-person dichotomy, which has preoccupied leadership research for nearly a century, has simply not emerged as a factor in my study. The leaders used in this study do not think in terms of 'task' and 'person' as separate entities. It may be possible that leaders in educational contexts, where the task is frequently also the person, are less inclined to think of their leadership in dichotomous and analytic ways. Nevertheless, it seems fair to conclude that the phenomenological method seems to give one access to that which seemed beyond the scope of empirical enquiry. But it also exposes that which has become clichéd in the literature, that which feeds off itself in neverending un-enlightening circles.

The answer to the fundamentally important question of whether phenomenology is an appropriate approach to use in studying educational leadership is therefore resoundingly affirmative. But not unreservedly so.

I experienced difficulties in establishing just how far the discussion of my findings should go. Descriptions of the steps which may be followed in applying a phenomenological approach typically end with what Stones (1988:154) called "synthesis and description". Giorgi (1994:206) referred to this as the "search for essences", by which he meant descriptions of the invariant characteristics of the phenomenon and how they relate to each other. Phenomenological studies (e.g. Stones 1982, Aanstoos 1983, Allen 1986, Lambie 1987, and Giorgi 1992b) do, however, usually proceed beyond this point to a discussion of findings (or "results" as they are sometimes misleadingly referred to). The discussion usually takes the form of commenting on some of the more significant findings, comparing these with the findings of other researchers. With these guidelines and examples in mind, I approached the discussion of my own findings with considerable trepidation, since I felt that I would have to do more than this. In the case of Simphiwe in particular I needed to refer to political developments and cultural elements to try to account for the complexity of his working context; to account also for his ambivalent attitude towards his colleagues. Why did I feel reluctant to include this kind of detail? I had similar misgivings about introducing mythology as a basis for understanding Jim's hero-worship of Nelson Mandela. I no longer have these misgivings, since I am convinced that in both cases I have been faithful to the data: Simphiwe's acute discomfort and anguish and Jim's reverential hero-worship were not manufactured by me, but are manifestly part of their being-a-leader. If I have moved into what appear to be peripheral sources I did so purely for the sake of gaining and conveying a clearer understanding of the phenomena in question.

But the fact that I did experience misgivings raises an interesting question about phenomenology, or, at least, about my understanding of phenomenology. For the cause of my discomfort was simply that I had not seen this done before. But then, I had seen very few examples of educational research conducted along phenomenological lines; much of my discomfort, then, was concern about whether I was pushing phenomenology beyond its limits. And this brings me to the question. There do, indeed, seem to be clearly established limits to what is permissable in

phenomenological research. The researcher is expected to bracket *a priori* conceptions, get participants to talk about how they experience the phenomenon in question, extract themes from meanings units and finally produce descriptions (situated or general or both) of how the phenomenon is lived by the participants. Given this (admittedly simplified) breakdown of the phenomenological procedure, I find it entirely unsurprising that phenomenology is sometimes regarded as "exploratory research", a view which Giorgi (1994:210) was anxious to discredit:

> It is often pointed out to me ... that the type of research I propose is interesting and even legitimate as exploratory research and that after careful description has revealed what is important about the phenomenon, one could proceed even more certainly with traditional research. In other words, the suggestion is often made that qualitative research is merely preparatory.

Giorgi argued that qualitative research had a logic of its own, and a resultant completeness that would obviate the need for additional enquiry along "traditional" lines. And of course, most qualitative researchers would agree with him. Yet I must confess that reading phenomenological reports and studies often leaves me strangely dissatisfied. My dissatisfaction, though, usually arises from the sense that the researcher has adhered too closely to what seems permissable in phenomenological research; reports have an air of completeness and closure that one expects to find in research conducted in the natural science paradigm.

A hard-hitting article by Peterson (1994) arraigns the growing ranks of qualitative researchers - bursting many frothy bubbles in the process - by insisting on such basics as maintaining a critical-reflective attitude; warning against the debilitating effects of the "insularity of qualitative research" which results in creating two antagonistic camps; drawing attention to the general failure on the part of qualitative researchers to declare the limitations of their study, and the implications (in terms of power and privilege) of their relationship with their participants (or subjects). His most telling point, in my opinion, is that:

> a method should yield more than a catalogue of themes or ideas; it should help in seeing and articulating how certain experiences are constituted as meaningful (Peterson 1994:183).

Post-modern criticisms offer more direct and painful blows. Goodman has questioned one of the fundamental tenets of existential phenomenology, arguing that focusing on the individual's consciousness obscures the extent to which that reality is regulated by underlying structures and relationships:

> The frame of reference that emerges from the work of social phenomenologists does not encourage questions of why certain institutionalised meanings, rather than others, dominate within a given milieu. Group life can only be fully understood in terms of its embeddedness within a social, political and historical context (Goodman 1992:121).

A perceptive observation, in my opinion, which accounts for the disquiet I have tried to express, and probably explains why I felt it necessary to situate Simphiwe's leadership within a broader socio-political-cultural context.

It would seem that the more phenomenology is applied in broader social contexts - such as in education - the more it will need to declare its position in terms of ideology and power. The phenomenological researcher is not, in reality, the value-free, neutral, suppositionless agent of enquiry he or she needs to be for the sake of conducting valid research. "There is no social practice [including research] outside of ideology" (Hall, quoted by Goodman 1992:122).

9.2 The limitations of this study

The factors which account for the strengths of this study are precisely those which contribute to its limitations. It is only by means of in-depth, intensive, subjective interaction with a small number of participants that a researcher is able to gain access to mental, emotional and psychic operations that are generally glossed over and taken as read. And it is for these same reasons that I shall have to concede firstly that my

findings are in no way generalisable, and secondly that my strong presence in the investigation must in some way have affected the research process which therefore raises questions about validity. Thus the qualitative researcher will often seem to be caught in a catch-22 situation.

These are matters which have exercised the minds of qualitative researchers for decades. As early as 1975 Amedeo Giorgi, the pioneering spirit behind the current popularity of phenomenological research, was grappling with these very issues. Part of the problem was that qualitative research, as an alternative mode of enquiry to the 'more respectable' traditionally scientific research, was still in its infancy. In attempting to postulate its own criteria it naturally resorted to the only vocabulary available at the time, including words like "generalisability", "validity" and "reliability". By 1985 Lincoln and Guba had dispensed with the jargon of positivism, and substituted more appropriate criteria, such as "trustworthiness", "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability" (cited in Seidman 1991:17). And by 1994 Wolcott was ready to reject the traditional notion of validity altogether, arguing that the validity of ethnographic findings was dependent on the degree of rigour with which researchers conducted their work.

Giorgi (1975) similarly argued the case for rigour and the proper adherence to internal validating procedures, such as frequently comparing descriptions with original protocols to ensure that one was remaining true to one's data. Shapiro (1986:172) argued that "mundane experiencing can give ... an always accessible and evolving touchstone" for validating reality claims. Thus simply being human provides the basis for validation. For researchers, who are "necessarily involved" (Shapiro 1986:173) in the construction of reality, there is "direct access to understanding and to a form of verification inherent in the lived relation between themselves and the object of their investigation." On the question of replicability, Giorgi (1975:96) explained that it was taken for granted that different researchers could draw different conclusions from the same data. For him the chief criterion for phenomenological research was "whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the

researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it" (1975:96). This would in fact constitute validity in qualitative research.

For phenomenologists generalisability will always be problematic; the very idea of generalising from phenomenological findings is paradoxical, because phenomenology questions the notion of an independent reality open to scrutiny. One can only study the reality construed by the individual(s) who participate in one's research; it is assumed that each individual's reality will to a large extent be unique. To the phenomenologist, therefore, generalising is anathema. The fact that my findings are not generalisable is therefore neither a weakness nor a shortcoming, but must nevertheless be acknowledged as a limitation.

The second limitation I need to highlight also derives from the very feature that has enriched and strengthened this study, viz. the fact that I have had to be personally and subjectively involved with the leaders who comprise my small sample. There is of course no way of avoiding this; qualitative research (indeed, any kind of research) without personal involvement is a contradiction in terms. But what may have complicated this particular involvement to some extent was the relationship between myself and my participants. As explained in Chapter Three, my participants were students in a Masters' course I was teaching. I cannot therefore ignore the possibility that our unequal power relationship may have biased my approach to them, and/or their response to me. There was always the possibility that their answers to my interview questions may have been designed to please rather than to reveal 'the truth'. And indeed, this may have been the case had my research been of a different kind. As it was, they had no idea what I was looking for, largely because I approached the project with an entirely open mind, intent only on finding out what I could about how leaders think and feel. This open-mindedness is, as I have explained, central to the phenomenological position, a self-imposed position of neutrality brought about through rigorous reduction. Furthermore, since I conducted the interviews early in the course, there was no possibility of their having gained insight into my personal feelings on leadership. I felt convinced then - and feel so still - that the interviews

were conducted in an entirely unthreatening, open-minded way, and that the respondents spoke from the heart.

The third and last limitation I wish to discuss is the rather obvious fact that this study is only one small attempt at gaining enriched understanding of a rich and multi-faceted phenomenon. As I have stressed in Chapter Two, leadership literature seems frustrated by the fact that no clear answers are forthcoming. I do not share this view. I prefer to see each new piece of research as an attempt to illuminate yet another facet of the phenomenon. Clearly phenomenology does not have the potential for effectively illuminating all of these facets. There is an urgent need to address the question of educational leadership in this country, and a more complete picture can only emerge when a variety of approaches and methodologies are applied in appropriate ways. I shall elaborate on this point in the next section.

CHAPTER TEN

Suggestions for future research

This study seems to have raised more questions than it has provided answers. There were frequent occasions - during the writing up of my findings and particularly in the course of this chapter - where I felt a need to know more, or a desire to have access to related research which would help to illuminate or contextualise what I had found. I shall attempt to list these occasions here, as suggestions for future research.

1. Firstly, the apparently contradictory notion of educational leaders playing a role - i.e. assuming behaviour patterns or roles - whilst at the same time being themselves. In my findings I made the observation that it is perhaps true for educational leaders that their role-playing is who they are. But this is presented as a suggestion only, one which will require far more evidence - in the form of phenomenologically driven case-studies - before it can be elevated to the status of a justifiable claim. I believe, however, that we need greater clarity on this issue, for it has implications for leadership training or education. I shall return to this point later.

2. Secondly, I believe the question of whether (and how, if they do) educational institutions differ from profit-making business organisations needs to be explored. This issue is clearly related to the first point made, for I have suggested that it is more appropriate for educational leaders to be themselves than it might be for leaders in industry, since their work is so entirely people-centred. The proponents of business models applied to education, such as Total Quality Management (TQM) would have us believe that schools are very much like businesses; they even appropriate the language of business to describe educational goals and procedures (Murgatroyd & Morgan 1992). Research conducted by Carlson (1996) revealed that teachers at schools which had taken on TQM principles sensed that they were experiencing professional as well as personal growth. Nevertheless, one of the chief problems

experienced was with the "jargon" and "production-line product approach" that is central to the TQM approach (Carlson 1996:93). Teachers find it difficult to think of schools in terms of business metaphors.

3. At a more fundamental level, one is asking whether organisation is an appropriate metaphor for schools and other educational institutions. Greenfield (1984:148-149) would answer that it was not:

> To those who complain that the purely rational and machine models of organization are too simplistic, the organicists reply by endowing the machine with life. Organizations in this view retain many machine-like properties, and their relationships with their environments now become "dynamic".
>
> The organic metaphor is seen in the view that speaks of the "health" of organizations, of "organizational personality," and of "organizational climate." It is endemic in the organization development movement (OD) and in much of the planned change literature.

Greenfield (1984:150) postulated the radically phenomenological view of educational institutions as "cultural artifacts ... systems of meaning that can be understood only through the interpretation of meaning." It is possible that a more appropriate model (or metaphor) for educational institutions may be found in Elizabeth's description of how NGO's operate, something akin to the vision driving the establishment of community colleges. In this model the notion of the college being a place or a building is of secondary importance; what drives the vision is the coming together of people - learners, teachers, employers - who negotiate curricula, regulations and criteria. This model articulates well with the present government's vision of schooling as decentralised, locally controlled enterprise, allowing for input from all stakeholders, including the students. The viability of adopting this kind of framework for future educational planning in South Africa needs to be explored.

4. Closely allied to 2. and 3. is the question of morality. I have suggested, in the course of this study, that educational leaders are perhaps more strongly guided by generally accepted moral principles rather than instrumental organisational values. This clearly needs to be investigated more closely, since the implications for leadership training or education, as well as for understanding how educational institutions work, are considerable.

5. There is, I believe, a pressing need to investigate the emergent post-colonial aspirations of Black South Africans. It seems as though important decisions are made on the basis of assumptions that have not been tested. It is assumed, for example, that democracy is what everyone wants; but there are many different understandings of democracy, as my research has shown. [I am reminded of a comment made by Counciller Jabavu of the Ciskei, quoted by Mager (1995:61): "Democracy is something that has come from the white man ..."] It is also assumed that a post-colonial nation needs to restage or reclaim the past; this is the argument on which Mbigi's (1995) *Ubuntu* rests. But we in South Africa have had almost daily evidence of the catastrophic effects of a nation's clinging to its glorious past. Think of all the conflict and misery brought about by the Zulus' insistence on carrying traditional weapons to rallies. A leading IFP (Inkhata Freedom Party) spokesman recently said on national television that he could not be expected to regard the ANC (largely Xhosa dominated) as his leaders, since they (the Xhosas) had never defeated them in battle. Along with different aspirations come different perceptions of leadership, and of schooling, and of how education needs to be organised. Ethnographic studies of post-colonial Black culture would help to throw light on the complexity of the situation and lead to more meaningful planning.

6. Another area which ethnography is well placed to investigate is the question of levels of authoritarianism among educational leaders. Hofstede's (1994) suggestion that Black South Africans are perhaps more tender-minded is open to question, if my findings are anything to go by. There appear to be deep-

seated levels of authoritarianism among Black South African educational leaders. This may be partly accounted for by cultural factors, but may also be due to the need to preserve the status quo established under apartheid bureaucratisation. If the government's vision of site-based school governance and management is to be realised we shall need greater clarity on the extent to which principals are able to cut the navel cord, as it were, and take their schools to self-determination in consultation with staff, students, parents and community. In other words, how feasible is the key-notion underlying contemporary thinking on organisational culture, viz. that organisations spring from the wills and imaginations of leaders, in the context of a post-apartheid South Africa?

7. I found it surprising that the issue of gender and leadership was not raised in this study, this despite the fact that two of my participants are female leaders. Elizabeth refutes the notion of women leading differently from men. She believes we all have stereotypical views of how women lead (or should lead); but in her experience most of the women she has worked with simply would not match the stereotype, and lead more like men. For her it is not a gender issue; there are different kinds of leadership; the leader you are depends on your life-view, not on your sex.

   Recent research conducted by Ngcobo (1996) postulated that the attributes of the transformational leader are what most would describe as feminine qualities. She found no traces of gender discrimination against female principals amongst the teachers in her sample. If we accept that what is needed in South Africa at this time - to realise the educational vision of the new government - is transformational leadership, the implications for selection boards and training institutions are considerable. Clearly this is an area that requires extensive research. Many more qualitative enquiries - such as the study by Ngcobo - need to be conducted, in order to establish how widespread the perceptions she has described are.

8. One of the strongest findings of my research is the sense in which educational leadership involves the self. I have postulated that it is characteristic of education to provide a setting where the leader's sense of self, morally as well as more generally in terms of who the leader is, is constantly challenged. It is perhaps true that a constantly shifting sense of self and a state of critical self-exploration seems to open the mind to possibilities, enabling the realisation of imaginal visions. Speaking at the Ilitha Arts Conference in Grahamstown in April 1995, Njabulo Ndebele, President of the National Arts Coalition, expressed his surprise at discovering that multinational companies were moving away from recruiting students with "narrow, single-discipline-based, career orientated training" (Ndebele 1995:22), and were opting instead for "students who have high linguistic ability, high analytical skills, good inter-personal skills and an ability to take creative initiatives" (Ndebele 1995:22). Ndebele's description of the positive effects of an education based in the creative arts (or more broadly, the humanities) sounds remarkably like contemporary leadership writers' attempts to capture the essence of vision and creativity in leadership:

> The intention here is not to make everyone a poet, but rather to let everyone participate in the activity of stimulating the imagination. The creative arts teach us to walk on uncharted avenues. They teach us to be open minded. They teach us to find possibilities and beauty in the most unlikely places, and by challenging orthodoxies, they tell us when old solutions have begun to be a problem (Ndebele 1995:25).

It is conceivable that institutions concerned with the education and training of educational leaders may need to conduct vigorous research - in the form of evaluations, essentially - into their curricula. What is taught in tertiary institutions' diploma, Bachelor's and Master's courses? What are the essential theories and philosophies that inform these courses? To what extent are they geared towards instrumentalising leadership, as opposed to developing people holistically, focusing them on their inner creative selves, opening their minds

to possibilities so that they may come to see, as Senge (1989) has put it, that "the reality we have is only one of several possibilities?"

Naturally research of this kind needs to begin with national or regional surveys, such as that conducted by Nicolaides & Gaynor in the United States in 1989. Nicolaides and Gaynor analysed and compared 36 syllabuses for administrative and organizational theory doctoral courses offered by universities affiliated with the University Council for Educational Administration. Their aims were to determine the extent to which four schools of thought - "traditional, phenomenology, ethnomethodology and critical theory" (Nicolaides & Gaynor 1989:1) - informed the syllabuses examined; to compare their findings with recommendations proposed in *The report and papers of the national commission on excellence in educational administration*; and to point up the implications of these findings in the light of current educational challenges.

Needless to say, their report makes fascinating reading. Unfortunately it would be inappropriate for me to dwell on their findings in any great detail, but the gist of the report can be conveyed in a few sentences.

The researchers found that:

> with a few notable exceptions, teaching in these courses is limited to topics and themes shaped by traditional perspectives. Alternative perspectives, such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and radical humanism, which are widely discussed in the scholarly literature, are under-represented in the courses examined (Nicolaides & Gaynor 1989:5).

They found that the two themes that most consistently characterised the theoretical frameworks of courses were the Weberian approach to the analysis of formal organisations, and the general and social systems model. Thus

concepts of power, authority and control were the most commonly addressed topics, and Max Weber was the dominant contributor to organisational thinking:

> Less frequent were topics that included affective components of administration. Describing and checking one's feelings and giving feedback for sensemaking rather than information processing were rarely addressed. The least frequent topics were those addressing human sensitivity to gender roles, values, and attitudes in administration (Nicolaides & Gaynor 1989:32).

I concede that I have given a crude and oversimplified account of this important report; but perhaps this will suffice to support my plea for similar kinds of research to be conducted in this country. As things stand at present, tertiary institutions have very little insight into each other's course offerings. External examining and the occasional conference provide limited opportunities for cross-pollination and sharing of ideas.

To end on a hopeful note: At the time of writing the Department of Education of the Republic of South Africa has launched a project to address the education management needs in South Africa. The Minister of Education has appointed a Task Team on Educational Management Development (EMD) whose brief is to conduct an audit of needs as well as resources, and thereafter devise strategies by means of which existing resources (such as academics) may best be utilised to address these needs. This is encouraging, and, in a sense, will answer the need that I have outlined in this section. One is allowed one's reservations though. And, as an academic, I must confess to being disappointed that initiatives such as these are not conducted by and through tertiary institutions, guided by vigorous and critical current thinking, lest we end up with a debilitating emphasis on a state-driven instrumentality.

REFERENCES

Aanstoos, C.M. 1983 A phenomenological study of thinking. In A. Giorgi, A. Barton & C. Maes, Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology Volume IV . (pp. 244-256). Duquesne University Press.

Adair, J. 1988 Developing leaders. Berkshire: Talbot Adair Press.

Adams, H. 1995 The politics of ethic identity: comparing South Africa. Ethnic and Racial Studies Volume 18 (3), 457-475.

African National Congress: Education Department. 1994 A policy framework for education and training. Braamfontein:ANC.

Alexander, N. 1990 Education and the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. Cape Town: Skotaville.

Allen, J. A. 1986 A phenomenological investigation of the beginning therapist's experience of the first session of psychotherapy with the first patient. Unpublished M A dissertation. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Aronowitz,S. & Giroux, H.A. 1992 Postmodern education. Politics, culture, and social criticism. Minneapolis & Oxford: University of Minneapolis Press.

Avens, R. 1980 Imagination is reality. Western nirvana in Jung, Hillman, Barfield and Cassirer. Dallas: Spring Publications.

Bar-Tal, Y. 1989 What can we learn from Fiedler's Contingency Model? Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 19(1), 79-96.

Bass, B.M. 1990 Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership. New York: The Free Press.

Bennis, W. 1984 Transformative power and leadership. In T.J. Sergiovanni & J.E.Corbally (Eds.) Leadership and organizational culture. (pp. 64-71), Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Bennis, W. 1994 On becoming a leader. Reading: Addison Wesley.

Bennis, W. & Nanus, B. 1985 Leaders - The strategies of taking charge. New York: Harper & Row.

Bhabha, H.K. 1994 The location of culture. London: Routledge.

Blake, R.B. & Mouton, J.S. 1964 The managerial grid. Houston: Gulf.

Blake, R.B. & Mouton, J.S. 1983 An overview of the Grid. In W.R. Lassey & M. Sashkin (Eds.) Leadership and social change. (pp. 124-131) San Diego: University Associates.

Block, P. 1987 The Empowered Manager. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bloom, H. (Ed.) 1963 English Romantic poetry Volume 1. New York: Doubleday

Bly, R. 1990 Iron John - A book about men. Shaftesbury: Element.

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, T.E. 1994 Looking for leadership: Another search party's report. Educational administration quarterly 30(1), 77-96.

Brooke, R. 1991 Jung and phenomenology. London: Routledge.

Buiys, G. 1996a 28 May Senior Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. Personal communication.

Buiys, G. 1996b 28 May Senior Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. Personal communication.

Buiys, G. & Atherfold, G. 1995 Savings and money-lending schemes: How rotating credit associations help poor families. Report HG/MF-19. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Burns, J.M. 1978 Leadership. New York: Harper & Row.

Bush, T. 1986 Theories of educational management. London: Harper & Row.

Campbell, J. 1988 The power of myth. New York: Doubleday.

Cahill, W.P. 1994 Why Greenfield? The relevance of T.B. Greenfield's theories to catholic education. Educational management and administration 22(4), pp. 251-259.

Chamberlin, J.G. 1974 Phenomenological methodology and understanding education. In D. Denton (Ed.), Existentialism and phenomenology in education. (pp. 119-138) New York: Teachers College Press.

Carlson, B.K. 1996 A critical analysis of the application of Total Quality Management principles in two schools. Unpublished M Ed dissertation. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Clarke, J.J. 1992 In search of Jung: Historical and philosophic enquiries. London: Routledge.

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. 1989 Research methods in education. London: Routledge.

Cloonan, T. F. 1971 Experiential and behavioral aspects of desision-making. In A. Giorgi, W. Fischer & R. Von Eckartsberg, Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology Volume I. (pp 112-131) Duquesne University Press.

Colaizzi, P.F. 1978 Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R.S. Valle & M. King (Eds.) Existential-Phenomenological alternatives for psychology. (pp. 48-71) New York: OUP.

Covey , S.R. 1992 Principle-centered leadership. London: Simon and Schuster.

Deal, T. & Kennedy, A. 1982 Corporate cultures. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Denton, D. (Ed.) 1974 Existentialism and phenomenology in education. New York: Teachers College Press.

De Pree, M. 1992 Leadership jazz. New York: Dell Publishing.

Dover Wilson, J. (Ed.) 1960 Culture and anarchy. London: Longman.

Dunne, J.S. 1973 Time and myth. London: SCM Press.

Eliot, T.S. 1969 The complete poems and plays of T.S Eliot. London: Faber & Faber

Eisenstadt, S.N. (Ed.) 1968 Max Weber on charisma and institution building. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Feather, N.T. 1992 Values, valences, expectations, and actions. D. Bargal, M. Gold & M. Lewin (Eds.) Journal of Social Issues 48(2). pp. 109-124

Fiedler, F.E. 1967 A theory of leadership effectiveness. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fiedler, F.E. 1983 The contingency model - New directions for leadership utilization. In W.R. Lassey & M. Sashkin, Leadership and social change. (pp. 160-173) San Diego: University Associates.

Fischer, W.F. 1974 On the phenomenological mode of researching 'being anxious'. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology 4(2), 405-423

Fischer, W.F. 1985 Self-deception: An empirical-phenomenological inquiry into its essential meanings. In A. Giorgi, Phenomenology and Psychological Research. (pp. 118-145) Pittsburgh: Duquesne University.

Giorgi, A. 1970 Toward phenomenologically based research in psychology. Journal of phenomenological psychology 1, 75-98.

Giorgi A., Fischer W.F., & Von Eckartsberg, R. (Eds.) 1971 Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology: Volume 1. Duquesne University Press/Humanities Press.

Giorgi, A. 1975 An application of phenomenological method in psychology. In A. Giorgi, C. Fischer & E. Murray (Eds.) Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology Volume II. (pp. 82-103). Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A., Fischer, C., & Murray, E. (Eds.) 1975 Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology Volume II. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A., Barton, A. & Maes, C. (Eds.) 1983 Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology Volume IV. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A. 1985 Phenomenology and Psychological Research. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A. 1992a Description versus interpretation: competing strategies for qualitative research. Journal of phenomenological research 23(2), 119-135.

Giorgi, A. 1992b An exploratory phenomenological psychological approach to the experience of the moral sense. Journal of phenomenological psychology 23 (1), 50-86.

Giorgi, A. 1994 A phenomenological perspective on certain qualitative research methods. Journal of phenomenological psychology 25(2), 190-220.

Goodman, J. 1992 Theoretical and practical considerations for school-based research in a post-positivist era. Qualitative studies in education 3(1), 117-133.

Greaves, N. 1990 When hippo was hairy and other tales from Africa. Mbabane: Bob books.

Greene, M. (1974) Literature, existentialism and education. In D.E. Denton (Ed.) Existentialism and phenomenology in education. (pp. 63-86) New York: Teachers College Press.

Greenfield, T.B. 1984 Leaders and schools: Willfulness and unnatural order in organizations. In T.J. Sergiovanni & J.E.Corbally (Eds.) Leadership and organizational culture. (pp. 142-169), Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Griffiths, M. 1993 Educational change and the self. British journal of educational studies XXXXI (2), 150-163.

Grocott's Mail 1995 3 March, No 17, p.1; 6 June No 44, p.1; 13 June No 46, p. 1.; 8 August No 62, p1

Grocott's Mail 1996 17 May, Presidential Souvenir Supplement.

Hartman, S.J. & Harris, O.J. 1991 The role of parental influence in leadership. Journal of Social Psychology 132(2): 153-167.

Hartshorne, K. 1992 Crisis and challenge: Black education 1910 - 1990. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K.H. 1969 Life Cycle Theory of Leadership. Training and Development Journal 23(5), 25-34.

Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K.H. 1988 Management of organizational behavior - Utilizing human resources. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Hofstede, G. 1980 Motivation, leadership and organization: Do American theories apply abroad? Organizational Dynamics. Summer 1980, 42-65.

Hofstede, G. 1994 Cultural and other differences in teaching and learning. In A. van der Walt (Ed.) The principles of multicultural tertiary education. (pp. 71-79). Vanderbijlpark: Vaal Triangle Technikon.

Hoy, W.H. & Miskell, C.G. 1987 Educational Administration: Theory, Practice and Research. New York: Random House.

Hughes, M. 1985 Theory and Practice in Educational Management. In M. Hughes, P. Ribbens & H. Thomas H. (Eds.) Managing education - the system and the institution. (pp. 3-39) London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Huey, J. 1994 The leadership industry. Fortune, February 21, 1994: 24-16.

Jung, C.G. 1959 The collected works Volume 9. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Kallaway, P. 1984 Apartheid education. Johannesburg: Raven Press.

Keen E. 1978 Psychopathology. In R.S. Valle & M. King Existential-Phenomenological alternatives for psychology. (pp. 234-264) New York: OUP.

Khumalo, E. 1991 The application of educational management principles in Ciskei secondary schools and possible consequences. Unpublished M Ed dissertation. Alice: Fort Hare University.

Khumalo, E. 1993 Parental involvement in senior secondary schools. Paper delivered at Educational Leadership and Management Seminar. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Kruger, D. (Ed.) 1984 The changing reality of modern man. Cape Town: Juta and Co.

Kruger, D. 1988 An introduction to phenomenological psychology. Cape Town: Juta and Co.

Laing, R.D. 1969 Self and others. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Lambie E. 1987 A phenomenological explication of the artistic creative experience of a painter, a writer and a playwright. Unpublished M Soc Sc dissertation. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Lassey, M. & Sashkin, W.R. (Eds.) 1983 Leadership and social change. San Diego: University Associates.

Likert, R. 1961 New patterns of management. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Loye, D. 1977 The leadership passion - a psychology of ideology. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mager, A. 1995 Patriarchs, politics and ethnicity in the makings of the Ciskei, 1945-1959. African studies 54(1), 48-72.

Mahanjana, N.V. 1991 Educational management in Ciskeian Secondary Schools, with special reference to the role of the headmaster in a possible new educational dispensation. Unpublished M Ed dissertation. Alice: Fort Hare University.

Makhokolo, K J. 1987 Management development of principals of black schools with special reference to Top-Downs. Unpublished M Ed dissertation. Potchefstroom: PUCHO.

Mandela, N.R. 1994 The long walk to freedom. Randburg: Macdonald Purnell

Maslow, A.H. 1954 Motivation and personality. New York: Harper Row.

Mbigi, L. (with Maree, J.) 1995 Ubuntu. Pretoria: Knowledge Resources.

McConville, M. 1978 The phenomenological approach to perception. In R.S. Valle & M. King (Eds.), Existential-Phenomenological alternatives for psychology. (pp. 94-118) New York: OUP.

McGregor, D. 1966 Leadership and motivation. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Morgan, G. 1986. Images of organization. London: Sage.

Murgatroyd, S. & Morgan, C. 1992 Total quality management and the school. Buckingham: OUP.

Ngcobo, T.M. 1996 An investigation into teachers' perceptions of female secondary school principals in Kwazulu-Natal. Unpublished M Ed dissertation. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Pervin, L.A. 1985 Personality: current controversies, issues and directions. Annual Review of Psychology 36, 83-114.

Peters, T. 1987 Thriving on Chaos. New York: Harper Row.

Peterson, G. (1994) Challenges of qualitative inquiry and the need for follow-up in descriptive science. Journal of phenomenological psychology 25(2), 174-189.

Polanyi M. 1969 Being and knowing. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Rosenblatt, L.M. 1969 Pattern and polemic. English Journal 58 (7), 1005-1012.

Sashkin, M. & Lassey, W.R 1983 Theories of leadership: A review of useful research. In M. Lassey & W.R. Sashkin (Eds.), Leadership and social change. (pp.91-106) San Diego: University Associates.

Schmuck, R.A. 1986 Leading and managing. Excerpts from a paper published in the Doctoral Residency Seminar Series. Florida: University of South Florida.

Seidman, I.E. 1991 Interviewing as qualitative research. New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia).

Senge, P.M. 1989 Innovation '89. (Video recording of an interview with Senge initiated by the Barlow Rand Group Training Centre, Johannesburg).

Senge, P.M. 1991 Leadership: Bringing vision and reality together. Human Resource Management. June, 12-15.

Sergiovanni, T.J. 1984 Cultural and competing perspectives in administrative theory and practice. In T.J. Sergiovanni and J.E. Corbally (Eds.) Leadership and organizational culture. (pp. 1-10). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Sergiovanni T.J. & Corbally J.E. (Eds.) 1984. Leadership and organizational culture. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Sergiovanni, T.J. & Starratt, R.J. 1988 Supervision - Human perspectives. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Sergiovanni T.J. 1992 Why we should seek substitutes for leadership. Educational Leadership. February 1992, 41-45.

Schein, E.H. 1985. Organizational culture and leadership: A dynamic view. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E.H. 1992. Organizational culture and leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Scholes, P.A. 1970. The Oxford companion to music. London: Oxford University Press

Shapiro, K.J. 1986 Verification: Validity or understanding. Journal of phenomenological research 17(2), 167-180.

Shaw, H. 1972 Dictionary of literary terms. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Simon, R.I. 1992 Teaching against the grain. Texts for a pedagogy of possibility. Toronto:OISE Press

Smith, C.K.O. 1995 "The kids. That's what we were about." The social organization of teachers of diverse race and culture in a South African High School: A case study. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Oregon.

Spindler, G. (Ed.) 1982 Doing the ethnography of schooling. Illinois: Waverley Press

Spinelli, E. 1989 The interpreted world: An introduction to phenomenological psychology. London: Sage

Starratt, R.J. 1993 The Drama of Leadership. London: The Falmer Press.

Stones, A. M. 1982 The implications of teacher maladjustment in schools for teacher selection and teacher training. Unpublished M Ed dissertation. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Stones, C.R. 1988 Research: Toward a Phenomenological Praxis. In D. Kruger An Introduction to Phenomenological Psychology. (pp. 141-152), Cape Town: Juta and Co.

Vaill, P.B. 1984 The purposing of high-performing systems. In T.J. Sergiovanni & J.E. Corbally (Eds.) Leadership and organizational culture. (pp. 85-104), Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Van den Berg, J.H. 1972 A different existence. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Valle, R.S. and King, M. (Eds.) 1978 Existential-Phenomenological alternatives for psychology. New York: OUP.

Van der Mescht, H. 1993 What kind of leadership do we need to face the future? Four school management models. Unpublished paper delivered at Educational Leadership and Management Seminar. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Vecchio, R.P. 1987 Situational Leadership Theory: An examination of a prescriptive theory. Journal of Applied Psychology 72(3), 444-451.

Weick, K. 1976 Educational organizations and loosely coupled systems. Administrative Science Quarterly. 21(1), 1-19.

White, A.T. 1959 Myths and legends. London: Paul Hamlyn.

Wilcox, K. 1982 Ethnography as a methodology and its application to the study of schooling: A review. In G. Spindler (Ed.) . Doing the ethnography of schooling. (pp. 456-488). Illinois: Waverley Press

Wilson, C. 1965 Beyond the outsider. London: Pan Books.

Wilson, I. 1992 Realizing the Power of Strategic Vision. Long Range Planning 25(5), 18-28

Willower, D.J. 1982 Some "Yes, Buts" and educational administration. A UCEA Occasional paper. Columbus, Ohio: University Council for Educational Administration.

Wolcott, H.F. 1973 The man in the principal's office: An ethnography. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Wolcott, H.F. 1994 Transforming qualitative data. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Yukl, G.A. 1989 Leadership in organizations. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

APPENDIX - Natural Meaning Units

A: SIMPHIWE - Meaning units

A1: *I think I'm a bureaucrat because, you know if there are rules and regulations to carry out one's duty I believe that I stick to such rules to see to the achievement of whatever you do in accordance with such regulations.*	He sees his role as that of a bureaucrat, because he abides by rules and regulations.
A2: *Well, eh, sometimes really there are rules which one doesn't agree with and ... whenever such a situation exists I prefer to use my discretion.*	Yet there are rules he disagrees with.
A3: *I've often consulted my senate - i.e. the Vice-Rector plus the HOD's, and then thereafter I would just inform the staff in a way that we're supposed to be doing this but I feel that thing that has to be done like this you know so that's how I use my discretion just to consult and then thereafter try to get a view from the staff members.*	In these cases he consults his senior staff, and then informs the staff of the decision, and requests their views
A4: *In a way it does [create problems] in that you are caught between the two sometimes, i.e. the ... you know you don't do it the department's way and you get a rapping for it ... and ... sometimes it solves the problem.*	This course of action can have both positive and negative results. The authorities can take disciplinary action if you ignore instructions, but it can also solve problems.
A5: *I've got some strong ... reservations about the word "democratic".*	He is suspicious of the concept of democracy.

A6: *I think it has been abused in a way because everything one does ... mm in a very unfruitful way one calls that "democratic". I'm going to take the question of students that you are working with. They would regard you as not being "democratic" because you don't involve them in decision-making, yet they make decisions without involving anyone. They would under the guise of democracy try to have their views prevailing over everything and again I think that the question of democracy, why I have some reservations is that many things are happening in our society under this guise of democracy where you find anarchy ... same as democracy.*

He thinks the concept is abused.

Students demand democracy but make decisions without consultation.

Students enforce their wishes under the guise of democracy.

Conditions are closer to anarchy - existing under the guise of democracy.

A7: *That's why I wouldn't like to be seen as a democrat in that, you know, it seems as if you buy cheap popularity in order to ... these are the ... connotations of the term I know. Not that democracy's bad per se but ... there are lots of meanings that are unbecoming meanings attached to the term.*

He would not like to seen as a democrat - it may make you popular, but the there is no substance to it.

The word has unfortunate connotations for him.
He does not believe that democracy is bad per se.

A8: *Sometimes I do feel that I don't have all the right answers and that ... people may have the right answers although I happen to be in a position of leadership. And I hate to have an idea and just impose it because it's mine. I hate to impose myself.*

He believes he does not have the right to impose his ideas and decisions onto people. He likes to consult, because other people may have the right answers.

A9: *I'm talking to everybody - and if an idea grips me or if I have anything that I want to do it's easy for me to just in talking to people informally say "Look, this idea came to mind." Even the staff, not necessarily HOD's, just the same "This is an idea. What do you think of it?"*

When it comes to a new idea, he shares with everyone, not only senior staff.

A10: *Yes. Most of the times [I have to make decisions on my own]. But since you are accountable at the end of the day you just have to do them.*	But usually he needs to make decisions on his own, because he is accountable.
A11: *[I am accountable to] the Chief Education Specialist. The Deputy Director General, the Director General and the Minister, but the way it works in the Ciskei you go to the Chief Education Specialist and he takes you to the minister straightaway. So ...*	He is part of a rigidly organised hierarchy, and he is accountable to his immediate superior.
A12: *It's a very autocratic hierarchical structure.*	He finds it a very autocratic system.
A13: *Ja, I talk to them [the staff] and usually - and that's why I say I've been in a very fortunate position - usually people don't avoid me, they come straight and say; they really made me feel like [I belong to this institution].*	He makes people feel they belong because he is approachable. People feel they can approach him.
A14: *I think the fact that I'm not very formal, and the fact that I talk to everyone, and mm I always try to myself not to wear a mask.*	He sees his style as not very formal. He tries to be himself, instead of acting a part.
A15: *People tend to accept you as you really are and ...*	And finds that people accept him for who he is.
A16: *Well you know I feel I'm different ... perhaps it's personality difference. You know I've found people talking to their staff you know and you find there's a lot of officialdom, if I may put it that way, whereas I do try to be as ... civil as possible, not to be that much of an official.*	In this sense he thinks he is different from other principals, perhaps because he has a different personality. He is less inclined to hide behind 'officialdom'.

A17: *Well I've had some cases of many staff members and hm ... actually coming to me and saying you know ... one other thing there was this white lady, she, you know, especially when in tough situations she used to sort of have some card, put in on the table and all those things, and I asked her the other day "Why are you doing this?" And said, "You know, whenever we've got a problem you go all out of your way not trying to be sympathetic but to try to be* <u>*there*</u> *with us"; and so you find that it's been like that for blacks, coloureds and whites that I'm working with and ... you know ... I don't know. Other people have been saying "The ministry comes through you", you know (laughs)...*

His staff enjoy the way he empathises with them; they feel he is right there with them in their difficulties.

He tells of how a white woman complimented him on his empathetic understanding of her problems.

Some comment on how the ministry comes through him.

A18: *I am saying this deliberately because it has come out of the staffroom as well, and you know there are people who are very rigid, and if a thing has to be done this way it has to be done that way, but I'm going to make an example of students not attending classes and all those things. And you find that the rule is that after so many days this has to be done, the school can even be closed down. And ah I tried, you know, to talk to students and the criticism that has come out loud and clear from people who are coming from these rigid disciplines was "You're bending over backwards," and ... eh when, you know I've tried to understand because sometimes; now you find the students are not really boycotting you, because ... they, they, they want a showdown but they are pressurised by the community ...*

He is regarded as a weak leader by some, because he does not necessarily follow procedures in disciplinary issues. He tries talking to students, instead of simply punishing.

He thinks the students are pressured into disruptive behaviour, such as boycotting, by the community.

A19: *And sometimes you find the staffmember for example he's reported for this and that and you try to ... instead of trying to say (slaps his hand) "Mhu", and then report that thing upwards and all those things, you try to say "OK why are you doing this?" So I would say weak leader in terms of ... ah ...I hate taking drastic action before you have actually made a person to be aware of what he's doing.*

With staff too, he would rather talk and counsel than follow routine disciplinary procedures.
He wants to understand why they are behaving in an unacceptable manner.

He wants offenders to understand what they are doing wrong, before taking disciplinary steps. He regards this a weakness.

A20: *I mean that's how I view myself ... there was a time in life when ... I ... was viewing myself rather negatively, and ...not trying to accept that I ... you know when I started being principal you find that I was ... I was a little bit cringy ... not trying to go out and ... you know thinking that I cannot make it. That was the first time. But, again I found that, you know, I <u>can</u> make it. And this made the, the, the whole difference. Sometimes I regarded failure shattering ... but now sometimes I find I try to say What's gone wrong, you know ...That's why I say that self-concept actually drives to try and initiate things.*

He had a poor self-image at one stage.

When he was a beginner principal he was nervous and reluctant to assert himself.

But knowing that he is capable of doing the job boosts his confidence.

Failure can be a positive thing. In this way he sees his self-concept driving him towards improvement.

A21: *Oh when I look at my family I think huh that's my (what do I call it?) my, my backbone you know ... I've got a <u>rock</u> behind me, that's my mother. And of course with my wife and my kids and ... my mother is a rock behind us ...*

His family is an important stabilising influence, his mother in particular. She is a particularly strong person.

A22: *And sometimes you go there downhearted and say I just want to be here for a week and all those things but when you leave that whoa! it's eina.*

He needs her support, especially when he is depressed. It is painful to leave after a visit.

A23: *I trained to be a pastor and ... my leadership really was ... again ... I, I, I got something from the church in terms of being put into a leadership role and ... and to face situations as a leader ... and so on. It's ... eh the church life, the prayerful nature of the whole exercise, so I find ... that's played a role.*

His training as pastor has shaped his leadership. He is strongly influenced by the 'prayerful' nature of pastoring.

A24: *But up to this far God has been with us, and sometimes I've ascribed my success in leadership situations not as coming out from this (points to head) that is the head, but from the, the, the, the grace of God. I really believe that you know God is there and God is very helpful and it's an inspiration that keeps you going. And when you relate to people, sometimes you find that you get all the - that's why I say I'm stupid at times - you get all the people saying to you, you've done this well, you've said this well, and then what not - you've said this at the right time. You've been just ... And then I say to myself when they are out of sight, "Thank you God," and all those things, because I don't think that I've got all that intelligence and what have you to do what I've done at times ...*

He ascribes much of his success as a leader to God. Much of his strength and wisdom come from God.

A25: *Ja, you know, people can take you for a ride if you're ... very sensitive to their feelings. Hm ... you know people sort of come to you and say "We've got this and this and this" and they know that, you know, you're that type of person. Sometimes really ... You know I admire people who are tough and rough, this is the thing, because, you know, they have got this cut and dried and, you find, no exceptions to the rule and all those things. And eh ... I think I may be interpreting this thing in terms of my experience. Sometimes you know I've been trying to be very - especially to the community - they come with all sorts of things and say "But eh this, this, this people, this child has no parents, this what not this what not this what not and against all things whatever you put down yourself you say "OK, I'll try to help your child." And then I found that many of my problems have come from the situations where I've been trying to be as helpful as anything to that aspect and people come with such things. That's what I say, I don't trust that now, I think it can be a weakness.*

It can be a weakness if you are too trusting, because people take advantage of your naivety.

Sometimes he admires people who are tough and see things in black and white.

The community in particular expects help from him, but takes advantage of his willingness to help.

He now distrusts a helpful attitude.

A26: *As I said from the very onset, I don't want to be not myself. And this may be seen as if I'm rigid and not flexible. There are some things that I cannot sacrifice. There are some things that I cannot sacrifice.*	In insisting on being himself, he may be regarded as inflexible or rigid. He has principles which he cannot ignore.
A27: *Hm...You know ...when ... you know ....the thing is when you look at life as a Christian, you take people as ... images of God ... people as endowed with lots of talents and all those things and you tend to express your relationship that is, is a warm type of relationship where you have trust and you want to work with in a very harmonious way and you try by all means not to have tensions and what have you ... and this I think is a weakness in a way, because human nature being as what it is you may find that you may have misplaced your trust at times ...*	He thinks in a Christian way about people being 'images of God', and strives for harmony and warmth. But again, he is more wary of this attitude now because he has at times misplaced his trust.
A28: *My authority comes from my position. It's legal authority. It's bureaucracy and so it goes well with what I said ...*	He is part of a bureaucracy and therefore sees his authority as 'legal' - his authority comes from his superiors and the system.

A29: *Ja one thing I would add there is I think those are ... the people themselves sometimes ... I'll take it from the workers there ... not the teachers, the workers themselves there. You find sometimes the way you relate to them as workers. You go down to them and try to sort of talk to them I ... often do that I like talking to them. I find that those people whenever they have problems, they don't come to me in a very confrontational manner, but they come to me a person that they trust is going to help them out of their problem. They see me not as someone in terms of his position but in terms of his personality you care naturally ... because I've never had problems with being confronted by workers. Now again to teachers themselves. You find sometimes you get to teachers who acknowledge you as a principal in terms of being appointed as a principal but sometimes you find that the way they trust you to do other things for them, they come with their problems ... and then you find that they trust you.*	But also from people themselves. People approach him for help, not in a confrontational manner. He feels he has their trust. He is seen as a leader by many for his personality, not for his position.
A30: *I may try to serve the people again, what I want to explain here is that sometimes, especially in this era, people are afraid to say "NO", as if no was an offensive word. You know I serve people as far as I believe ... that this is in keeping with my personality. I don't go all out to serve whether I feel that this is wrong or right. I wouldn't do things just to make people love me. I don't like that.*	He thinks there has been a decline in moral standards; people no longer feel they can so "No". He will not compromise his standards, just for the sake of popularity.
A31: *I had been inspired by very few people there ... one of the people there we used to adore was Martin Luther King. And another person is Mandela.*	Inspirations for him have been Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.

A32: *You know that man was in jail for how many years? I think 27 years. He has never used that as his trump card. You know his personality has come through every time. He is such a person who does ... for example in our era if you have been arrested for two days you go out and become an activist and you call yourself an activist because you have been arrested for two months you know ...that man has never alluded to his being in prison to sort of make people feel that eh ...*

Mandela has no bitterness, despite how he has been treated. Other political prisoners cannot wait to trade on that fact. Mandela has never even alluded to it.

B: MICHAEL - Meaning units

B1: *I thought, well maybe it is time I started to look around for something different. Hm and I honestly just applied out to kind of anything that seemed worthwhile ... and this job came up.*

He was prompted into applying for other jobs by the need for a challenge; something different.

B2: *Without thinking of what the implications were, I applied for it. I was interviewed.*

He applied for a principalship without considering the consequences.

B3: *Hm ... at that stage I was 1st team rugby coach, first year at that. I'm sure that had a lot to do with it. I had run the 'Long Walk' which is a big outdoor you know for three years and I'd done it very well, and I think that counted in my favour. And hm I was head of the Audio Visual department and I was busy putting that thing together. I had been very successful as an English teacher I think ... and I guess I had a fairly high profile in the school community.*

He feels he was appointed to principalship because he had proved himself - he had a good reputation and had been successful.

B4: *I did have very good rapport with children ... although of course those were high school children. But yes, as I think as a successful teacher ... I'm sure those things counted.*

He also a good rapport with children, and had been a successful teacher.

B4: *Well, I guess from my English background I've always had that kind of interest in reading and ... I think all this comes naturally for the English teacher, so lo and behold I was now in a new job, and eh I guess I pretty soon got into the habit of saying to myself Well, what is this all about? and eh started to, you know, read on the subject. I think that probably came about four or five years into the job. And eh, ... certainly the perceptions I'd had about school leadership, both from my own school days and also from my teaching, left me with the very strong feeling that I didn't want to be out of touch with what was happening, and I think I developed more and more to become a kind of dynamic ... leader - something I don't think I was, let's say in the first few years - certainly not from my point of view looking back now. And so, ja I have become increasingly more orientated towards reading up, eh getting involved in educational activities, and trying to broaden my own perspective as far as possible, and this undoubtedly has had a profound effect on my own leadership.*

Being an English teacher he has always been a reader. Reading in the field of leadership therefore came naturally. He wanted to be in touch with what was happening.

Reading played a major role in helping him to become a dynamic leader.

Reading continues to play a major role shaping his leadership.

B5: *Ja. Some people might criticise that as being too much on the academic side and maybe not too much ... you know? But one can do both. You know, What is the role of the head? And I certainly have come to terms with it far better now, as I see it.*

Although some may criticise him for being too academic, he feels he balances the theory with the practice. He is comfortable with his interpretation of what the role of the head is.

B6: *In 19 hm ... 87 I went overseas on long leave and I spent hm ...two months in the States, on my own travelling around from school to school. That was a wonderful experience for me. That stimulated a lot of thinking on my part. I think when I look back as to one event that was it. It really got me going saying hey there's a lot of other things happening in the educational world.*

A life-changing experience was spending two months in the States. He saw other possibilities and was enormously stimulated.

He regards this as the one event that changed him profoundly.

B7: *I think just the variety of experiences, and the ... you know different people that I met, you know ... some people there said "Listen, why don't you write for a magazine" and one day I wrote for Phi Kappa Delta there, and also I had a particular interest in Gifted children and how one should be dealing with them, and somebody there said "Well there's this world conference on at Salt Lake City next year, why don't you deliver a paper?" So you know, that's where I became intensely interested and involved in those sorts of things.*

The stimulus came from people who were different.

He was encouraged to act boldly, like writing for Phi Kappa Delta, and delivering a paper at a conference.

B8: *No, I think there were a lot of things ... some varied from, you know simple practical little things ... I remember seeing in one of the schools a happygram ... I don't know if you've heard of a happygram ...*
Alright, well I saw that there for the first time, and I mean that's an integral part of our school.

There were some practical things he brought back, like the happygram.

B9: *To sort of more broader ideas ... hm ...books of course. I came across Leo Buscaglia's 'Living, learning and loving' and that opened my mind. I also became very interested in Jose Enzuli's work on gifted education ... hm ... ja*

As well as more general educational issues. Again, reading played a role. He remembers reading Buscaglia and Enzuli's work which exposed him to entirely new ideas.

B10: *Just one comment I want to add, you know I came into that job and, feeling that in actual fact I had no preparation for it ... and I still consider myself very much so ... I didn't go through any steps, I just went from ordinary teacher to head of a school. When I look back at it now! And I suffered ... I really struggled to survive in my first three or four years ... I look at it now as almost a nervous breakdown kind of ... you know ...*

He feels he had no preparation for the job of principalship, no training, and no experience either, not having gone the route of promotion posts. This contributed to his struggle for survival in the first three years. It was a period of enormous stress.

B11: *The Board of Governors for example that I inherited were very formal, hm you know meetings started with you being left outside while they chatted about ... you ... was the kind of thing. They were all very traditional, very old school, really there was no-one there that I kind of felt ... comfortable about going along and chatting. I had been a member of Round Table up until three years into that job and hm ... you know there were certain people I could just socially ... you know.*	One of the problems was the outdated management style at the school. The Board was very formal and traditional, making decisions without him, for example. He did not feel free to approach them less formally.
B12: *But even the Chairman of that board hm and in the end the whole thing built up halfway through my career there into one huge confrontational thing, where it was touch and go whether I was nearly kicked out. And you cannot imagine ... it was a meeting ... fortunately ... staff supported me. But it was really in the end... boiled down to management issues, you know, the way they wanted to take the school without I felt my ... inclusion in the whole debate.*	This led to a huge confrontation, where he nearly lost his post. He had the support of his staff. The crux of the conflict was a clash between different management approaches. He wanted to be included in the planning and shaping of the school.
B13: *But it did just bring to a head this whole management style which, you know, which operated. And it ended up with a board meeting announcement, and the staff came, they sat there, we sat there and ...*	It climaxed in a confrontational situation, with the Board and Staff on opposite sides.
B14: *Now it's completely different. Now it's totally relaxed, it's all friends, and therefore I feel of course much happier.*	Now the entire style has changed. There is openness and a more relaxed atmosphere. He is happier with this.
B15: *But seldom it ever comes to a vote sort of situation so the whole things's changed dramatically. You know it fits in with my style now.*	The management style now fits in with <u>his</u> style.
B16: *My predecessor was, you know, still is very much the old school, you know, authoritarian type of person. And I think I came in there you know as very different. And still perceived as very different (laughs).*	He was also perceived as very different by the staff, who were used to a more authoritarian principal. He is still perceived as different.

B17: *But of course at the same time the advantage was it has allowed me the freedom to be able to explore and you know develop myself as a person which I wouldn't have been able to do in a government school. That (the government school) was soul-destroying for me.*	But he feels the freedom of the private school situation allowed him to explore his resources and develop as a person.
B18: *So you know why I ... maybe ... I guess I am quite an individual and hm ...and introverted person in many ways.*	He experiences himself as an individual, and an introverted person.
B19: *Hm ...I ... you know I don't ... I enjoy working on my own in certain situations, I enjoy doing research, I enjoy reading hm ...I don't have to go and party with people all the time so it's ...*	He enjoys private activities, such as reading, doing research. His need to be socially engaged is small.
B20: *But, ja there were people, I mean I think there were two teachers in my school, both of whom are very good teachers who are still with me ... hm ... who I kind of latched on to, and they were people who helped me in that situation.*	Other people did play a supportive role in his struggle. He was helped by two of his staff members who are still on the staff.
B21: *Unfortunately I ... hm made the mistake of creating an impression of favouritism, and I picked up some very negative flack from that.*	Unfortunately the fact that he worked closely with two people seemed to others to be favouritism, for which he was criticised.
B22: *And again you know the staff I inherited also was of the same school ... so essentially I went through the process of ... you know somebody had to move (laughs).*	The staff generally were of the same traditional, conservative mode. He knew that either he or they would have to move.
B23: *My vice-head is still there, but he has changed marvellously as a person. We work very well together. Hm ...*	His vice-head has stayed, but has changed as a person and they enjoy a good working relationship.
B24: *Although now, through mistakes that I've made, I now always do it [appointing staff] as a shared thing.*	New staff are appointed by a group. He did this himself initially, but made mistakes.

B25: *Hm ... I <u>loved</u> teaching English literature. I'd go back to it any day, particularly in that kind of environment, you had marvellous freedom other than your Matric syllabus. I was strongly influenced by Ken Durham, you know? And we had a very good English department at the school at the time I was there ... and I guess, you know, the kind of person I am was to a great extent formed by those sort of experiences.*	Teaching English and learning about English has had a profound influence on his life. He mentions his university experience, as well as his experience of teaching English at High School. He believes he was formed as a person by these experiences.
B26: *Ja ... I think very much more as a sort of nurturing side of things. We always have been and still are a very close family. You know, we get together once a year at least. So that has been a tremendous source of security, and values, and nurturing sort of thing.*	His family has played an important role in nurturing his growth. They are a close, supportive family. He describes them as a source of security, and values.
B27: *My father certainly was a strong role model. He was a really strong personality. I think looking back now he was probably quite intimidating personality for me, especially as the eldest child and especially in my younger years. Hm .. (long pause)...hm but he certainly had, you know strong leadership qualities in things like ... you know he was a rugby referee, very strong on the sports side, he'd been a talented sportsman. And of course we grew up in that kind of environment, my brother succeeded in that sort of thing...hm. I think I ...*	His father was a strong role model; he had a strong personality and was intimidating. His father was a leader in sporting matters, and he feels the family was influenced to succeed in that area. His brother was successful at sport.
B28: *Although I've very often been strongly criticised for not being competitive enough in sport, and I actually have quite a different philosophy compared to, you know a lot of other people.*	He himself is criticised for not being competitive enough in his sporting philosophy for the school.
B29: *And I've struggled to survive and still do, with some of the school community.*	He experiences this as a struggle with some members of the school community.

B30: *Maybe because I wasn't particularly successful compared to a Springbok brother and Springbok father referee. So maybe there was some of ... you know feelings of inferiority there. Hm ... I didn't have the natural ... ability, you know. Both my brother and sister are both natural sportsmen ...I don't have natural ball-skills. So the only sport I ended doing anything in that was rugby, but even there you know I wouldn't have said I was a natural rugby player and I really loved it. Hm ... or even soccer, the experience I had. But I wouldn't have said I was really the rugger-bugger sort of person.*	It is possible that he feels a sense on inferiority, as both his brother and sister have excelled at sport, while he feels he had little natural ability.
B31: *Growing up in the turbulent 60s played an important role. Hm ... hm ... I think particularly at Rhodes. I had leadership roles ... at school as captain of rugby and I was a prefect. I didn't shape at primary school, I hated my years at primary school. It was a nightmare for me.*	He believes growing up at a time when there were huge social changes taking place (the 60s) played a role in influencing his leadership. He had leadership roles at school.
B32: *High School I enjoyed. And you know I did well there, although I was very much ...mm you know, awkward teenager. You know moody and all that sort of thing ... the sort of Elvis Presley kind of thing of fifties (laughs) and then went to Army for 9 months, didn't enjoy that, but ended up a corporal. But ... sort of in the end when I look at this I think it was all those kind of senseless authoritarian bureaucratic things that really got to me ... and maybe that's why in the whole government system too I just ...*	He was a moody teenager. He did not enjoy military training; was a corporal. Was always in revolt against authoritarian bureaucratic structures.
B33: *I think so ... must be ... no I am [a rebel].*	He perceives himself as a rebel.

B34: *And then Rhodes, Rhodes I loved. Again I did well in rugby, and got a leadership role there. And ... then... I got involved with ah ... student Christian movement through two very or three people. Peter ... he was a priest then he was banned and all sorts of things, and John and James who now heads the film division down in Cape Town. Long grey hair, you'll see him at Festival times, guy with long grey hair.*	His University career included leadership roles in rugby, SRC. His involvement with the students Christian movement was influential. He remembers two people who were especially important influences.
B35: *And I had digs right next to his down here in Beaufort Street. And ah I got friendly with them ...and he said to me "Why don't you stand for SRC?" And again I'd never, you know, thought of doing anything like that but I thought oh well, why not? So I stood for SRC and got on the SRC, was educational counsellor and that also was very definitely a significant event in my life.*	Again, encouraged to take the lead by others.
B36: *And then I became ... politicised also for the first time having come from a family that was politically very conservative ... very, very ... And a school, of course ... so you know there was kind of an awakening, you know, at that time, and that's where I got into ... all the Kennedy stuff and you know ... Martin Luther King and all that ...*	Also a political and social awakening. Having come from a conservative background at home and school. He was influenced by Kennedy and Martin Luther King.
B37: Hm ... probably more ... ja. It was a social awakening too, in terms of the people I started to mix with.	It was also social awakening in terms of the people he mixed with.
B38: *No, I didn't really [think of myself as a leader]... I don't think I really thought about that, in the abstract. I mean I knew I was captain of rugby, and I was on SRC ... I didn't really have very much confidence in myself as a person. Very introverted, you know, every step was kind of, quite agonising. Hm ... Well I still think my personality is introverted rather than extroverted.*	He did not see himself as a leader, even while he occupied leadership positions. He perceives himself as having been lacking in confidence, and being introverted. His life seems to have been hard, emotionally.

B39: *No ... hm I've become much more comfortable with my own style. You know first I tried to be what I was supposed to be, ... and that was difficult. So I, you know, I've enjoyed finding who I am ...*

Today he accepts himself more easily; he is no longer trying to fit into a mould; he is comfortable with who he is.

B40: *I tried to fit all those things.*

At first he tried to fit the mould of school principal.

B41: *But again fortunately I was in an environment where I could change, and ...survive.*

His environment was supportive.

B42: *Yes. And I think I worked very hard to try and not be a typical ...*

Later he realized he had to be himself.

B43: *And I still ... just the beginning of this year, we have a new pupils' reception day and I was inside my office, and my desk is kind of this side of the wall, so if you stand in the door you sometimes can't actually see me. And a mother came with her little daughter in Std 1 and she stood outside the door and she obviously couldn't see me and she said to this little girl, "Right this is the principal's office, this is where you come when you are very naughty." I pounced out of there and I said "This is also where you come when you are very good."*

An example of how he tries to change parents' perceptions of the headmaster.

B44: *And she was so embarrassed. But that's the sort ... the perception you see. And I still work with that. I had a parent coming to see me last week, you know there'd been a cricket match that had been arranged for at the last minute and all the parents were up in arms about that and she came to tell me about that and the other parents won't come. I said "Why, because we do our best to say If you've got a problem come and talk." "Oh no because, you know, they're all frightened to come and make an appointment with the Headmaster." And I said "Alright thanks. Beginning of next term I'll set up a discussion group with the parents and really try and work with them."*

He perceives a gap between what the school clearly wants to encourage (in terms of parental involvement) and what the parents perceive. He wants to change this.

B45: *Well that's why I would see again that would be one of the most important roles that one has to, should play. Actually working with people, change those perceptions.*	He sees this - changing people's perceptions - as one of his most important roles.
B46: *I think there has always been something within me that has said, you know, I'll take a chance and try it, even though I might have been, you know, dead scared about it. But there are a lot of things in my life that have reflected that. Mm ... you know things like going for the SRC and, you know, just doing that. Things like applying for the job and becoming headmaster without any real...hm ...running Comrades' marathon - I really don't have the build to do that sort of thing; hm ... as a kid swimming across the Buffalo River, or diving off the pier and swimming to the beach ... you know? Or going overseas for two months, not ... you know, being prepared to travel around and go and visit schools ... you know, those are quite big things there. Going to world conferences, delivering a paper. Terrifying. No I certainly do deliberately challenge myself. M Ed. All those things.*	He has always been one for taking risks, and trying new things. He experiences these as accompanied by fear, but enjoys being challenged.
B47: *No ... I actually thrive on it. I've come to terms with the fact that, you know, I <u>can</u> do it, and I think that's been one of my biggest growing points. I used to fear that I can't do it and there's something paralysing about that. But now a lot of things in life, I <u>know</u> that I can do it. Ja because I've done it and I have the confidence that I will do it.*	He believes he thrives on challenge. The barrier to overcome is knowing that you <u>can</u> do it.
B48: *Ja ... ja I do [bottle things up]. Emotionally. Hm.*	He is inclined to keep to himself, emotionally. He is not a natural sharer.

B49: *One of my teachers has resigned hm over the sort of parity issue. You know, it's only emerging now, but you know Is everyone in the organisation having the same similar sort of hours, you see. And this has just arisen, we had a discussion about it and this young girl says "No I'm off." And this is what I'm going to have to talk through tomorrow. But now this afternoon, one of the breaks I was sitting there, and I was, you know I was thinking about it, going through my mind you know. And one of the others said to me "Ah you look like you've got the ... you know, the world on your shoulders," or something. And what I used to do a great deal was that I used to mull these things over and I probably won't sleep at night, and I'd think about it ... but then I used to go to school and I used to have that expression on my face and people would see Ooh, there's something wrong with Michael. And it's a terrible distancing thing. So one of the things I've tried to work is to ... you know I have smile on my face.*

He is aware that his appearance sometimes betrays his mental state. He is critical of this, as it may alienate other from him.

He tries to look happy.

B50: *Really used to wear my emotions on my face ... but then I didn't tell anybody what it was. And I'm also now far better about saying to people "Look, I've got a problem, I'm really worried about something" ... you know ...*

He is now more comfortable showing his true feelings, because he can tell people that he has a problem.

B51: *Ja ... I have actually done a lot of that [taking risks] and I think I'm good at that ... and I think a quite lot of people perceive me as being good at that. And I've actually got more comfortable in accepting that as part of my role.*

He thinks people perceive him as a risk-taker, and that he is good at it.

B52: *Ja I would say very definitely, but not specifically Christianity. And I struggle with formal religion. I would much rather engage in a dialogue about religious issues, than sitting in a church and having someone preach at me. You know ... the style of that ...*

He struggles with formal religion. He enjoys a dialogue situation, but dislikes the idea of a more formal ceremony.

B53: *Well ... well let me just explain something along those lines [spirituality]... In the year I got the post my father died in June and my wife's father died also ... cancer ... hm...*

His spiritual life is tied up with loss and grief; both he and his wife lost their fathers.

B54: *And so we as a family went through quite a traumatic experience. My wife went through a very bad experience ... bad crisis time. And then I got this job. And at the same time I also became very friendly with some people at St Pauls, and a whole lot of factors kind of combined that we used to go there to some of the services. And I think I went into the school saying, I must now try and be the Christian the headmaster is supposed to be because I was I think very much into being authentic but I think my view of being authentic was what was expected of me sort of thing ... and ja again trying to be something I wasn't. And this lasted for a certain period, and I like kind of almost took on the evangelical Christianity of the whole St Paul's community, aspects of which I find very attractive, I must say.*

The family went through a traumatic experience. His involvement with people at St Paul's, and his perceived need to be the Christian headmaster, led him to do what he thought he was supposed to do. He thought being authentic was being what one was meant to be.

B55: *Well yes it [church life] was ... it definitely was. Yes and still is [part of my role]... hm but that built up and after about a year and a half really again had a huge ... I just said "No this is not me" sort of thing hm ... and again over the years a lot of redefining has taken place in terms of that sort of role, for example the whole sort of worship at school is much more informal, and I think much more genuine and more just ... you know a sharing of ...*

The church life is still very important, personally and for the school, but he has redefined his role, as well as the form it takes in the school. It is now more informal and, he thinks, more sincere.

B56: *Yes I have remodelled it [the school].*

He believes he has remodelled the school to suit his style.

B57: *I see myself as a motivational leader, someone who strives to empower other people to develop their talents to the mutual benefit of themselves and the school; challenging staff and pupils to extend themselves beyond their perceived boundaries; and reflecting a positive, energetic and enthusiastic attitude within the school community.*

Michael sees himself as a leader who motivates and empowers teachers and pupils; he wants them to exceed their own perceived boundaries, for their own sake as well as the school's.

C: ELIZABETH - Meaning units

C1: *When I went into non-government community based stuff I think those six years that I'd done there absolutely changed ny whole view of life... it was a huge learning thing for me, a huge learning situation, an absolute mind-opener.*	Changing from formal school teaching to working for an NGO brought about huge changes for her personally. It was a learning experience.
C2: *I was very ... extremely stimulated by it. You sort of ... you live it hm as a lot of us were saying ... and often talking to other people in the same sort of position ... women in leadership positions in NGO's hm what comes through is that it's such a mind-boggling sort of experience being involved in real life as it were ... I mean I use that phrase often but it's a micro-cosm of exactly what SA's about and that's what it is.*	She experiences great stimulation. She feels it is life really, more than a job. She thinks NGO's are truer reflections of society at large.
C3: *This community of people who are poor, who are rich, who are black, who are white, who are uneducated, who are frightfully educated and who are whatever. It's, it's just so very rich in comparison. So when I look, from my experience, when I look at those two parts of my life I love both ... I was in both of them but, where, ja I was shaped largely was in the community-based stuff.*	Schools have largely homogeneous population - NGO is heterogeneous in every sense of the word - and much richer in comparison.

C4: *In … in the last teaching job I had when I look back at that I think that was the time when I was happiest … calmly happy. Not the most stimulated. But I … I had a really good life in the calm, whole sort of way and …Ja and it was lovely and really a great place for creativity and freedom to plan and do. I had a lot of that but that was because I was in the fine arts side first of all and everybody perceives that as being such a crazy thing it doesn't matter ja they're different and so on and then in pre-school as well where there's not a sort of a set syllabus and hm …*	She was happy and calm in teaching, but not stimulated. Even though she was teaching art in which there is much freedom. And also because she was in pre-school where there is no fixed syllabus.
C5: *I've always been in a sort of hm sort of seen as a very creative sort of side … art and so on … but in my last six years that's been the big thing … is making new and … making something new and hm really being extremely innovative, and hm … when you are you want to see what you're doing come to fruition.*	In the NGO she is more creative, conscious of making something new, being innovative.
C6: *So it's easy to say "I think this is a brilliant idea. Let's do it now! With little modification." But you can't … you know you can't do that. You've got to be very formal; well I have to be very formal about consultation. So much so now that (laughs) I find now that I actually can't work now without consulting. I'm so much in that habit. Or negotiating or whatever.*	In the NGO she has learned that one cannot proceed without consultation. You have to be very formal about consultation. She now can't operate without it.
C7: *Ja. Really … that vision business. To me it means that one must have a really far view - a far-seeing view of what could be. Ja.*	One needs vision, a view of a different future.
C8: *It's a different sort of leadership altogether - absolutely different. Sort of leading from the back much more.*	Her leadership role is less overt, less visible.

C9: *That's what I'm doing now ja ... I'm not in a position of authority ...now. I'm not the leader, with everybody following after me I'm the ... influencer. It means giving people space, e.g. planning to stay in a job for a certain time only and negotiating this.*

She is an influencer, rather than a leader.

C10: *Ja. A vision and not only seeing .. well that's the other thing too but pre-school field is perceived by most people as being a fairly narrow ... narrow field. You know it's hm pre-primary or it's 'criches' as it's called you know créches ... whatever hm ... and it's for women and it's bounded here by all those sorts of things but hm what I mean by the global thing is that ... I think very firmly that it fits into adult ... it's an adult education issue, and it's a community education issue, and it's a secondary school issue, and a curriculum issue obviously, and it's an in-service training issue. It's a teacher training well that's what I'm going into now as this INSET business ... hm ... it's that and it's everything really - so I suppose what I mean by global is that maybe it's much narrower than global. It's actually the centre of the thing and from there you move out.*

She has a very big picture of her field. Her vision is to see the full spectrum of education; pre-school is about every kind of education at all levels. It's a very big picture. She does not see boundaries and limitations.

A global view shows one the centre from which one works out to other areas.

C11: *The other aspect of leadership perhaps being manipulative.*

Leadership is manipulative.

C12: *It is [Machiavellian], but not if you state it, which in itself is being manipulative of course. (Laughter) I'd tell you where I was. I'd say, "This is where I am ... I'm at this point." I think it ties in with the business of writing an essay and saying that I come from this particular viewpoint. And so on ... Ja, I think even by declaring your own bias that you can be very manipulative.*

You need to tell people where you are, what you want to achieve - be open and upfront - but even that is a form of manipulation.

C13: *I think this is not true of me but of leadership in a way that if you know where you're going and you have this vision, then you've got to take people along with you and the methods you use to take people along with you are essentially manipulative, otherwise you wouldn't ...It's a constant struggle to be democratic and objective when really one would like to be autocratic and bossy.*

You can't avoid being manipulative if you want to take people along with you.

Being democratic does not come naturally or easily.

C14: *I don't know what charisma is. I mean I sort of have a ... gut feeling about it ... I sort of know what it is ... but I don't. I think if you're a people person, even if it's your shadow self or whatever ... Ja, I do. I do. Hm. I'm perceived as having that attribute.*

She thinks she has charisma; she is perceived as having it.

C15: *You know earlier I thought this was going to be dreadful interview because it sounded so jolly underhand but I think it comes from hm being able to whip people up (laughs) into some enthusiasm ...*

Charisma is being able to whip people up.

C16: *By being enthusiastic ... myself and by having a mad look in my eye ... and by being fairly unconventional. Being extremely motivated and showing this.*

Her charisma is enthusiasm, and being unconventional. It also shows in her physical appearance.

C17: *In the pre-school field, which is my closest and most recent thing, hm there are sort of five probable leaders, big ones ... you know it's what called the big five ... five people - well perhaps ten now because of the democratic nature of what's happening in the pre-school field - five or ten people, who I think are genuine leaders of one sort or another, but I can count up in small number the people who have got some sort of integrity hm I think that's important in a leader ... I mean regardless of manipulation. You can have integrity in the way you manipulate people as well, by being up-front with it, but hm but I think a lot of leaders don't have general integrity.*

Very few leaders have integrity - an important quality.

C18: *I was reading in a book - not a managementy sort of book but a ... what are those sort of journalistic books you were talking about ...about leaders and the person who wrote differentiated between driven and called leaders. He said driven leaders are people who are driven by some thing inside themselves which they're battling with. And therefore in their leadership role, what they're doing is attempting to get that right within themselves for themselves so it's quite selfish. Whereas a called leader is much more at ease with themselves, with himself or herself, and sort of knows more or less what the frightful things are and is quite happy with that, you know in a sort of human way, but is looking outside at the hm at the cause rather than the cause being ...*	She distinguishes between two kinds of leaders: driven and called. Driven leaders need to sort out something in themselves for themselves and are therefore quite selfish. Called leaders know themselves, are at ease with who they are; they are outward oriented.
C19: *In fact it's a bit like ... perhaps John the Baptist is a good example of a called leader, sort of leading from the back sort of business, thinking in religious terms.*	John the Baptist is a called leader.
C20: *(Laughs) No. See I'm a lapsed Anglican so I'm perfectly comfortable. (Laughs)*	She experiences her loss of faith comfortably.
C21: *But the reason for [being familiar with the leadership discourse] is not by reading or from the academic side but from the practice ...*	She has learned about leadership through practice.
C22: *Ja. I haven't read anything for five years. So I'm struggling.*	She does not read much.

C23: *I think because ... when people ... ever ... say anything about me ... which is not often I'm always quite surprised at what they say is their... how they see me, and it doesn't include ambition, and I am ambitious, I mean everybody is. I'm not ambitious to become the king of the watchamacallit - I mean not that kind of ambition at all. I am ambitious, I don't think that I'm ambitious for positional power in that way but I'm jolly ambitious to be involved in things or to be part of a solution in things.*	People don't see her as ambitious, but she experiences herself as such. She is ambitious, not for positional power, but to be involved in big issues and to help solve problems.
C24: *Oh yes. Adaptable, spontaneous, flexible, like to stay open to new experience ja without ... For a task to be finished. Yes. Ja I tend to ... Ja I tend to let somebody else do the bits. (Laughs)*	The qualities in her personality - spontaneity, flexibility, openness to new experience - leads to decreased task-orientation since she is happy to leave final details to others.
C25: *My positional authority, whatever it is, came from that, because hm how I was appointed into the post was in discussion with the whole staff and management board of the organisation without me; they decided, the whole lot, not just the three or four bosses or whatever.*	She has a mandate from the whole staff, so she feels she has credibility. She was not appointed by a few bosses.
C26: *Well it could be knowledge. It is a broad power base, it is a sha... I think it comes from possibly the fact that... ja one of them is a sort of technical authority, I mean a lot of knowledge and people recognising that, but the other one is hm... hm ...*	What gives her authority is knowledge. This is technical authority; people recognise that she know a lot.
C27: *You know in NGO's there's a lot debate all the time ... weakness people think - about things like that. There's a lot of debate about power and who's who and who said you can be there, who said you can be the convenor of this committee, or who said you can be on this committee, you know all the time. If you don't get asked that once a day, I mean if anyone doesn't get asked this once a day you start feeling insecure in a way.*	The broad power base continually questions itself; everyone is challenged (almost daily) on their right to be there, to occupy a certain position etc. One feels insecure when this does <u>not</u> happen.

C28: *Ja, and also because there's little accountability as well as an accountability structure of the same sort as there is in a government thing.*	Accountability works differently.
C29: *We are accountable to people, downwards, rather than upwards. Hm but there's not accountability upwards in the structure; there's no boss; there's no national or provincial boss or whatever. Your a local institutional business and that's where you ...*	NGO's are accountable downwards, rather than upwards. She experiences the sense of not having a boss as challenging.
C30: *I don't think it's a really weak way of being accountable. It's just a different way of being accountable, but it certainly allows you to have great freedom. But if you fail badly ...*	She experiences this as great freedom. On the other hand, failure is more serious.
C31: *To do with the creativity and innovation, you're constantly taking huge risks ... mm ... it's nice, it's lovely, the adrenalin just flows, but boy are you burnt out at the end (laughs).*	She thrives on the environmental challenge of taking risks. But she acknowledges how demanding it is.
C32: *Mm. Mm. I don't sleep at night easily. I find for myself if I'm very happy and calm I'm less creative, but I suppose that's true for everybody. In fact in my next job I'm ... I've got ... I'm thinking about two different sorts of job. I've been offered two interesting - very interesting things which has made me think about moving into another bit of education, and the thing that's worrying me most about taking either of those is Am I going to be stimulated enough in ... in either of them. Or should I just take the gap and take a couple of months off and ...ja.*	She experiences her creativity as something that keeps her awake. When she is calm and happy she is less creative. In trying to decide which new job offer to take up, she leans mainly on the single criterion: which is likely to be more stimulating?

C33: *I think it was where we lived, and how. My father was a principal of an adult training thing in forestry in Zambia, and we lived right out of town, far away from anywhere. And it was on very small settlement near the Congo border. We used to have to go 30 miles to school every day in a Landrover on horrible roads, and we were just very isolated and hm probably why I'm an 'I', and hm (laughs) ja it was very safe ... it was very safe there and we were able to ... my mother and father were not hm they guided us but they didn't overtly sort of teach us as it were. My mother particularly was very sort of laid back and said There you are my dear, do have a lovely day sort of ... and hm we had huge freedom to roam properly, I mean go right through the bush to the water gorges miles away on a bike and hm to go on a canoe in a dam, through the reeds by ourselves without ever saying anything to anybody - it's accountability again you see. And it was very ... it was quite wild I suppose and we didn't ever notice those dangers yet we had that ... I just think of the way my poor children are brought up which is in an urban situation, and in an unsafe situation really. Hm.*

She thinks her childhood had something to do with her present restlessness and need for change and challenge. The family lived on a forestry station in Zambia. They were very isolated. It was safe for her as a child to roam freely. There is a strong physicality in her recollections.

C34: *Ja, maybe it was that one ... if you grew up in a town or whatever there are many more rules guiding you, so perhaps it's a narrower, you can only think in this narrow sort of way because we didn't have those sorts of rules, but there were ... there was not so much red tape perhaps.*

She thinks perhaps if one grows up in a more restricted urban environment one is less likely to be free in one's thinking, and more likely to need rules.

C35: *It's not a gender thing in that case. But so I suppose generally maybe the stereotype is that women lead like that, it's a general thing. But in my experience if I had to count it up it wouldn't be so. No. Not in real life. I think it's more ... it depends on your life-view really.*

She does not see differences in the way women and men lead as a gender related. It depends on one's life-view.

C36: *I think the other part of it is that people think that women should lead like that, it may be a sort of moral compunction on women to lead like that, or people don't see further than their belief, their stereotype belief that women should be like that, so that perhaps if someone is looking at me who leads like that they may not expect something else from me.*

People have stereotypes of how women should lead; they expect to see women lead in a particular way and fail to see what's really happening.

C37: *I think it does definitely because when you're managing and leading and all those things that one is doing, a large percentage of what you're doing is counselling and listening and conflict managing and so on ... now I don't think you can do those things unless you bring in the spiritual dimension of that, not a church dimension or a Christian dimension at all, but s spiritual dimension, Now it it's your spiritual self ... ja it's your ... ja it's yourself and that's not about systems or ... Those systems help to guide you in perhaps giving you some parameters.*

Spirituality is essential in leadership. In the different roles you play you need to bring in the spiritual dimension. She does not include organised religion (the church, Christianity) as part of the 'spiritual dimension'.

C38: *In fact that's one thing that would characterise for me and other people about me is hm in my leadership style is always talking about principles, always, every day, because when you are doing all those things like solving problems and stuff, that's it ...*

Her leadership is very closely tied up with principles; they talk about principles all the time.

C39: *In fact the two readings that have most influenced me - since I haven't been a reader I mean I am normally a reader but I haven't been a reader lately are Training for Transformation, which is a Catholic Liberation theology type approach ... most extraordinary with Paolo Freire and all sorts of things fitted onto that - extremely spiritual, and the other thing was stuff like ... what's it - I can't remember the name of the book - stuff like A Different Drum. You know that sort of thing which says much the same sort of thing except in different language. But that sort of thing. And I keep thinking about John the Baptist, and spouting on about John the Baptist ... (laughs) that's a more overt one. He ended up with no head but anyway.*

Her recent reading has been spiritual in a general sense. She seems to be a little cynical about the Scott-Peck type of literature: They all say the same thing in different words.

John the Baptist again, as a strong role model.

C40: *Hm ... hm .... I think it's sort of pretty much on the down side. Ja. I mean, ja. I think it goes with my leadership style as a matter of fact, sort of leading from the back type style. I know where I'm good, but I don't think that I am good as it were. Ja, hm ... so generally speaking I'm confident in lots of things, in my knowledge perhaps, and in my ability to conduct certain processes, but if I had time I would probably think quite a lot whether I was doing more than surviving ...*

She is uncertain about her self-concept. She seems reluctant to claim glory for what she does - she leads from the back. She is confident about much of what she does but finds it hard to look at her whole life objectively and decide whether she's doing more than surviving.

D: JIM - Meaning units

D1: *One weakness mentioned by my wife was that I want to be democratic. I want to allow people to take responsibility on themselves, I'd like people to do that but I don't necessarily follow that to its logical conclusion. I want to intervene and see if ... it's as if my input, if it's not there it's not going to make that decision complete. That is why sometimes I would actually stop the classroom [reference to lectures] going, to make that last point ... because otherwise it would trouble me until I ... it seemed as though I hadn't tied up the package before everybody left. I often fear that tasks allocated would not be completed by those who took responsibility for them and therefore I end up doing too much myself.*

Jim experiences tension between the need to be democratic, and fully allowing the democratic process to take its course. He believes that as a leader he must mention everything he feels is important. He needs to have things completed.

He does not altogether trust others to do things as well as he can.

D2: *But it doesn't come from the feeling that they are not sufficiently empowered to do what you can do. It's more that it's out of either a desire of people to leave quickly, or to just terminate the proceedings, you know, and go away. They might often overlook some of the issues that I think would be important in a discussion. And so often I do that. I just like to raise those points up so that people can think before it ... before we leave.*

He does not feel people are unable to satisfactorily complete proceedings without his input. He thinks people are often in a hurry, and are anxious to end the meeting before everything that he thinks is important has been raised.

D3: *[I've held leadership positions] from a very tender age. I think the church became very instrumental in that. I was a youth leader there, Sunday school superintendent etc. when I was very religious you know? Not any more. But I think from there I moved into civic and student leadership, organising SRC on campus and ... so it just grew into that ...*

The Church was an early training ground for him as a leader. From there he moved naturally to leadership in civic and campus environments.

He seems naturally drawn to leadership roles.

D4: *I just feel there's something in ... in people that actually brings out that leadership in me you know. It's not as though I've learned it.*

People awaken his leadership potential.

D5: *I began to ask what it was I'm doing that allowed people to put on me responsibilities they didn't want to take on. Or in a group of people they would nominate me to take ... maybe become chairperson of a particular committee. And then I realized that possibly it's because ... maybe it's my commitment to that particular organisation...*	There is a suggestion that he is sometimes given responsibility because no-one else wants it. The qualities others recognise as leadership qualities are his commitment
D6: *or my experience of that field*	his experience
D7: *or my knowledge.*	and his knowledge.
D8: *[One of the most important qualities is] the ability to conduct a meeting.*	In Jim's leadership context the ability to chair meetings is an important skill.
D9: *The first time I chaired a civic meeting there were heavyweights at that meeting, you know. But I finished the meeting far before those meetings finished before that, and I got all the discussions going, and I was complimented about how well I could chair a meeting. And that was a real pep-up.*	His first experience of chairing a civic meeting was a success, even though there were some important people present. He was complimented, and felt recognised.
D10: *And how good a listener you are. You can listen to somebody and take the same question the person is posing and throw it to the same person for a response from that person and it's amazing, the same person will be able to provide an answer to the question he or she raised. That's what I think assisted me in my own leadership. I encourage discussion ... allowing people to ask the simplest and most redundant questions and giving them an audience ... a successful leader has to maintain participation. I insist on ownership of the problem. As long as the group believes the problem is theirs, we are on our way ...*	Part of the skill of running a meeting is getting people who ask questions to answer them. He calls this a listening skill. Participation is crucial - Jim ensures that it happens. From this flows ownership, which is essential.
D11: *I had a love for English. I had a love for drama. I like reading out things aloud and being Julius Caesar or being Martin Luther.*	He attributes part of his success to his love of English, drama in particular.

D12: *But I think the church played a very important part in this because in church we'd have to produce things and act them out, and we did this from a very young age...*

The church was an early training ground for public performance.

D13: *But I think what also helped was the involvement in community organisations where you had to make addresses. Now I've made a number of them through the NECC addressing a number of communities, and you know, large groups of people...*

So too was his involvement in community organisations where he had to learn to address large numbers of people.

D14: *The greatest moment for me was when I chaired the people's forum with Nelson Mandela. Then I could sense that people viewed me as a leader, because there were about 40,000 people there and you know that ... it's a people's forum where you had to locate people and ask them questions and relate this back to the audience ... and then I knew that I could stand the test of you know ... a large audience. They also raised some weak points but overall the feedback that I had was that I chaired it very well. In fact Mandela himself commented on that.*

His most significant recognition resulted from his chairing of a people's forum with Nelson Mandela. He could cope with the vast numbers and was complimented by Mandela.

D15: *Oh ja ... I've admired Mandela from the time I was at High School. I've written poems about him, I wrote him a letter when he was in prison. When I was in High School.*

Mandela has been a strong role model since he was in high school. He wrote him a letter, and wrote a poem about him.

D15: *And ... at times I would be one of few Indian people amongst this mass of township people, you know, we would be toyi-toying in the streets ... but that came naturally to me. Ja...*

He takes part in rallies and protests, and is sometimes one of few Indians present.

D16: *Mandela served as a role model even while in prison ... very much so. He was telling us how in prison people thought that they were in prison, so where is the struggle, you know? And he said the struggle was in prison itself... to change the hearts and minds of those prisoners, to organise, to uplift the morale of fellow-prisoners, to organise study classes, and he was the key person behind all that ... organising inside you know, organising inside... ja, it's amazing.*

He regards Mandela as a powerful role model. Mandela took up the struggle in prison. Mandela worked on transforming prisoners' hearts and minds.

D17: *But the kind of mysticism that was with him when he in prison is slowly translating itself into a* <u>*real*</u> *kind of worship for a man like Jesus who walked on the earth, you know. The most conservative of people, amongst the Indian community will tell you well here is a man we can trust you know. They won't trust the ANC but they'll trust Mandela. Because there's no bitterness in him, you know. I think it's a very good quality for a leader to have, even if it's put on.*

While Mandela was in prison people's admiration had an unreal quality; but now he is a reality. He compares Mandela with Christ.

He has everyone's trust.

Despite his years in prison there is no bitterness in him. This is a very strong leadership quality.

D18: *The only time I ever heard him say something untoward to somebody was on TV when he was interviewed by John Bishop, the first time he was out and John Bishop asked him a questions and Mandela was very offended and he said You see, you see that's what's wrong with you white people. That's the only time I heard him talk in racist terms.*

Mandela has only once been guilty of racist talk.

D19: *I think one of things that makes me successful is popularity, being recognised by people. Let's say, if you're in a grouping people must know That's Jim, he's the chairperson of the CRA, or he's with the NECC. It's better than somebody saying, who's this guy who's speaking there. So immediately your authenticity is stamped.*

Being known - physically recognised - is an important ingredient of his success. It gives him authenticity.

D20: *Sometimes it's embarrassing ... I've got this knack of not remembering people's names. And someone would say Hi Jim, and I would say Howsit, and then my wife would say you know that guy, and I would say I don't know, but just keep quiet. It's an embarrassing thing. And it's so important, if a leader's is to remain being a leader ...*	One of his weaknesses is his own inability to remember the names of people he meets. He thinks it is important for a leader to know others by name.
D21: *My mother is a very dominant ... was a very dominant woman. Hm ... she dominated over my father ... If it wasn't for her we wouldn't have a house to stay in now. Wouldn't have got educated.*	His mother was a strong role model in his youth. He feels indebted to her for what she sacrificed.
D22: *My mother was the ... was the push behind my whole success as a teacher, as a person really.*	His mother motivated him to become and be a successful teacher.
D23: *In fact I take after her in many respects.*	He is very like his mother.
D24: *She didn't have the chance of getting a good education you know, because she actually had to stop school to send her brother to school and university and so on. I think they're far more educated than we are.*	She sacrificed much for other family members.
D25: *I still go to church. Play the guitar there ... you know I love singing very much. My wife is a Christian. My two kids go to Sunday school. I go there ...*	He leads the singing in church, but really attends to support his family.
D26: *But it's going well ... it's become like a socially active kind of grouping you know. So that's my involvement, so I don't know how ... it doesn't really affect me in my leadership you know.*	He enjoys the social aspect of church attendance.
D27: *Morality plays an important role in leadership. Oh ja. I think it must. It must, it really must. I can't see a leader not being pushed into decision-making by certain morals, the morality that he has grown up with.*	Morality helps leaders make the right decisions.
D28: *I use the word 'pushed' because I think sometimes you comfortably get into a position which is convenient at that point in time. But morality pushes you. I think it does ... in my case it does.*	Morality prevents leaders from making decisions that are expedient.

D29: *Sometimes in leadership you very conveniently make decisions that would be good for a point in time, but might not be good for a larger group of people ... let's say for in terms of the PTSA's. The leader might make a decision where he satisfies students because he doesn't want a boycott in his school the next day, but the decision does not necessarily mean a correct one in terms of the community as a whole ... it might be a morally wrong decision to make. And so, if the leader wants to be true to that wider community then the decision he makes must be pushed by his morals. Otherwise, quite conveniently, he could just slip into that very easy mode of making decisions.*

An example of how morals can push leaders into making better decisions.

D30: *In terms of spirituality, I found it difficult sharing this with somebody in the group the other day. They asked me about me religious convictions and I said I find it difficult to believe you know ... I'd like to believe in something you know ... but it's just that I'm finding it difficult like ... I ... I ... don't like to be a hypocrite and say I believe when I really don't believe. There must be something different in you, you know. You must feel something inside, to actually believe it, you know. It's like that shaking of the foundations thing. I had all these ideas of church about God and so on and I really believed I was a born-again Christian. I used to sing and preach and all ...*

He is not sure that he believes in God, or a superior being. He would like to, but does not feel that he does and cannot say so before he does.

There was a time when he believed he was a born again Christian.

D31: *But then as I became involved in community activity and began to read Marx and began to read socialist literature, you get to look at the role of the church in the country and I began to find myself keeping away from church services and socialism to me meant more than just going to church and that sort of thing. But I guess if I do find the truth I'd be happy with it. Because actually I think it's a necessary part, but I don't believe that I must just say that I know the truth when I don't know it. I'm being untrue to myself.*

He began reading Marx and found socialism meant more to him than going to church.

D32: *A strange thing happened today. I was having breakfast at the cafeteria. Someone from the EE group ... I don't have much of a relationship with her ... but I just met her and got talking. She's from Namibia. She came up to me and said Jim will you do me a favour? I said what is it? She said will you read ... will to listen to me ... will you listen to my assignment ... my seminar I'm going to present this evening? So I said Hey, I don't know a damn thing about EE. She says I know that but I want you to listen anyway. So I said OK ... lunchtime. Now she waited for me lunchtime, she got hold of me, we sat under a tree, and she just rattled her assignment, I listened to her (humour in his voice here), I made a few comments, I chopped and changed a couple of the things for her and so on... but I asked her Why did you come to me? She said I don't know why but I just wanted to come to you know. But I felt so good because ... (laughs)*

He recalls an incident in which someone recognised his leadership qualities.

D33: *I think compromise is a good and bad thing. I think I'm more of a person who would like to see a compromise made so that we don't have ... eh... people involved in damaging conflicts. Hm? So rather than get two people maybe clashing, getting heads together, I'd rather make both of them happy. But it's not a good thing in the end because ... Both are losing. I've come to realise that.*

He experiences mixed feelings about compromise and conflict. He is essentially one who tries to avoid conflict, and settle for compromise. But he is beginning to doubt the wisdom of settling for a compromise, since both parties lose.

D34: *Yes! In fact that's true. I firmly believe conflict is a more positive thing. I'm slowly changing my attitude about the whole compromise.*

He is beginning to experience conflict as something positive.

D35: *My friends at school accuse me of being very accommodating. Accommodating of ... ironic, but of principals and management who are very ... against the ideas that we espouse. And we will be debating it, and we'll be winning the argument, and on a vote count we would win. But so as maybe not to ... you know he's the manager. So as not put the principal in a position where he feels absolutely let down I would then make the suggestion Listen, can't we just compromise the issue. And that just deflates the staff because we're close to victory, and then here comes Jim, you know ... And they accuse me of being too accommodating ...*	His colleagues find that he compromises too easily. He enjoys the struggle against management, but then settles for compromise to save the feelings of the manager. He expresses the argument in terms of a battle - 'victory'.
D36: *My first year of teaching I taught in the Transvaal, Benoni, I got involved with the principal, for six times in the year, over issues like he had the Navy Band. And I refused to send my class. Or my class had made banners saying "No to the Navy Band", you know. And I refused to come there myself, so he booked me for that. I collected clothes for the African people in Wattville, a neighbouring village, and I wrote a poem and we stuck them in each class, and he said I was a communist, you know. It's things like that you know ... I mean he couldn't take that ... I got involved with him, he pulled a gun for me, you know. (Laughs)*	He describes how his first year of teaching was characterised by situations of conflict with the principal, usually on ideological issues. He led the pupils' protest activities. The principal threatened him with a pistol.
D37: *It was on fundamental issues that affect children, children's decision-making ... that sort of thing. And I got involved with all principals. But I seem to have mellowed over the years. In the sense that I'd still pose ...these eh ... I guess it's just in my character that I can't keep quiet over injustices and all you know I found it to myself.*	He has to speak up when he senses injustice.
D38: *But what I find happening is that I won't stand up and say "Hey but you're talking bullshit," you know. I'd say "But you know Mr Principal, let's view it this way" (laughs). I think it's a better approach.*	His style has changed, softened over the years, but he is still confrontational.

D39: *I think it's the belief that people are people and ... they must be given the chance to be people. I think it's a belief I have that given the chance people will be able to bring out the best in themselves, whoever they are.*

He believes in people's basic goodness. People simply need the opportunity to show their goodness.

D40: *Well ... (laughs) not speaking theologically. Ja people are good. There's good in everybody. And what the leader must do is to try and identify the good that he has in his grouping, and it's amazing what he'll find, you know.*

D41: *I like teaching, but I don't think I'll enjoy managing a school. I think I'm more comfortable managing possibly a bigger concern than a school. Maybe a group of schools where I can ... get managers together and relate to them that way. I think I'll be more fruitful in that way than relating in a kind of hierarchical structure with deputy principals and HOD's ... I don't think I'll be able to handle that very well.*

He does not see himself as a principal, but perhaps as a manager of several schools. He doubts whether he could be comfortable with the rigid hierarchical structure of power found in schools.

D42: *I told you I was nominated on the ANC list in my region. I turned it down. It's not for me. I don't want to get involved in politics in the paid sense of the word. Somehow it dilutes your thirst for the struggle. Even if the ANC is in power, you'll still be a politico you know. You'll still fight against the ANC or any government where they are unjust. And I can see myself in a two or three years in time possibly going marching down the street against the present government saying Please we demand compulsory free education for 10 years or 12 years ... so I can't see myself going that way.*

He does not want to become a paid politician, since this will make it impossible for him to continue the struggle. He would like to be able to demonstrate, even assist the ANC is necessary.

D43: *My authority is quasi-legal. In a sense that it is recognised by people who would show their allegiance to that organisation. And eh... let's say in a forum where there are people who would align themselves with that organisation and people who would not, but come to that forum, if I can convince them of let's say my own standing as a leader then in their minds it becomes legal to them. So it becomes then a quasi-legal thing, at any point in time.*

His leadership exists through the organisation. The organisation gives him legal authority. But he personally plays a role in convincing others of his leadership.

E: PHINDIWE - Meaning units

E1: *I think I'm easy going in the classroom, although I do have some limits. The students should know how far they can go. Mm ..if I should use the word democratic ... democratic. I think I am a bit ... democratic but I haven't seen any ... if people take advantage of that I haven't seen students doing that ... no.*	She is a democratic leader in the classroom. She believes there should be limits.
E2: *No ... as a black person I can't say it's because that's how I've been led, but it's because that's how I would like to be led. So probably I say if I want to be led this way therefore it means I must also lead that way.*	She has not learned this style of leadership through her upbringing. Rather, it is her wish to be led in this way, so she leads in this way.
E3: *No ... we aren't very democratic. I think everybody accepts that. Laughs.*	Black people are not very democratic in their family relations.
E4: *Hm but growing up in a family you don't have a lot of say about quite a number of things. And in little things ... for example when I grew up I wanted to go to another high school. I wanted to do Home Economics. I couldn't make that decision. You know I wasn't allowed to make that decision. Although I realise that the decision that was made for me was probably a good one ... but you know ... (laughs) ... there was no discussion ...no explanation. it's common. Perhaps it's ... getting less common now, but it was common when we grew up.*	As a child she was not allowed to make decisions affecting her life. Her parents made decisions for her, without discussion or consultation. She thinks this style of raising children has been very common, but is becoming less so.
E5: *No I don't find it [democracy] difficult. It's when the students cooperate. If you explain things to them they know why you do things then they give their opinions and they cooperate.*	She finds it easy to run her classroom democratically. She explains what she wants, and accepts the students' opinions, and they cooperate.

E6: *No they are not finding it strange. Because students now are crying for democracy ... so that's what they'd like to have. Hm so long as they can see you do have some authority. You don't leave everything up to them. I think they don't feel uncomfortable about that.*	Students enjoy this because they want democracy. Yet they need to know that you (the lecturer) have some authority.
E7: *Yes I try to [set a good example to my students].*	She leads by example.
E8: *Your role as a teacher is to set an example more than talking ... so even if I didn't want to I'd be forced to set a good ... (laughs) Then I try to.*	She accepts this as her responsibility, which forces her to operate in this way even when she does not want to.
E9: *The students are divided into classes according to the subjects that they take. So you see them in a smaller classroom than you'd see them in a big lecture hall. So the contact is more or less ... you know more personal. But I suppose that's not only where the caring takes place. When students do come to me with problems I do try to help. Without going too much the other way. For example if a student comes to me ... if he has failed a test and somehow wants ... easy marks from me ... I'm able to show the student that I understand that he's unhappy about the marks, but I don't feel it would be any help to him if I gave them easy marks. So I encourage him then to do better in the next test ... and so on. I find that perhaps towards the end of the year they do come back and say, That talk was a help ... I improved.*	Because the students are divided into smaller sets she is able to have personal contact with them. That is how she able to show her care. But students also consult her personally, for example when they have failed a test, and she encourages them. This often has lasting effects.
E10: *One year they sent me card thanking me for making the classes fun. Sometimes the fun does not come more from me. It's just that I allow them... to make jokes or to ... make examples that perhaps other people wouldn't allow them to.*	Learning should be fun. She has a 'fun' attitude to learning. Her students seem to have more freedom to joke and have fun.

E11: *I don't see myself as such [a workaholic]. But sometimes ... (laughs). You know I believe that when I'm at school I'm supposed to be working there. So people will see me getting irritated sometimes when I want to work in the staffroom and then people are not working and perhaps taking my books and moving to the library. So they see me as a workaholic. But as soon as I go home in the afternoon if I'm not studying then there is less work that I have to do at home. So I don't know whether that would be a workaholic.*	She has regular work habits and a strong work ethic. She works hard when she is at school. This means that she often has to withdraw from others and find a quiet place to work , such as the library, as she finds the staffroom too noisy. The staff see her as a workaholic.
E12: *She [my mother] was a single parent, like myself. She ... unlike me she had three children. Although she was a bit strange ... you could always know that she was able ... you know when you're a single female parent then it becomes hard for you to raise up three children. But she did, and ... at least all of us were able to make it and ... although she was strange she was able to show that she cared. She didn't have much time to spend with us. She was a nurse, you know, the hours she kept. But I suppose it's that caring even when she was ... I realize now that she was probably most of the time very stressed ... but she could show that she cared.*	She identifies with her mother - also a single parent, but it is clear that there is tension in the relationship. She insists that her mother cared, but also acknowledges that she was 'strange'. She admires her mother; the fact she could raise three children single-handedly.
E13: *Ja, she [my daughter] does a lot of that [confronting and challenging me] (laughs)...she does a lot of that.*	Her daughter challenges her authority and makes her think about her leadership as a mother.
E14: *I don't read the bible a lot but whenever I read, I look at the way he [Jesus] led, and usually I am amazed or impressed by it. Hm ... it ... for example I think he stuck to what he believed in. So, if he thought something was right, he wouldn't do something because he wanted to please people. He would do something just because he thought it was right. So those are the things I like.*	Jesus is a strong role model; she admires the fact that he stuck to what he believed in. He did not try to gain popularity by his actions, but did the 'right' thing.

E15: *Ja. He [Mandela]... is old but he still goes after what he believes in. I might agree or I might not agree with it, but he goes after it. He's a hard worker. He's flexible. And I think he ends up getting what he wants. And also the mere fact that he spent a lot time in prison and you don't see any ... resentment from him. So it tells me that even if people treat you badly, it's part of life ... you don't stop being a leader, you find other ways to solve the problems. That's what I meant.*	She admires a similar quality in Mandela; he is old but still pursues his goal. She admires this single-mindedness. She also admires the fact that he has no resentment, despite the fact that he spent so many years in prison. She admires his continued efforts to lead.
E16: *Ja, I think [humour plays a role in my leadership]...*	She has a sense of humour which affect her leadership.
E17: *Ja ... I don't easily open up. You know people quickly put labels onto that ... so ...*	She regards herself as withdrawn, private. She seems afraid of being labelled if she is too giving.
E18: *Students don't see that so I find it's easy for me to lead them because they don't see my reserve. But somehow I think with ... with ... teachers ... some teachers they might as I say put labels onto that person ...they may decide that if I'm the principal I'm not very approachable. Perhaps initially that's how they would react.*	She is not reserved with students, however, and hence finds classroom leadership easy. She is not comfortable with confrontation.
E19: *But I'm trying to get out of it [being a poor listener]. Perhaps ... at times there will be quite a number of things ... in my head ... and I would find it hard to listen. Perhaps ... I don't know if I've really got poor concentration or, it should be something that really interests me for me to listen.*	She thinks she's a poor listener, perhaps because she is always so pre-occupied with her own problems.
E20: *But I think it's bad because if people are saying something I should listen ... it's important to them, that's why they are saying something.*	This is a poor quality. People deserve to be listened to.

E21: *I said at the beginning my leadership has been with students, more than it has been with teachers. So the first [earned authority] applies to students. I haven't had much experience with my colleagues to say where that authority [legal] comes from. But the first is more important to me if I would continue leading my colleagues then I think I should not only depend on the legal authority.*

She believes she has earned her authority; she would not like to depend on legal authority.

E22: *Hm ... right now I think I am in transition ... I have sort of been not very sure ... of myself. And like I said it's when ... when you know students react to you that they sort of give you confidence and you start asking yourself, Why are you not ... sure of yourself? So I think I am getting to be more positive about myself but not as much as I'd like to.*

Her self-concept has not always been strong; she thinks she is in transition now. Her students are affirming her belief in herself, and this is challenging her earlier feelings of inadequacy.

RHODES UNIVERSITY LIBRARY