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The Values of
Educational
Administration

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**Edited by Paul T. Begley
and Pauline E. Leonard**

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The Values of Educational Administration

This book is for Marilyn and Laurie

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Edited by

Paul T. Begley and Pauline E. Leonard

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Foreword

Harold Bloom, in his elegiac defence of *The Western Canon*, identifies 26 authors who, for their 'sublimity and their representative nature' (1996, p. 2) are, for him, canonical. Amongst them, one is central. Shakespeare, for Bloom, is 'the largest writer we will ever know...his powers of assimilation and of contamination are unique and constitute a perpetual challenge to universal performance and criticism'. But, in modern times, the canon as a whole, and Shakespeare in particular, is under attack—I find it absurd and regrettable that the current criticism of Shakespeare... is in 'full flight from his aesthetic supremacy and works at reducing him to the 'social energies' of the English Renaissance, as though there were no authentic difference in aesthetic merit between the creator of Lear, Hamlet, Iago, Falstaff and his disciples such as John Webster and Thomas Middleton (pp. 96, 3). Such a development represents a collapse of 'aesthetic value' in which 'things have... fallen apart, the centre has not held and mere anarchy is in the process of being unleashed...' (p. 1). In attempting to describe and account for this collapse, Bloom draws upon Giambattista Vico's notion, in *New Science* of 'a cycle of three phases—Theocratic, Aristocratic, Democratic... Vico did not postulate a Chaotic Age before the *ricorso* or return of a second Theocratic Age; but our century, while pretending to continue the Democratic Age, cannot be better characterised than as Chaotic' (pp. 1,2).

In proposing this last judgment, Bloom appears to have in mind a collapse which is not restricted to the literary and aesthetic. In this context, the fear that 'ethics', along with all other forms of knowledge which rest ultimately upon claims and statements about values, is not what it was, has been voiced at more or less regular intervals over the last two and a half thousand years. In this century, the growing hegemony of ideas drawn from modern, modernist and, most especially, post modernist thinking has ensured that it is being heard once again. And so it should be because there is a very real possibility that the extent, quality and nature of the discourse on values will, as the new age of chaos works its way through the contemporary historical epoch, be further diminished and trivialized. To illustrate the danger, I would point to three developments which have influenced thinking about values, and their place in the theory and practice of educational administration, over the last 50 years.

1.

That values are not fit subjects for meaningful discourse

This and related claims are usually justified in terms of the ‘verifiability principle’ which is at the heart of logical positivist thinking. Briefly, according to this principle, we can never have knowledge as opposed to opinions about matters which turn on values. In its most rigorous forms, logical positivism asserts that propositions which are not, in principle at least, objectively verifiable by appropriate observation are not to be regarded as either true or false but as meaningless. As such, attempts to offer evidence or argument either for or against such propositions are pointless. At best ethical, and aesthetic, propositions can be regarded as pseudo-propositions, which amount to statements of preference.

Such thinking was mediated to the field of administration, and subsequently to educational administration, by Herbert Simon; initially through his book, published in 1945, *Administrative Behaviour*. Simon did not deny the place of values in the world but, for the kinds of reasons identified above, believed that they were not susceptible to objective verification. As such, they were not proper subjects for study for social scientists and should therefore as far as possible be removed from the concern of administrators. Such a perspective entailed that students and practitioners alike should restrict their attention to the worthwhile and realistic task of producing objective, value-free knowledge of what worked in the administration of organizations, rather than in the pursuit of a self indulgent, and ultimately, vain search for subjective and value-laden prescriptions of what ought to be done.

The influence of these and related ideas, found their way into educational administration in the 1950s, mainly through the work of the group of scholars, notably Campbell, Getzels, Halpin and Griffiths, who came collectively to constitute what has sometimes been labeled as the ‘Theory Movement’. As Hughes (1985) puts it, this approach entailed ‘a determination to rely exclusively on a natural science methodology’ and its consequence was that ‘concepts used were to be defined operationally, i.e. their meanings were to correspond, as Herbert Simon had insisted, ‘to empirically verifiable facts or situations’. Value judgments as to the desirability of policies and behaviours were therefore to be firmly resisted in the new studies being initiated, which would concentrate on determining what *is* rather than what *ought to be* (Culbertson, 1965, p. 4).

These approaches seem to share two beliefs. First, that educational administration is properly a science and, as such, to do with what ‘is’, and not with what ‘ought to be’. Second, that propositions about what ‘is’ and what ‘ought to be’ are logically different and cannot be deduced one from the other (a view sometimes known as the ‘naturalistic fallacy’). Whilst most members of the theory movement accepted the validity of the notion of the naturalistic fallacy, many also had high hopes for science. More recently, some contemporary students of administration, and of educational administration, whilst rejecting the notion of the naturalistic fallacy, have nevertheless harboured similar and, indeed, in some respects, much grander hopes for science than ever did Dan Griffiths or Andrew Halpin.

2.

That science will eventually tell us all we need to know about values

Hughes in his account of the theory movement, has argued that it was characterized by ‘a significant infusion of new ideas, propagated by a new breed of able enthusiasts [including Jacob Getzels, Andrew Halpin, Ronald Campbell and Dan Griffiths] whose expertise in educational management was derived more from study and research in the social sciences than from long practitioner experience’ (1985, 11). They believed that the field should turn away from the study of practical problems and focus on research into theoretical issues. Theory, in this context, was to be closely defined. Halpin, for example, advocated Fiegl’s definition of theory as ‘a set of assumptions from which can be derived by purely logico-mathematical procedures a larger set of empirical laws. The theory furnishes an explanation of these empirical laws...’ (1951, p. 182). From this beginning, some eagerly anticipated a great leap forward. As Hughes (1985, p. 11) notes, ‘The ideal which Griffiths enthusiastically envisaged was the development of a general theory of human behaviour, within which the theory of administrative behaviour in education would be a sub-system. The natural sciences, and particularly physics, would provide the model, Kepler’s Laws of Planetary Motion being the prototype of the yet undiscovered laws of Educational administration (Griffiths, 1957, p. 388)’.

With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to exaggerate the extent to which the ideal of a hard science of educational administration, based upon a single and overarching grand theory, ever fully achieved paradigm status. In the United Kingdom, for example, and, indeed, in many other parts of the world, it found few adherents. Even within the United States there were always sceptics. By the mid 1960s, critics like Schwab were already arguing that ‘contrary to the burden of recent literature on administration, the pursuit of one sufficing theory of administration is a manifest impossibility in the foreseeable future, and an uncritical aping of the wrong model’ (1964, p. 47). Shortly afterwards, key members of the theory movement also began to voice their disillusion with what had been achieved and doubts about what was possible. Andrew Halpin was in the first of these categories. In 1969, 1972 and 1977 he published a series of papers which seemed to suggest that in the history of the theory movement it was people who had failed theory rather than that the theory had failed the people. Dan Griffiths was in the second. By 1966 he was already warning that ‘the search for one encompassing theory (if anyone is searching) should be abandoned... We have learnt that a more modest approach to theory pays off’ (quoted in Baron, Cooper and Walker, 1969, p. 166).

Griffiths, was later to acknowledge that the final demise of these early hopes ‘came at the 1974 meeting of the IIP in Bristol... The *coup de grâce* was delivered by Greenfield who made an across-the-board denunciation of every aspect of the theory movement’ (1988, p. 30). Some years later, Griffiths was to qualify this first assessment. In doing so he suggested that whilst Greenfield’s critique of the theory movement was ‘clear, strong, consistent and emotional’ his attack ‘was actually on a narrow segment of the movement—that is, the handful of theories developed by American scholars in the late 1950s’ (p. 152). He also argued that although Greenfield’s ‘critique deepened over the years...it did

not broaden... It started as an attack on the Theory Movement... and that is what it remained' (p. 152).

Evers and Lakomski take a different view. Having attested to the power and importance of the arguments which Greenfield had presented in 1974, they claim that in the years after Bristol, he had 'broadened and deepened his critique. In an impressive set of papers...he has sought to develop a systematic view of social reality as a human invention, in opposition to the systems scientific perspective of social reality as a natural system. He has constructed strands of argument on the nature of knowledge, on administrative theory and research, on values, on the limits of science, of the importance of human subjectivity, truth and reality...the magnitude of his undertaking and a corresponding elegance of argument make his work the most important theoretical development in recent educational administration' (1991, p. 76).

The papers to which Griffiths and Evers and Lakomski refer, appeared at regular intervals in the 19 years after Bristol and revised versions of several of them are collected together in Greenfield and Ribbins (1993). In 1980, Greenfield published *The man who came back through the door in the wall: Discovering truth, discovering self, discovering organizations* which he came to believe summarized authoritatively key aspects of his thinking. The paper took the form of a *prolegomenon* for a new study of organization. This, he stressed, was not presented as 'a blueprint of organizational reality or as hypotheses that can be confirmed or disconfirmed by empirical facts alone. The claim for them is only that they weave together what some people have defined as the limits of knowledge with what others have experienced as the reality of organizations'. They attempt to 'forge a coherent but necessarily incomplete argument about the nature of organizations and the possibility of inquiry into them'. The *prolegomenon* has *nine propositions*: That organizations are accomplished by people and people are responsible for what goes on in them; that organizations are expressions of will, intention and value; that organizations express becoming and not being; that facts do not exist except as they are called into existence human action and interest; that man acts and then will judge the action; that organizations are arbitrary definitions of reality woven in symbols, expressed in language; that organizations expressed as contexts for human action can be resolved into meaning, moral order and power; that there is no technology for achieving the purposes which organizations are to serve; and, that there is no way of training administrators other than by giving them some apocalyptic or transcendental vision of the universe and of their life on earth (1993, pp. 103–113). Such a statement represents a powerful affirmation of the place of values in the theory and practice of educational administration. In making it, Greenfield was committed to defending the notion of the naturalistic fallacy and to contesting the view that science, traditionally conceived, represented the way forward for the field.

In this context, and notwithstanding the generous acknowledgment of Greenfield's achievements, Evers and Lakomski, whilst rejecting what they regard as its foundationalist preconceptions, do appear to share some of the key aspirations of the theory movement. Their views, sometimes known as Australian naturalism or naturalistic coherentism, have been developed at length (1991, 1996). They claim to be able to offer a solution 'to the current stand off' in the field of educational administration which entails 'neither a return

to traditional science [as advocated by the members of the theory movement], not the acceptance of multiple paradigms with their many world views [as advocated by Greenfield and his allies] which fragment the research enterprise, but to develop a new science of administration. Our new science is justified by a coherentist epistemology that is the best available alternative to foundational theories of knowledge...' (1996, p. xiv). Underpinning such a conception of new science are some sweeping claims about the possibilities of neuro-science in the years to come. On this Evers and Lakomski's express some surprise that 'while there seems little disquiet over neuro-scientific explanations regarding more mundane human activities, the level of scepticism rises sharply where such issues as human subjectivity and culture are included as contenders for neuro-scientific explanation' (p. xvi) and are puzzled that 'at a time when scientists are beginning to unravel many of the traditional mysteries of what goes on inside a person's head, that is, beginning to find causal accounts for human action, our naturalistic programme is considered to be 'reductionist' in the sense of de-humanizing' (p. xvii).

If such ideas can be regarded as a prolegomenon for a new 'Ionian Enchantment', Evers and Lakomski are by no means alone in advancing them. Thus, for example, Edward Wilson, the American biologist, who has been described as one of the world's greatest living scientists, has called for consilience. This postulates the existence of an underlying and fundamental unity to all knowledge—of the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities—in which everything in our world, indeed within our universe, is shaped by a small number of fundamental natural laws that comprise the principles underlying every branch of learning. As Wilson puts it, 'the central idea of the consilience world view is that all tangible phenomena, from the birth of stars to the workings of social institutions, are based on material process that are ultimately reducible, however long and tortuous the sequences, to the laws of physics' (p. 266). Wilson's claims, like those of Evers and Lakomski, are presented essentially in the form of an undated promissory note. He is at pains to acknowledge the enormity of the task involved if the project he envisages is to be brought to a successful conclusion. He recognizes, like Evers and Lakomski, that 'such reductionism is not popular outside the natural sciences' (p. 227). It is certainly not popular in the social sciences and is even less so in the humanities.

3.

That values are not respectable topics for sophisticated modern discourse

Some commentators have claimed that the spirit of the contemporary age is characterized by a reluctance to engage in discourse, serious or otherwise, about values and when such talk does take place it is often impoverished. Why this should be so is described and explained in a variety of different ways.

James Wilson, in *The Moral Sense*, describes the spirit of the age as deeply sceptical. It is an age in which 'science has challenged common sense'; one theory of science holds that we can never have knowledge, as opposed to mere opinion, about morality. Anthropologists have shown how various are the customs of mankind. The dominant tradition in modern anthropology has held that those customs are entirely the product of culture, and so we can conclude that man has no nature apart from his culture.

Philosophers have sought to find a rational basis for moral judgements; ‘the dominant tradition in modern philosophy asserts that no rational foundation can be given for any such judgement’ (1997, p. viii). With this in mind, Wilson asks ‘whether the mirror that modern scepticism has held up to mankind’s face reflects what we wish to see?’ (p. x). He believes most ‘ordinary men and women...wish to make moral judgements but their culture does not help them to do it. They often feel like refugees living in a land captured by hostile forces. When they speak of virtue, they must do so privately, in whispers, lest they be charged with the grievous crime of being “unsophisticated” or, if they press the matter, “fanatics” [...] Our reluctance to speak of morality and our suspicion, nurtured by our best minds, that we cannot “prove” our moral principles has amputated our public discourse at the knees’ (pp. x, xi).

Wilson draws upon his experience of discussions with college students asked to make and defend moral judgments to illustrate and explain what he means. Many, he suggests, ‘will act as if they really believe that all cultural practices were equally valid, all moral claims were equally suspect, and human nature is infinitely malleable or utterly self-regarding... If asked to defend their admonitions against “being judgmental”, the students sometimes respond by arguing that moral judgements are arbitrary, but more often they stress the importance of tolerance and fair play’ (pp. 6, 7). As an attack on the deficiencies of ‘cultural relativism’, these views echo those advanced a decade earlier by Allan Bloom. In *The Closing of the American Mind*, Bloom acknowledges that ‘men are likely to bring what are only their prejudices to the judgement of alien peoples. Avoiding that is one of the main purposes of education. But trying to prevent it by removing the authority of men’s reason is to render ineffective the instrument that can correct their prejudices. True openness is the accompaniment of the desire to know, hence the awareness of ignorance. To deny the possibility of knowing good and bad is to suppress true openness’ (1987, p. 40). He identifies two kinds of openness: ‘the openness of indifference—promoted with the twin purposes of humbling our intellectual pride and letting us be whatever we want to be, just as long as we don’t want to be knowers—and the openness that invites us to the quest for knowledge and certitude, for which history and the various cultures provide a brilliant array of examples for examination’ (p. 41). Sadly, whilst ‘openness used to be the virtue that permitted us to seek the good by using reason. It now means accepting everything and denying reason’s power. The unrestrained and thoughtless pursuit of openness, without recognizing the inherent political, social, or cultural problem of openness as the goal of nature, has rendered openness meaningless’ (p. 38).

What are the implications of all this for the future of discourse on values? Wilson claims that ‘Most of us have a moral sense but have tried to talk ourselves out of it’ (1997, p. ix). Given the intolerance of the new age of tolerance, people tend to ‘flinch...at least in public’ from addressing fundamental questions about values (p. xi). As commonly used today, the ‘word “values” finesses all the tough questions. It implies a taste or preference and recalls to mind the adage that there is no disputing taste’ (p. xi). This is a bleak conclusion but, as Wilson also stresses, ‘we don’t really mean that our beliefs are no more than tastes, because when we defend them—to the extent that we can—our muscles tighten and our knuckles grow white. Arguments about values often turn into fights about values... That is not the way we discuss our taste for vanilla ice cream’ (p. xi).

Does such passion have a relevance to educational administration? On this, and for once, the views of my own most influential mentors are not easily compatible. Thomas Greenfield was not altogether optimistic. Reflecting upon the training of educational leaders he noted that:

‘One of the things I have sensed in speaking to leaders in education, is how impoverished their real world is. They don’t see beyond a narrow horizon. They don’t see the problems of education, except in rather technological terms, or if they do see it, if they talk about it in larger terms, they are sentimental and platitudinous. We need leaders in education who can think about the larger issues... But it will be an uphill struggle to bring them to such a contemplation... The headlong pressure to act, to do, to be the leader militates against a reflective attitude—a stance that is need for the growth of worthwhile values, of character. That is what I see as the ultimate in the nurture of leaders through training. It would be aimed at... fostering awareness of values and of the value choices that face them, and thereby perhaps assisting character growth.’ (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, pp. 258, 259)

This account does not square with Christopher Hodgkinson’s experience of training administrators in educational or other fields. As he notes: ‘From the beginning I have had an obsession with administrative man and the concept of values. Real life administrators are often thought to have a minimal attention span, a contempt for all things intellectual and a pride in their tough images, but I have found that when you start talking about values you can establish an instant rapport with them. Values are the key to their interests. They know what you are talking about. You are onto something which is important to them’ (Ribbins, 1993, p. 15).

My sympathies lie with Hodgkinson. Many years of involvement with school principals and other educational leaders have taught me that values are important to them. Almost all those I have interviewed for my books on headteachers and headship in primary, special and secondary schools (Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Rayner and Ribbins, 1999; Ribbins, 1997; Ribbins and Marland, 1994) talked fluently and enthusiastically about their efforts to achieve a shared vision for their schools, and of the struggle to clarify and apply their values as leading educators in practice. One example must suffice, particularly as it is located somewhere between the views of Greenfield and Hodgkinson and since it speaks to so much of the rest of what I have had to say earlier. In my discussion with him, Brian Sherratt, headteacher of the largest school in the United Kingdom, stressed that

‘building the ethos of the school and...working it daily’ was absolutely crucial. Such an ethos, he emphasized, must be expressed in the values and procedures of the school. It is ‘because we have these values, this is the way we do these things... On the whole teachers are not very happy with philosophical talk. They tend to say “That is philosophy, it’s nothing to do with...the realities of the job”; but it can be, and if they can see the principles which drive the institution the way the institution wants to do things, and this can be broken down into the things they do in the

classroom and the yard...they will accept that this stress on values can be helpful'.
(Ribbins and Marland, 1994, p. 170)

In summary, given the paucity of published texts which focus specifically and in depth, on values, or even on ethics, morals, or politics, in educational administration it probably invites hubris to speculate upon the status of the canon. Even so, a growing number of scholars, many of whom have attended the conferences on 'Values and Leadership in Education' and are represented in this book and its accompanying volume, have made an important contribution to thinking on these and related topics. It might also be widely accepted that at least one of these scholars, Christopher Hodgkinson, in what I think of as his 'Victorian Quartet'—*Towards a Philosophy of Administration* (1978), *The Philosophy of Leadership* (1983), *Educational Leadership: The Moral Art* (1991), and *Administrative Philosophy: Values and Motivations in Administrative Life* (1996)—may already have achieved canonical status.

What is surely certain, is that the field owes an considerable debt to Paul Begley, and to his colleagues at the Centre for the Study of Values and Leadership at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, and its affiliate the University Council for Educational Administration Centre for the Study of Leadership and Ethics of the University of Virginia, for organizing the series of conferences from which this collection and its companion volume *Values and Educational Leadership* have been derived. Such events are important vehicles for enabling and encouraging discussion about the meaning and relevance of values in the study and practice of educational administration. Their importance should not be underestimated; without them, as Bloom puts it, 'the shadows lengthen in our evening land, and we approach the second millennium expecting further shadowing' (1994, p. 16). On the last day that I spent with him, Thomas Greenfield said to me, as the long series of conversations which prefaced our preparation for his only book drew to a close, 'a more balanced judgement of my work will surely be possible after the results of the program we are engaged in here appear... After its publication, I would hope to hear the opinions of those who may bring an open-mindedness to the issues and ultimately a balanced appreciation of them. *De quistibus non est disputandum*. I am willing to let the matter rest with a "trial by what is contrary" as Milton has described the process of truth making' (Greenfield, T. and Ribbins, P., 1993, 267). Such a hope expresses exactly my expectations for *The Values of Educational Administration*.

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Introduction

Some might ask why study values or, why connect values and educational leadership at all? Christopher Hodgkinson's answer to the values question is,

...educational administration is a special case within the general profession of administration. Its leaders find themselves in what might be called an arena of ethical excitement—often politicized but always humane, always intimately connected to the evaluation of society...it embodies a heritage of value on the one hand, and is a massive industry on the other, in which social, economic, and political forces are locked together in a complex equilibrium of power. All this calls for extra-ordinary value sensitivity on the part of educational leaders. (1991, p. 164)

There are other pioneers of the field equally convinced that a values perspective is essential to educational administration. These include Starratt (see [Chapter 2](#)) and Willower (see Begley, [Chapter 4](#)), and although it would be safe to say that all the contributors to this book agree on the importance of values as a topic for inquiry, beyond that, some quickly part company. Evers ([Chapter 5](#)) and Lakowski ([Chapter 3](#)) propose coherentist perspectives as a comprehensive and epistemologically justifiable foundation for a philosophy of educational administration. Willower (see Begley, [Chapter 4](#)) is more in favour of Deweyan pragmatism. Hodgkinson ([Chapter 1](#)) believes scholars should be studying the problems of emotions, ethics and ego. Ryan ([Chapter 7](#)) reminds us that it is a post-modern world. Finally, those with practitioner orientations (i.e. Begley, [Chapter 4](#); Gronn, [Chapter 9](#); Leonard, [Chapter 6](#); Shakotko and Walker, [Chapter 12](#)) prefer a situated problem-based approach, or to focus on the resolution of value conflicts in specific contexts. The overall effect is to illustrate that theory and research about values and leadership are still very much works in progress. The field remains fragmented at this time, and although many academics are now actively engaged in dialogue with each other, there is still no strong consensus on the nature and function of values as influences on administration.

Newcomers to the literature on values may find this on-going academic ferment intimidating and complex. To help initiate readers to the debates, it may be helpful to table several propositions. While not all the contributors to this book accept these propositions as true, they nevertheless highlight some of the key issues. Proposition one is

that organizations are essentially social constructions, not necessarily perceived by all individuals in the ways intended by organizational leaders and managers, or those with vested interests in that organization. Furthermore, these social constructions we call organizations are driven, animated or operated by people, often a small number of people whose interests the organization serves. Proposition two states that as interesting as it is to analyze and describe the values manifested by organizations, inevitably the organizational meta-values of growth, profit, maintenance and survival will prevail, often at the expense of individuals who become pawns or are treated as expendable resources. People and their well-being ought to be treated as ends not merely as organizational resources, a tendency that probably started with the Industrial Revolution when labour and identity began to be traded for wages on a large scale—and a pattern which continues today despite our frequent rhetoric about collaboration and increasing concerns for the development of moral or good organizations. Proposition three, perhaps the most hotly debated, states that as wonderful as the advances of science may be, particularly in the area of mind-brain studies, they will only in the end explain the *how* not the *why* of human enterprise, and they will never be capable of 100 per cent prediction of human intentions or actions. There is one final proposition, and on this most of the contributors would agree. It states that the transcending agenda of theorists, researchers and practitioners of educational administration should be to do the following: promote reflection by individuals on personally held values (the examined life); followed then and only then by promoting a sensitivity to the value orientations of others, individuals and groups; and thirdly encouraging a sustained dialogue among all people as the only hope of reconciling certain tragically persistent values conflicts between and within societies. Otherwise people are doomed to keep repeating the mistakes of the past over and over again.

This book is organized in three sections totalling 15 chapters. To summarize briefly, the first section of the book, comprised of five chapters, is devoted to theoretical and conceptual perspectives. Both the traditional debates as well as several intriguing new perspectives are presented. Four of the chapters in Section One are authored by giants of the field; Hodgkinson, Starratt, Lakomski and Evers. Hodgkinson (University of Victoria, Canada) is best known for his subjectivist orientation to administration, something he has termed 'the moral art'. Starratt (Boston College, USA), a well-known American scholar, writes prolifically on the subjects of moral, ethical and visionary leadership. Evers (Monash University, Australia) and Lakomski (University of Melbourne, Australia) are best known for their coherentist contributions towards the formulation of an epistemology of educational administration. The fifth contributor to this section is Begley (OISE/ UT), co-editor of this book, a mid-career academic and relative newcomer to the field. He contributes a strong practitioner orientation to the theoretical and conceptual debate on values and valuation processes.

The second section of the book, composed of four chapters, is devoted to reporting the findings of recent research on values and valuation processes in educational settings. The contributors include two respected international scholars, Peter Ribbins (University of Birmingham, UK) and Peter Gronn (University of Melbourne, Australia). Their two chapters (8 and 9 respectively) reflect the ethnographic perspectives for which they are best known. Ryan (OISE/UT), like his Values Centre colleague Begley, is a mid-career

academic who is concerned with issues of equity, minority culture issues, and language (see [Chapter 7](#)). Leonard (University of Saskatchewan), a newcomer to the field and co-editor of this book, contributes a chapter based on her ground-breaking research on the culture and values of school communities (see [Chapter 6](#)).

The third and final section of the book is devoted to a more highly focused discussion on particular topics and issues. In many respects the discussion in these chapters reflects the intersection of theory and practice, hence the adoption of the word praxis in the section title. A total of six chapters make up this concluding section. The contributors are several promising young scholars as well as established authorities. The newcomers to the field with important things to say are Lafleur ([Chapter 10](#)), Carlin and Goode ([Chapter 11](#)) and Shakotko ([Chapter 12](#)). The other contributors—Walker ([Chapter 12](#)), Beck ([Chapter 13](#)) and Bossetti and Brown ([Chapter 14](#))—are all established academics. A concluding chapter by co-editor Leonard speculates on an agenda for future theory building and research in the field.

The chapters that make up this book began as papers delivered at the annual Values and Educational Leadership Conference which, since 1996, has alternated between Toronto, Ontario and Charlottesville, Virginia. This conference, usually held in October, is sponsored by the OISE/UT Centre for the Study of Values and Educational Leadership in Toronto, and its University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) affiliate, the Centre for the Study of Leadership and Ethics, based at the University of Virginia. Both research centres were established in 1996 and are devoted to the promotion of theory development and research on the subject of values and valuation processes in educational leadership situations. The 1996 Values and Educational Leadership Conference was an inaugural event that brought together an impressive international team of philosophers, theorists and researchers in the field of values, ethics and leadership. This original group, as well as an expanding network of associates, has continued to meet annually and the annual conference is rapidly becoming an institution. This book presents the outcomes of these most productive gatherings in the form of updated, expanded and synthesized versions of the best among the original papers.

It is the hope of the authors that this book will satisfy the primary audience for which it was intended: university faculty, graduate students and experienced educational administrators. The book is highly recommended as a text in support of the increasing number of graduate level courses focused on the topics of values, ethics and moral leadership. Finally, Begley and Leonard, representing the contributors, wish to express their thanks and appreciation to the editors of the Falmer Press for accepting this book for publication. The authors count themselves privileged to be associated with this very fine publishing house.

Paul T. Begley, OISE/UT
December 1998

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Part I

Perspectives on Values and Educational Administration

The Triumph of the Will: An Exploration of Certain Fundamental Problematics in Administrative Philosophy

Christopher Hodgkinson

An incompetent leader—a value judgment

An impotent leader—an oxymoron

These semantics are instructive. Innumerable assertions, laudatory or pejorative, can be made about the executive, the administrator, the leader—but what cannot be said is that the office, the role or its incumbent is without power. This drives home to us what we already know at the deepest level, even though it may take some semantic conjuring to raise it to the surface of consciousness. What is then revealed is the absolute necessity for power in administrative affairs. *Power is the first term in the administrative lexicon* (Hodgkinson, 1982, prop. 6, p. 2).

Without defining, or confining, this primal concept of power, it may be said that it is the human analogue of the physical science term energy, that is, the ability to do work, to accomplish ends. But in administration, in human affairs as opposed to the simplicities of physics and mechanics, power is much more. It is above all else the ability to impose one's will. Here the contrast with natural science is revealing. In physics power is equivalent to force and is measurable in quantitative terms such as watts, joules, ergs, or pounds per square inch. But physical events are not human events. At most they are only components of human events. In science one presumes a determinism, a mechanism, a law of causation—notwithstanding that at the quantum level of analysis (that is, subatomic particle physics) strange paradoxes and 'irrationalities' are observable that seem to defy our ordinary understanding of cause and effect. In human events a new factor appears. In addition to the mechanistic-deterministic laws of cause and effect to which human beings are themselves subject, there is now introduced a concept of will or voluntarism. Thus the human agent in the total equation of determining forces is felt to possess a freedom of choice—whether that sense of freedom is illusory or whether or not it is an epiphenomenon, a psychological by-product of unconscious vectors that are the real determinants. Administration cannot exist without either the reality or the illusion, and science itself stops short at the edge of voluntarism, at the frontiers of conscious choice. For this reason a distinction between administration and management is essential (Vickers, 1979, p. 229): the former opening upon the limitless horizons of philosophy, the latter upon the restricted field of vision right and proper to science and technology.

It follows that administration is a form of life in which wills enter into a complex domain of conflict, reconciliation and resolution. In other words, administration is politics: the creating, organizing, managing, monitoring and resolving of value conflicts, where values are defined as concepts of the desirable (Hodgkinson, 1991, pp. 94–6). In principle or in theory the accomplishment of administrative ends, goals, targets, aims, purposes, plans and objectives is no more than the imposition of a putative collective will upon the resistant and countervailing forces of matter, circumstances, materials, resources and contending *wills*. To be without will would be to be without power and, conversely, to have power is to have the ability to *impose* will. And here for the tender of heart and the already disaffected it may be allowed that ‘to impose’ can also be rendered as ‘to change’.

The Will to Power

At this point one may consider a deeper motivational concept: the will to power. This formulation is central to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche¹ although its origins can be traced through his mentor Schopenhauer (the will to life) back to Vedantic Indian philosophizing about the life-force and the eternal dynamic of creation, preservation and destruction.² Less metaphysically and more simply, in administrative terms it can be said to refer to the primal maxim; self-preservation is the first law of nature. I have represented this elsewhere as the first of the metavalues (Hodgkinson, 1982, pp. 180ff.).

How does the will to power bear upon administration? It does this in obviously fundamental ways. For example, inasmuch as administration is an attempt *via* organization to control the future, it is a *philosophical* activity:

Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, ‘thus it shall be!’... With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their ‘knowing’ is creating, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is—will to power. (Nietzsche, 1976, p. 211, author’s emphasis)

Conway expands upon the theme in this way: ‘As commanders and legislators, they must introduce order and discipline into the formless economy of Nature, thus “correcting” for Nature’s profligacy. Toward this end philosophers legislate a hierarchy of values that both promotes the flourishing of certain forms of life and excludes other forms...’ (Conway, 1995, pp. 39–40). This point is directly relevant, we may note, to postmortem and politically correct conceptions of inclusion. The *will* referred to here is, of course, despite the totalitarian nuance, the nomothetic will, the will of the collectivity. Corporations, organizations and nations can in this sense be said to be imbued with the will to power.

But now the problem of will has ramified. It can be seen as deriving from the individual, from the group and, as Weber made specific, from the environment, culture and *Weltanschauung* (Weber, 1948, pp. 120–1; Roth and Wittich, 1968, pp. 24–5). In essence Weber argues that, on the one hand, the administrator takes cultural values as given and is, for example, ‘politically correct’ in the contemporary sense. This would

allow the administrator to assume the mantle of self-righteous 'responsibility' and to steer a satisficing course to given ends as per the doctrine of H.A. Simon (Simon, 1965, pp. 38–41, 240–4). On the other hand, the administrator may embody convictions (and commensurate will) towards ends which may or may not be either cultural or those of the corporate entity he represents. This leads to the potential for 'irresponsibility' or bureaupathology, as when the interpretation of orthodoxy (*Weltanschauung*) is appropriated by the leader.³ Will to power here acts as an administrative countervailing force to the downward impress of cultural and organizational dictates. Yet even in the case of the administrative factotum-administrator as Simonian agent *simpliciter*—will to power as a depth motivation is a powerful determinant in the overall collective equation.

Grand Assumptions

Granted that administration is the very business of power, that power is its preeminent characteristic, it is somewhat curious that (with a few exceptions, notably Machiavelli) the standard literature glides so smoothly and blandly over the problematics of power. Two very deep-seated assumptions seem to underlie this phenomenon; assumptions so entrenched and buried that they might be regarded meta-assumptions,⁴ or assumptions at the unconscious level that pass without question, scrutiny or examination. Before we examine them, however, it should be repeated that these are assumptions in the literature, in the theory of administration, in the conventional wisdom and orthodoxy. It should also be noted that the assumptions selected for critique are only two examples of presumptive error in administrative thought and praxis; others such as the naturalistic, homogenetic, militaristic and excisionistic fallacies have been dealt with elsewhere (Hodgkinson, 1996). The first of these meta-assumptions or presumptive fallacies is that 'We are all honourable men' (and/or women, to satisfy the politically correct). The second is that authority and leadership in and of themselves legitimize power. Taken together these two unspoken assumptions effectively divorce the administrator from problems of ethics, morals, values, axiology or philosophy—leaving in their place only problems of technique, of managerial efficacy and efficiency; problems in decision-making and implementation that can in principle be solved by the application of rationality and technology. Systems theorist MacNamara's belated apologia for the Vietnam War is a case in point (MacNamara, 1995). Flowing from these assumptions is the concept of power as neutral instrumentality; a means to righteous ends (derived from outside the system) which means are also the professional property of a managerial elite. Thus honourable men and women pragmatically muddle through to resolve the ongoing problems of their particular organizational interest—making a profit, breaking even, delivering quality services, satisfying educational demands, winning the war against crime, or drugs—whatever it might be. Or else the same honorati apply the full force of rationality, systems theory, technocracy, bureaucracy and quantitative methodology to produce pro tem solutions that satisfy or satify the stakeholders and constituencies involved. Either way, ends are achieved and our leaders rise above their earthbound followers, escaping the bonds of gravity by means of their virtue, home aloft on the wings of these grand

assumptions, and falling from grace only with failure to maintain the proper altitude and attitude for airborne manoeuvring.

Alas! neither assumption withstands the light of conscious scrutiny. The first assumption can be rejected not on the grounds that fools and knaves assume the administrative mantle—fools and knaves know no boundaries of role or occupation—but on the simple logic of universal self-interest. Self-interest, when it takes the form of egoism, vanity and careerism, is often (but not always) antagonistic to the organizational and higher interests. But more subtle considerations compound the potential for pathology. For example, consider, as Nietzsche does, the feeling of power, the affective quality of power. Nietzsche's analysis in *The Gay Science* dissects this in ethical terms:

By doing good and doing ill one exercises one's power upon others—more one does not want! By doing ill upon those to whom we first have to make our power palpable [...] By doing good and well-wishing upon those who are in some way already dependent upon us [...] Whether we make a sacrifice in doing good or ill does not alter the ultimate value of our actions; even if we stake our life, as the martyr does for the sake of his Church—it is a sacrifice to our desire for power or for the purpose of preserving our feeling of power. Certainly, the condition in which we do ill is seldom as pleasant, as unmixedly pleasant, as that in which we do good—it is a sign that we still lack power... (Nietzsche, 1974, s. 13)

This analysis hardly needs explication for the practicing administrator. It is a matter of simple experience, even if that experience goes unscrutinized and unexamined. It penetrates and permeates the affective life and insidiously subverts the claim to honour. It is at the root of Lord Acton's aphorism that power corrupts, and its little known corollary: 'Great men are almost always bad men' (Acton, 1960, Appendix).

The second assumption, the assumption of formal legitimacy, falls even more calamitously and precipitously into the pit of decadence. This is because it is entirely a dependent function of a special perception, namely, the perception of the common good, the common interest, of, in a word, the *commons*. Before legitimacy can be assigned to the formal role of leader there must be agreement upon the collective purpose or the public interest or, simply, the *larger* interest. But what is this legitimizing interest in a neo-feudal (Hodgkinson, 1983, Ch. 4), corporatist (Saul, 1995) social structure where everyone is obliged to defend the *parochial* interest of some organization or subset of an organization, the interests of which may well be antagonistic to the whole? This is a system wherein the first duty of each administrator is to 'fight his own corner'; where everyone and anyone is a 'stakeholder'; and where devices for litigation and conflict resolution and power equalization (ombudspersons, equity and harassment officers, quotas, commissars for this and that perceived abuse) proliferate *ad absurdum*. In all of this is there somewhere a commons, a source of legitimacy, or has it nihilistically gone to the wall in the general pandemonium of postmodernism? Is it not fair to say that our present condition is one wherein the *sense* of commonality tends to dwindle to the vanishing point among contending ideologies? In this condition, paradoxically, the demand for conformist orthodoxy and political correctness frustrates the use of reason and speech and inhibits