Title: Authentic leadership: Circling the same buoys? Can creative writing assist in relaunching the language of leadership?

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In a sea of endless stories of corporate ethical scandals, many of which are attributed to 'failed leadership', this article examines how creative writing research is being used as a way of inspiring – or at least suggesting – new forms of authentic leadership behaviour. In the processual nature of being in our lives (Dibben et al, 2017), if experience is valued as primary to consciousness as a way of active belonging, then it will be argued that creative writing – and here, scriptwriting specifically – is a powerful medium through which the experience of organizational life can be examined. This research practice occurs through the lens of affect in embodied responses to such experience, as distinct from the singular, scientific mode of cognitive analysis that can cause us to habitually jump too quickly to conclusions about our experiences (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). By employing the affective methodology of creative practice research, which in this case forms the basis for a PhD currently in candidature, this article speculates how creative writing might disrupt habitual thinking through the elevation of emergent data from our physical senses. Creative writing can, I argue, provide a balance for science to work with art and craft (Mintzberg, 2005), and in doing so encourage new thinking in the fields of organizational behaviour, relational leadership, management learning and creative practice research.

Key words

Leadership, affect, practice, ethics, embodiment, creative writing, organizations, performativity, play, management.

Introduction

Simply put, writing affects bodies. Writing takes its toll on the body that writes and the bodies that read or listen (Probyn, 2010, p76).

In the context of seemingly endless stories of not only corporate ethical scandals but also public sector corruption, unethical religious institutional responses to child sexual abuse crimes and, heaven forbid, ball tampering 'cheating' in international cricket, many of which are attributed to 'failed leadership' (Ferris, 2018), the aim of this paper is to examine the potential for research-led creative writing to inspire and support new forms of authentic leadership behaviour.

As one example in Australia, written transcripts of hearings at the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry has demonstrated an ability to affect our bodies.

When Commonwealth Bank Australia (CBA) internal whistleblower Jeff Morris exposed the CBA financial planning scandal involving the actions of "Dodgy Don" Nguyen, a CBA financial planner who allegedly forged signatures, overcharged fees and created unauthorised investment accounts for his customers without their permission, Morris contributed to setting in motion the 2018 commencement of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry. In 2008, it went like this:

> Morris: "I remember going to my first office Christmas party. It was barefoot bowls, and in the middle of it, the managers started yelling, 'Hey, listen up everyone! Don's done it again! He's got an 86-year-old woman to sign up for $1.6 million and he's charging her 2 per cent up front – $32,000!' This is for a boiler-plate financial plan produced in an hour. 'Where does he find these little old ladies?! Ring the bell!!!'" (Hooten, 2018).

Imagine you've just made $32,000 for an hour's work, filling out a few 'off the shelf' forms for an unsuspecting 86-year-old lady. Imagine it's your job. It's supported by your manager, your company, your whole corporate structure: you'll get a bonus and be professionally celebrated for it. Morris recalls feeling "like Alice in Wonderland" within weeks of starting at CBA. "It was this feeling of, 'Am I the only one who thinks this whole thing is just wrong?'" (Ibid).

Experiences like those of Morris 'generate affective responses; responses that live on in our flesh, layered as new events unfold that remind the body how it feels to feel' (Pullen and Rhodes, 2017). How did you feel when reading the Morris account? How would you feel if the 86 year old lady was your mother, grandmother, auntie . . . ?

The action in the Australian banking Royal Commission transcripts reads like a theatre script with the posturing of interrogators circling their hapless banking executive prey in the witness box:

> Mr Mark Costello, counsel assisting the Royal Commission: *You're aware of the fees-for-no-service issues that Commonwealth Bank [CBA] has had?*
>
> Executive A of Colonial First State, owned by CBA: *Yes, I am.*

> Mr Costello: *And you know that Commonwealth Bank group entities have charged more fees for no service than any other financial services entity in the country; do you know that?*
>
> Executive A: *I do know that.*
>
> Mr Costello: *It would be the gold medallist if ASIC [the Australian Securities and Investments Commission] was handing out medals for fees for no service, wouldn't it?*
>
> Executive A: *Yes*
>
> (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p.1258).

CBA whistleblower Jeff Morris raised his concerns ten years prior to the decision by the Australian Government to finally relent and establish the Royal Commission. The idea that it requires a Royal Commission to get to the truth of unethical conduct in all organizations would obviously be excessively expensive and implausible. But it does raise the prospect of identifying innovative ways for organizations to get to the truth and for people within organizations to stand back and reflect on their own actions as perpetrators, bystanders, victims and whistleblowers on the organizational stage. Creative writing, in this case, creative writing as an affective experience, has potential to assist.

Baker (2018) highlights the value of creative writing – specifically playwriting – to trigger a number of responses in the reader including an affective experience containing non-verbal knowledge related to the scripted story (Baker, 2018). Whereas, scholars of writing for performance have mostly tended to focus on scripts for live performance, not as 'standalone works' but as mere prompts for stage productions and performances (Baker 2013), Baker (2018) argues that 'a play script' can be studied both as a text in, and of, itself (whether performed or not) and as an artefact coming out of a specific writing and research practice. Similarly, Batty (2016) argues that fictional narratives enable ideas to be shown and felt, not merely told. Drawing on material thinking and process philosophy, a focus on how emotion and affect 'is the way in which making as doing can create a sense of the lived experience' in terms of our embodied experience of the world, contributes to figuring out how the performative act of making can tell us about the world in which we live (Batty, 2016, p.4).

The purpose of the paper is to consider the potential for creative writing to make a new contribution to organizational leadership practice and theory. It is important to note that 'creative practice research is a combination of creative and critical elements, not one plus the other' (Batty et al., 2017, p.14). As Lee et al (2015) argue, 'the nexus of the creative and exegetical work is not whether one speaks to an aesthetic quality, industry or artistic satisfaction or one speaks to the academy, but how they might co-exist and inform one another' (Lee et al, 2015).

Consistent with the creative practice PhD I am currently undertaking in which I have written an original theatre script titled: *Work. Life. Balance.*, Lee et al (2015) maintain that such a research method shifts the dissertation from 'a critical *explanation* of the creative work to a creative-critical *driving force* that results in the creative work' *(my emphasis)* (Ibid.).

Leadership and Creative Practice

Taylor and Hansen (2005) identify the tension between instrumental/intellectual work and artistic/aesthetic work and claim: 'Aesthetic forms of expression are like experiments that allow us to reconsider and challenge dominant categories and classifications . . . [they] not only transform organizations, but the lenses we use to view them' (Taylor and Hansen, 2005, p.1216).

In the organizational aesthetics research categories that they describe, Taylor and Hansen (2005) identify the tension between instrumental/intellectual work and artistic/aesthetic work and employ a "classic" two-by-two quadrant management theorizing approach for detailing the field of organization aesthetics (Ibid, p.1217). Refer Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th colspan="2">CONTENT</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th>Instrumental</th><th>Aesthetic</th></tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">METHOD</td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>*Artistic forms as metaphors for organisations
*Lessons for management from arts
*Arguments for the importance of organizational aesthetics
*Using aesthetics to deepen our understanding of traditional organizational topics</td>
<td>*Industries and products fundamentally aesthetic in nature
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*The direct sensory experience of day-to-day reality in organisations</td>
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<td>Artistic</td>
<td>*Artistic forms used to work with individual issues
*Artistic forms used to work with organizational issues
*Aesthetic forms used to illustrate/present intellectual arguments</td>
<td>*Artistic forms used to present the direct sensory day-to-day experience in organisations</td>
</tr>
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Table 1

Regarding the Taylor and Hansen (2005) grid, the proposed research is situated in the relatively under-researched artistic-aesthetic 4th quadrant where artistic forms, such as playwriting, are employed to present the day-to-day experience in organizations. This represents a direct correlation with the purple section in the colour wheel of Hope (2016), the Colour Wheel of Practice Research, where the creative practice is both the object of the study, the method to research that object and the result of the process; where, embedded in the creative practice is a research process which emerges because of engagement with the practice itself (Hope, 2016, p.83).
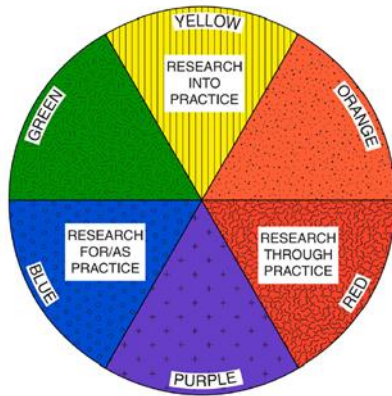
Colour wheel of practice-research. (Colour online, B/W in print)

In her Harvard Business School book, *Leadership Can Be Taught*, Parks (2005) argues that art, artist and artistry should be given a more prominent place within the lexicon of leadership theory and practice:

> "Artists work within a set of relationships that they cannot fully control . . . the artist works in a profoundly interdependent relationship with the medium – paint, stone, clay, a musical instrument, an orchestra, a tennis court, a slalom run, or food . . . A potter, for example, must learn that clay has its own life, its own potential and limits, its own integrity. The potter develops a relationship with clay, spending time with it, learning to know its properties, how it will interact with water, discovering that if you work it too hard, it will collapse, and if you work with it, it will teach you its strength, your limits, and the possibilities of co-creation." (Parks, 2005, p211)

The work of Parks is based on the case-in-point pedagogy of Harvard Business School professor Ron Heifetz (Yawson, 2014) who believes the possibilities of co-creation exist between a single actor 'leader' and his or her followers. Ironically, the relevance of Parks and Heifetz to this paper is not directly aligned to their perspectives on leadership. It is alignment to the here-and-now, story based sense-making of the case-in-point pedagogy where a connection exists. Unlike the single actor leader perspective of Parks, the leadership focus of the paper seeks to build upon leadership emerging from relationships (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Cunliffe, 2009; Ropo, 2005; Ospina, 2017; Hosking et al., 1995; Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011; Uhl-Bien and Ospina, 2012; Denis et al., 2012) and the radical reconceptualization of leadership by Wood (2005; 2018), Dibben et al (2017) in terms of viewing 'leadership' as a process of becoming rather than an event or thing performed by an individual actor; an emergent co-creation that occurs within the gap of the managerial leader-follower dichotomy (Wood, 2005). This process perspective creates potential for new knowledge to emerge and, according to Uhl-Bien (2006), "moves leadership beyond a focus on simply getting alignment (and productivity) . . . to a consideration of how leadership arises through the interactions and negotiation of social order among organizational members" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.672). To examine such leadership dynamics as interactions and social order lends itself to a creative writing method. Sempert et al 2017, argue that the responsive and reflexive nature of creative writing that makes a contribution to knowledge *is* the methodology in a research project ie. 'a way of working that emerges from the incubation of and reflection on a project/practice' (Sempert et al, 2017, p.206). They argue that 'in creative writing research both knowledge and text can be innovated through

open-minded and reflexive research incubation' (Ibid). The creative practice method of incubation, experimentation and 'being willing to not know' (Taylor, 2018, p.4) is processual in nature.

Dibben et al (2017) examine leadership through the lens of process metaphysics, where leadership is experienced subjectively within ourselves as an internally complex occasion of experience. In contrast to a Kantian view where 'the world emerges from the subject', Dibben et al follow a Whiteheadian view (1929/1978) in which 'the subject emerges from the world' as an organism, a *'being'* and a potential for every *'becoming'* (Dibben, 2017, p172).

Griffin (2008) follows Whitehead's "serially ordered occasions of experience" by claiming that 'experience is always active not passive' in that it is *not* what happens to us that counts (ie. 'external relation') but rather what we make of what happens to us for ourselves and others (ie. the internal relation)' (Ibid. p172). In process thought, experience is primary to consciousness; ie. we must experience something first *before* we can become conscious of it.

Batty (2016), Wood (2018), Davis (2013), Taylor (2002), Heathcote (1983) all/each argue for the capacity of creative writing in the form of novels, scripts, poems and more,. to evoke or render sensory experiences in the sense of embodied, subjective, *lived* human experience. If, as asserted by Dibben et al. (2017) Griffin (2008) and Whitehead (1929/1978), humans move to meet experience – in terms of the 'internal relation' of *what we make of what happens to us* (as distinct from the 'external relation' of what simply happens to us), and creative practice has the capacity to create that experience, then to examine organizational leadership experience through the lens of creative practice would appear to have significant potential. If, like art, leadership is 'experienced' by processes by which they are created, then great potential exists for incremental change to occur through the shifting tides of leadership and art. Simply put, might organizational actors paying attention to subtle 'ordinary affects' lead to more authentic, ethical leadership outcomes to emerge both for the benefit of organizations and our wider human community (Gherardi, 2017)?

'Creative Novelty' – Process Philosophy and Relational Leadership

As a famous ex-Beatle once sang:

> *'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.'* (Lennon, 1980)

A commonly accepted approach to organizational change management theory is the notion that there is a frozen solid present state or status quo that for change to occur needs to be unfrozen, prior to an interim period of disruption and movement until the desired new state is reached upon which a *refreezing* must occur to establish and embed the new status quo (Lewin, 1951; Kotter, 1996). Contrary to this view, Whitehead maintains that our lives are not a case of: things first are, then they change, then they are stable again. Rather, Whitehead asserts that life is a processual series of dynamic acts of experience or concrescence and that 'creative novelty' in terms of what is made of such experiences is the very essence of the universe (Whitehead 1929/1978).

This contrasts with the dominant world view of social sciences – that there are only passive objects that are largely unrelated to each other. For social science management studies, all occasions are inherently active subjects in their experience of becoming in the here and now of the present, but once they have perished to the past they become passive objects, for subsequent occasions to consider, examine and rationally analyse. According to Dibben et al (2017), process philosophy

closes the binary gap that underpins management as social science of quality-quantity, man-nature, mind-matter, leader-follower (Dibben et al 2017), and in the capital-labour, employer-employee, management-staff, employers-unions; in short, between the power relations of 'them and us' in organizational life (Conroy, 2015).

According to the relational leadership deliberations of Dibben et al (2017), it is not only the artistic interdependence with the medium that is the focus of interest, but also the *intradependence*; and a consequent demand emerges for an investigation of leadership as an intra-subjective process – in the midst of things and (immanent) relations. The focus of this paper is to examine whether the elevation of emergent data from our physical senses via creative practice can contribute to an investigation of leadership as an intra-subjective process thereby disrupting the more traditional habitual scientific cycle and potentially assisting people in 'coming to their senses' (Springborg, 2010, p243), including those with formal organizational leadership responsibilities. My original script, *Work. Life. Balance.,* created as part of my PhD project, charts the organizational action in a fictional Australian Government department, Federal Immigration and Border Security (FIBS). The action is centred around the power-abusing exploits of Waterside Control director Gino Genoa and his purchase of a sports cruiser boat using taxpayer funds. The play is a deliberate attempt to evoke, or render, the lived experience of Gino, his colleagues, including leaders, subordinates, co-conspirators, bystanders, whistleblowers and to juxtapose the action using a maritime theme related to human victims of FIBS policies both corporate HR policy and FIBS' Operation Borders Downunder policy (ie. asylum seekers).

Central to this exploration will be the view that deceptive behaviour is not the exclusive domain of any one side of the leader-follower dichotomy that underpins decades of research in leadership, management and organizations. If it is the norm for society to regard deceptive, unethical or toxic business culture as either a matter for leadership to fix or as a failure of leadership, then creative writing that can evoke the ordinary affects of lived experience might begin to imagine new possibilities for addressing such an organizational malaise.

Viewing ethical organizational culture through a slightly more traditional lens directed at leadership development, Cunliffe (2009) captures a similar focus in her work and a sense of what might be achieved:

> 'This way of thinking is important, recent corporate scandals have raised questions about the nature of ethical action and the pressures that leaders and managers face when trying to act in morally responsible ways. Critical-reflexivity offers a way of surfacing these pressures . . .' (Cunliffe, 2009, p.98).

Through characters and affiliated plotlines, we can examine this organizational phenomenon to appropriately question fundamental assumptions about leadership, such as degrees of balance between brazen self-interest, vulnerability, service, fear and care for others, based on the premise that authentic behaviour does not reside solely on one side of the dominant social science leader-follower dichotomy but is more relationship based in nature. The relational leadership theory (RLT) of Uhl-Bien (2006) considers how the relationship looks, feels and appeals to one's conscious and unconscious aesthetic sensibilities (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Similarly, Taylor and Hansen (2005) claim that experiments using artistic/aesthetic forms of expression facilitate reflection and allow dominant categories to be challenged, the transformative lens provided by such experiments, or play, also

creating potential for transforming organizations (Taylor and Hansen, 2005). The subtle shift that disturbs the dominant narrative is described by Manning (2016) as 'the minor gesture'.

The concept of 'the minor gesture' appropriates Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor force that works within the major narrative and opens experience to its potential variation (Manning, 2016, p.1). Unlike the major narrative in organisations – the structured grand status where recognisable power lies, where shifts are more easily identified and able to be understood – the nuanced, secondary rhythms of the minor are free from pre-existing structural control, open to flux and out of time, "rhythmically inventing its own pulse" (Ibid, p.2). The minor gesture is the flotsam and jetsam of a predictable organisational ocean whose minoritarian tendencies initiate the subtle shifts that create conditions for change to occur, 'sites of dissonance, staging disturbances that open [and reorient] experience to new modes of expression (Ibid, p.2). As the activator, the carrier that draws an event into itself, the minor gesture 'moves the nonconscious toward the conscious, makes felt the unsayable in the said, brings into resonance field effects otherwise backgrounded in experience' (Ibid, p.7).

With a view to make felt the unsayable in the said, to bring resonance to organisational effects otherwise backgrounded in the clutter and chatter and power dynamics of organisational workplaces, the intention in my research is to employ creative practice, in a form of an original playscript, as a creative artefact that arouses reflexivity and functions as a minor gesture working within the major narrative of organizations.

The claim of Cunliffe (2009) that critical reflexivity can surface previously unseen pressures that may lead to moral decline and dishonest behaviour, is important to our understanding of organizational life and to the health and well-being of people in organizations.

In the relational leadership terms of Cunliffe (2009), her phenomenological concern for self-reflection may give the false impression that she is adopting an individualistic and objectified conceptualisation of leadership. However, Cunliffe asserts that she is 'advocating a relational, reflexive and situated approach in which self is always in-relation to, and ethically-responsible for, others' (Cunliffe, 2009, p.95). Following her belief that 'The basic practical-moral problem in life is not what to do, but what kind of person to be' (Shotter and Cunliffe, 2002, p.20), Cunliffe employs the Philosopher Leader as a metaphor for 'examining the interrelatedness of the emergent relational, ethical and reflexive nature of this approach' (Ibid). In so doing, she pulls together the three threads of relationality, moral activity and reflexivity, which can be discussed separately, but are 'inevitably and irrevocably entwined' as follows:

(1) ethical and moral actions are (2) embedded in relational understanding and (3) enacted through self- and critical-reflexivity (Ibid. p.94).

The potential exists to extend Cunliffe's metaphor by entwining the critical reflexivity thread with the enabling thread of creative practice. If, as Cunliffe asserts, critical reflexivity means 'examining and unsettling our assumptions, actions and their impacts' (Ibid), then perhaps one way of creating such subtle, unsettling disturbances is through (4) the deterritorialising nature of the 'minor gesture' (Manning, 2016; Deleuze and Guattari, 1994) of creative practice.

The Philosopher Leader (Cunliffe, 2009, p.94)   **The fourth thread?**
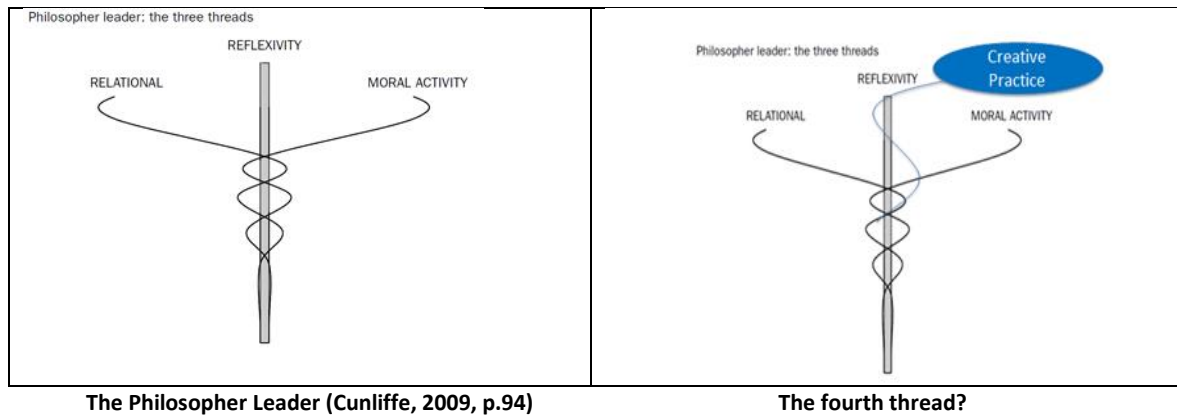
According to Wood and Dibben (2015), the process perspective that the aesthetic approach entails allows us to 'see and feel leadership as an occasion we experience subjectively within ourselves, instead of simply looking at it objectively from the outside. Such a process perspective, which grasps leadership as an internally complex occasion of experience, has implications for expanding the possibilities for what is known in management as relational leadership research' (Wood and Dibben, 2015, p.24). I contend that it may also have implications for creative practice research focused on relationship authenticity. For example, if/when 'consent and evade' (Ryde and Sofianos, 2014) behaviours occur in organizations, do impacted actors sometimes have a gut feel about them; a subjective experience within oneself that tells us that something is not right, or true or trustworthy? If so, how do we know and what might such knowledge mean both for relationships and for organizational outcomes?

Affect and Practice

In her study of the turn to practice and the turn to affect, Gherardi (2017b) argues: 'The motivation for approaching practices . . . was to define practice as 'a collective knowledgeable doing' aimed at 'the rediscovery of practice (as a philosophical and sociological concept with a long tradition)' that reconnects it with knowing and learning (Gherardi, 2017b, pp346-347). This follows earlier attempts in a 'quiet revolution' to 'shift from an epistemology of possession' to one of a 'knowing' practice (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000), of which Gherardi (2009) is critical due to it favouring 'more orthodox accounts shaped by assumptions of rationalism and cognitivism' where practice and 'routine' are synonymous (Gherardi, 2017b). Appropriating Contu (2014) regarding the significant link between power and knowledge in terms of learning and knowing in practice, Gherardi argues that:

> 'from the outset, the idea of practice was situated within a processual thinking and linked to the image of practice elements woven together . . . 'many of these developments point towards a new regard for the issues of power, politics and trust' (Gherardi, 2017b, p.347).

Gherardi (2017a; 2017b) highlights the commonalities and complementarities of the turn to affect and the turn to practice. She argues that they share a shift towards a 'becoming' epistemology where 'becoming is privileged with respect to being'; the 'body is the interface with the world, and it is what we learn to use to become sensitive to the world' and that sociomateriality is paramount in the post-humanist turn to practice because 'affect is embedded in the material world' (Ibid., p.355). However, 'what mostly links the two turns is an interest in a search for a post-epistemology that decentres the human subject, linking the social and the natural, the mind and body and the cognitive and affective' (Ibid., p.349).

Like Probyn (2010), Gherardi (2017a) attributes a central place to the body in the 'continuum of becoming', in the capacity of the body to affect and to be affected (Gherardi, 2017a). Describing affect as 'the name for what eludes form, cognition, and meaning', Gherardi (2017a) appropriates Massumi (1995) in emphasising the distinction between affect and emotion, denying they are synonymous. 'Affect pertains to biology' (Nathanson, 1992; Grossberg, 1992; Probyn, 2005) and is 'our physical response to feelings' that 'escapes confinement in the body' whereas emotion pertains to biography, it fixes 'the quality of an experience' by capturing affect, making emotion the biographical expression of that capture (Gherardi, 2017a, p.210). Building upon this, a further distinction might be made through an argument that emotion pertains to *sympathy*, in terms of feeling pity for others, whereas affect more closely pertains to *empathy* whereby our physical response to feelings allows us to walk in the shoes of others, to feel their pain. One example of this might be to consider the respective human responses of the CBA bankers who might have felt sympathy when gleefully announcing the plight of the 'little old lady' suffering through the unscrupulous actions of 'Dodgy' Don (Hooten, 2018) and whistle-blower Jeff Morris whose affective response appears to be one of empathy that continues to 'live on his flesh' (Pullen and Rhodes, 2017) to this day (Morris, 2018; Probyn, 2010; Gherardi, 2017a). Gherardi's focus is on atmosphere attunement to 'ordinary affects', often disregarded as irrelevant by the orthodoxy who 'position the researcher as a disembodied and external observer of life' (Gherardi, 2017a, p.218). 'Ordinary affects' are significant not in their everyday meanings and representations but in the intensities they build, the 'continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences' produced through 'the varied, surging capacities to affect and be affected' (Stewart, 2007, p.4), and the thoughts and feelings they make possible (Gherardi, 2017a, p211). Bertelsen and Murphie (2010) provide a cautionary example from 2001 Australian politics of 'an image that bled into the power to affect and be affected by that collection of bodies included in, or excluded from, "Australia"' (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p.138). It went like this:

The Red Ship on the Horizon

In 2001, just weeks before September 11, events involving a red, Norwegian freighter and 438 mostly Afghani refugees changed the political territory of Australia . . . A red ship appeared on the horizon . . . The political horizon was that of a desperate conservative government (that of John Howard and his coalition of Liberal and National parties) facing an election and almost certain defeat. The Australian government used the incident of the red ship (and others – such as the "children overboard affair") to turn likely defeat in an election into a "dark victory" (Marr and Wilkinson 2003) . . . In the images that provided the "aesthetic impact of a floating red hulk" (Mitropoulos and Neilsen 2006), this was first and foremost . . . a singular, intense "red shipness" on a general horizon . . . On board were 438 refugees (mostly Afghani) who had been rescued by the Norwegian freighter MV Tampa on August 26, from a small, Indonesian fishing boat . . . The Australian government "wanted Indonesians to take responsibility for the problem" . . . (Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 3) . . . the Howard government denied "the Tampa permission to enter Australian Territorial waters" (Maley 2004, 154) . . . the Tampa's captain, Arne Rinnan, decided to enter Australian territorial waters near Christmas Island. His ship was eventually taken over by Australian special troops . . . the government would not allow the media, or even the Red Cross, on board. There was to be no visual evidence of defenceless and desperate people or leaky little fishing boats (Burnside, n.d.). The red ship provided an entirely different aesthetic . . .

Personalization was resisted, giving the event a very different feel . . . of "pre-personal" affective forces into a variable "texture" – what Stern calls a "temporal contour" (Stern 2004, 62). The image of the Tampa had a slow, drawn-out contour, an almost immobile intensity. Its refraining – in tabloid newspapers, the nightly news – created an insistent, unresolved stubbornness: a redness sitting on the horizon that would not easily go away. It could have been a metaphor for threat or rescue . . . the *new functions* that emerged within the new *existential* territory marked by the red ship . . . the red ship refrain now bleeding into what was becoming a culture entrained to be wary of anything that hinted at "softness" . . . The aggressivity began to be played out against a series of abstract targets held in place by the red ship: "refugees", international laws and obligations, international shipping, compassion. Like all aggressivity, it was polarizing. Everything became a matter of attack and defense. Everyone had to have an opinion . . . A new territory had opened for political contest on terms much more suitable not only to the Australian government but to conservatives around the world . . . It allowed a remix of "border protection" and "national security" that densely interwove the psychic and the social, the legal and the geographic. The red ship made further refrains possible. In its wake, the prime minister brilliantly, darkly, victoriously stated, "We decide who comes into this country and the circumstances in which they come (in Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 277). This was classic discursive refraining of ambiguous affective powers within an increasingly broad and enduring existential territory. It confused an increasingly presidential-style "fathering of the nation" with a "we" that was itself an open assemblage of a political party, a government, and a fairly homogeneous image of like-minded "real" citizens (from which of course many were excluded) . . . (Bertelsen and Murphie, 2010, pp.141-145).

It is examples such as the *Red Ship on the Horizon* that reinforce the significance of 'ordinary affects' identified by Silvia Gherardi. Her argument is not that 'ordinary affects' are just part and parcel of the working practices of practitioners and researchers but, rather, that 'ordinary affects' are made present by atmosphere attunement and embodied writing that call for experimentations in doing fieldwork and writing about it (Gherardi, 2017a, p218). I contend that this is where the potential exists for creative writing and creative practice to support new forms of learning and knowledge in leadership, management and organizational studies.

By focusing on affect and how the act of doing or the performative act of making can contribute to ways of knowing (Batty, 2016), a process philosophy sense of the *lived* experience in terms of how we experience the world can be created. This aligns with the Parks (2005) example of the potter, who 'must learn that clay has its own life, its own potential and limits, its own integrity . . . and if you work with it, it will teach you its strength, your limits, and the possibilities of co-creation' (Parks, 2005, p.211). In short, in the lived experience of creative practice, both the medium and maker have an affect on each other

According to Fotaki et al (2017): 'Affect permeates organizations profoundly, influencing people's motivation, their political behaviour, decision-making and relationships with leaders and followers (Fotaki et al., 2017). The study of affect attempts to evoke . . . states of being, rather than to analyse their later discursive representation as emotions . . . scholars emphasize the potential transformative properties of affects such as *shame* by showing how it can be creatively appropriated and reworked to evoke *pride* (Sedgwick, 2003). 'Affect enables an appreciation of, and a way to

communicate, the texture of embodied life as it is lived: its qualitative richness' (Ibid). Furthermore, 'the researcher herself is open to becoming affected by encounters, rather than simply reporting them' (McCormack, 2008). According to Fotaki et al (2017) 'this demands innovative and experimental approaches to how we study organizations' (Fotaki et al, 2017) and how we engage with 'the pulsing refrains of affect' that illuminate the organizational scenes we study' (Ibid.) This is where creative writing might add value to the leadership field, as an innovative and experimental approach with the potential for evoking 'the pulsing refrains of affect'.

By creating 'layers of complexity that mirror [the] subject matter' (Williams 2013), the richness of a creative artefact - here, a playscript - can surface emotion that can be impactful to what we make of our experience (ie. internal relation): 'It's what people do with it. How it makes a difference … informs others in ways that change their practices or shift their thinking.' According to Stroud (2008), creative practice such as fiction 'holds the power to move individuals to thought, reflection, action, and belief . . . [and to] enable ideas to be shown and felt, not merely told' (Stroud 2008, p.1). To operate in the here and now, using the situational present of making to reflect who we are and what the world means to us (Batty, 2016), might help to allow organizational actors to reframe the objective from developing authentic leaders to authentically developing leadership (Conroy, 2015). The layers of complexity described by Williams (2013) involve the integration of the creative and the critical (Sawtell, 2016) which conveys wisdom, capability and knowledgeability (Benjamin 1970a, p.86, cited by Nash 2014, p.98; Harper, 2007).

In research terms, it is important to note that 'creative practice research is a combination of creative and critical elements, not one plus the other' (Lee et al. 2015). The shift is away from binary positions of one or the other towards a co-existence that strives for balance, harmony and completeness. Similarly, Harris and Holman Jones (2016) reject the view that performance is embodied and writing is merely a record of the event and 'asserts that writing and performance are two arms on the same body . . . writing is equally a physical practice . . . a making practice, a creative practice, a critical practice' (Harris & Holman Jones, 2016). The inadequacy of a purely scientific perspective has been highlighted by leadership and management scholars and philosophers alike, despite the disparate focus of their work. For example, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) argue that science, art and philosophy have a different focus regarding understanding and knowledge yet have always gleaned learning from each other to make linkages in the process of enquiry that are necessary in the interests of broader more complete outcomes. According to Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy is concerned with conceptual forms and therefore *thinks with concepts*; science is more concerned with the function of knowledge and therefore *thinks with functions*; and art is concerned with the force of sensation and therefore *thinks with sensations* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994; Wood, 2018). Similarly, management scholar Mintzberg (2005) argues for the balancing of art, craft and science in a managerial style where art represents vision and creative insights, craft represents practical experience and science represents facts and analysis (Mintzberg, 2005, p92-3). According to Mintzberg, science contributes systematic analysis in the form of inputs and assessments, art contributes comprehensive synthesis in the form of insights and visions and craft contributes dynamic learning in the form of actions and experiments (Ibid). Once again, the image emerges of the co-creating potter to which Parks (2005) refers.

According to Lee et al (2015) in their discussion regarding the writing of a screenplay for a creative practice PhD, 'the nexus of the creative and the exegetical work is not whether one speaks to an

aesthetic quality, industry or artistic satisfaction or one speaks to the academy, but how they might co-exist and inform one another' (Lee et al. 2015:93). The powerful consequence of such a co-existence is that it shifts the dissertation (exegesis) from 'a critical *explanation* of the creative work to a creative-critical *driving force* that results in the creative work' (Ibid). Insights such as those of Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Mintzberg (2005), Parks (2005) and Lee et al (2015) offer great potential to assist in the quest for authentic, ethical organizational leadership, which for the scholar using creative writing as a mode of research, results in a creative artefact that 'thinks'.

A Problem with Authentic Leadership Relations

Attempting to pin down the elusive definition of leadership has long been a focus of scholars. The decision to locate this paper within one small subset of the relational perspective, dealing with aesthetic, embodied sensibilities, within the broader relational leadership discourse that emanated from the larger continuous discourse in the field, is designed to create a minor gesture (Manning, 2016; Deleuze and Guattari, 1994) in terms of disrupting standard relational leadership language into a reinvented use.

Regarding the larger, continuous discourse in the field, differentiations have been made between leaders and managers (Zaleznik, 1977, Bennis and Nannus, 1985, Kotter, 1995). Generally, the former have been categorised as being preoccupied with rationality, order, control and relating to followers in impersonal bureaucratic ways, whereas the latter have been characterised as being more intuitive, more tolerant of a degree of disorder and more inclined to relate with followers in personal and direct ways (Gabriel, 2013).

The general tendency amongst leadership scholars has been to elevate the motivation of 'leaders' to being more personally connected to others around them, more compassionate, even altruistic, in terms of having personal traits that attract followers, including traits such as authenticity.

The approach of basing research on individual leaders inspiring individual followers "to go beyond their self-interests to concerns for their group or organization" (Bass and Avolio, p.202), lends itself to automatic assumptions about the motivation of leaders, and prompts serious questions to be raised, such as:

1. Who is responsible for inspiring leaders to go beyond their own self-interests?
2. Should we merely assume that leaders, having found their way into a managerial leadership title, will always maintain an authentic primary focus of "concerns for their group or organization" at the expense of their own self-interests?
3. Must leadership be leader-centred or can so called 'followers' be leaders too?

In 2018, the Australian Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry might have provided some cogent answers to these questions.

Wood (2005) reconceptualised the leadership field by asking why the majority of leadership theories have remained leader-centred. Writing in the context of process theory, Wood was seeking a new way of conceiving of leadership beyond the binary approaches by leadership scholars such as Stogdill (1950) and Fiedler (1967); Blake and Mouton (1964) and Hersey and Blanchard (1977); Heifetz (1994); Burns (1978), Rickards (1999) and Bass, Aviolo and Goodheim (1987), to name a few. The various approaches to leadership by such scholars has included individual leaders' personal qualities

and style; leader-follower transactional models based on individual follower maturity; the adaptive leadership response; and transformational leadership where leaders try to change organizational culture, unlike transactional leadership where leaders work within the existing culture (Wood, 2005).

Wood argued for a new way, based primarily on a relational understanding, and concluded that:

> The notion of leadership does not, therefore, refer specifically or exclusively to the transformational, charismatic or visionary figure of transcendent leaders, nor does it focus entirely on the behaviour of followers, or the discrete relations between one or the other, which leave the relations external to each other" (Ibid., p.1118).

Appropriating Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Wood prioritises "emergence and becoming" above sheer existence or being (Ibid). Referencing process metaphysics, Wood espouses the 'interconnectedness' of Whitehead (1967b) and the 'mutual penetration' of Bergson (1921) to conclude that concrete things such as leaders, followers and organizations are "surface effects": "They are simple appearances we employ to give substantiality to our experience, but under whose supposed 'naturalness' the fundamentally processual nature of the real is neglected" (Ibid., p.1104).

The notion of "supposed naturalness" – seemingly concrete things but mere "surface effects" – is at the heart of the relational and the authentic in my PhD project because of the 'lived experience' contribution creative practice might make for leadership studies. In the process metaphysics espoused by Dibben et al (2017) and Wood (2005), authenticity is reality itself but expressed as a fluid concept as distinct from a static abstraction of logic. It cannot be communicated via theories or concepts but must be directly lived. What we call inauthentic is merely a certain view of the same thing, it simply denotes the presence of a form of the same authenticity that does not interest or appeal to us, ie. authentic (good) or inauthentic (bad); or to use another example, the case of order (good) and disorder (bad) in practical terms where the actual presence of authenticity, or order, superimposes on its virtual absence. Thus, if authenticity, or order, is better denoted as directly lived experience as distinct from static abstractions of logic, then the lived experience of a creative practice event – including the performativity of play-writing, play-reading and performance (Baker, 2018) – may offer insights that have been previously hidden to leadership studies.

The more traditional work of Uhl-Bien (2006) on Relational Leadership Theory (RLT), whilst not following process metaphysics, differentiates between an entity perspective that focusses on the attributes of individuals whilst engaging in interpersonal relationships, and a relational perspective that sees leadership as a process of social construction through which understandings of leadership emerge and receive privileged ontology. Following the relational thread in pursuit of aesthetic perspectives such as the body as a source of knowing, lived experiences, sensuous perceptions, Ropo (2005) considers how the relationship looks and feels, the extent to which it appeals to both conscious and unconscious aesthetic sensibilities (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.672).

Dibben et al (2017), who examine leadership through the lens of process metaphysics, wherein leadership is experienced subjectively within ourselves as an internally complex occasion of experience. In contrast to a Kantian view where 'the world emerges from the subject', Dibben et al follow a Whiteheadian view where 'the subject emerges from the world' as an organism that "belongs to the nature of being that it is a potential for every becoming".

Like much of the dominant social science literature, the focus of psychology is primarily on an individual leader upon which leadership is accomplished and to which organizational work is reducible (Dibben et al, 2017, p176). What follows is that a leader-follower binary is created. Then 'followership' (Collinson, 2014), then shared or group leadership, then social exchange theory and so on.

Underpinning these shifts in the leadership field is an underlying assumption that leaders and followers jointly affect leadership. Such an assumption confines attention to the leader-follower interface. The focus remains on how terms such as leader and follower determine a relation with little attention to how a relation determines its terms. Whilst such ideas of leadership permit connection of the leader-and the-led as inter-subjective 'relationship based', they are 'clear cut' (Whitehead 1929/1978) individuals or groups, each capable of existing separately in their own right and each determining their own relations, ie. concrete separate groups each determining their own relations. The focus on scientific facts and absence of the balance espoused by Deleuze and Guattari (1994) and Mintzberg (2005) results in a 'tautology' or 'logical fallacy' in that it holds well only because leadership is read into the content of the process which actually conditions it (Dibben et al, 2017). In short, research does nothing but establish a series of relations between individuals or groups and neglects to show how such relations determine these terms. This is precisely where the aesthetic, sensory contribution of creative practice, the inductive visioning of art and iterative, experimental venturing of craft (Mintzberg, 2005), has the potential to rebalance leadership discourse and, in turn, possible outcomes in practice.

'Lying in the way of experience' – The Language of Leadership

In their summary of leadership studies, Denis, Langley, Sergi (2012) cite Wood (2005) but appear not to expand on his contribution as they do with other scholars, perhaps as a result of the 'logical fallacy' that Wood describes. Or might this simply be a case of a definitional divide or impasse regarding the meaning of leadership as a field of research?

Like Wood (2005) and Dibben et al (2017), the focus of Denis, Langley, Sergi (2012), Uhl Bien (2006); Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012) is on relations. However, unlike the former, the latter focus is more directly targeted to belief in processes of social construction. These include contingency perspective; social exchange theory or leader-member exchange (LMX) Theory; Role Theory; Framing – everyday talk and interaction where subordinates can meet leader's attempts to frame a situation – accept or reject – and where talk is coded in order to assert control, acquiesce, request control or neutralise control (Fairhurst 2004). Together with 'affects and refrains', there was also evidence of framing in the *The Red Ship on the Horizon* study described above. A more modest example of this appears in a previous creative writing project in my completion of the Executive Master of Arts at The University of Melbourne where I produced an original play titled *The Myth of Themanus – 21st century leadership in action*. This creative writing project in the form of a playscript focused on toxic 'them-and-us' organizational tensions, where a mythical ambitious new manager, Themanus, has his plans derailed by a lowly subordinate, Mischievous, who despite having little formal organizational power or authority, is able to employ his significant informal authority as a staff *opinion leader* to reject and undermine the control of his boss, Themanus (Conroy, 2015). In writing the play, my hope was to 'show not tell' the 'ordinary affects' (Gherardi, 2017) which influence our organizational lives, on both sides of the 'them-and-us' binary. In the performative act of writing, my aim was to examine

the framing forces behind such socially constructed dichotomies – which appeared to me over twenty-five years of management and leadership practice to be curiously 'convenient' for both sides of the leader-follower binary – and, finally, to try to evoke an affective response from the reader in the performative act of reading (Baker, 2018).

The point about framing made by Dibben et al (2017) is that scholars focus on discursively based social construction but conceive leadership in terms of external relations between distinct and self-contained leaders and followers, an inter-subjective performance constructed through talk and text that helps us to *create* leadership through language and discourse (Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012; Collinson, 2014). In other words, discursive construction comes from *conscious* analysis not from direct contact with experience whereby experience is primary to consciousness. Consequently, framing creates an 'intellectual strait jacket' by mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself (Dibben et al, 2017, p.178). According to Dibben et al (2017), this 'introduces a great deal of confusion . . . [as] leadership is not reducible to sentences and propositions. Leadership is more than leaders, managers and subordinates performing and enacting discourse' (Ibid).

Whilst it is true that creative practice, including the theatre script of Conroy (2015), could equally be accused of the same 'intellectual strait jacket', the making by doing potential for research-led creative practice (Hope, 2016) to evoke and render intra-subjective experience for people engaging with it in the momentary here-and-now present might enable the emergence of 'sites of dissonance, staging disturbances that open [and reorient] experience to new modes of expression' (Manning, 2016, p.2). As Taylor and Hansen (2005) argue:

> 'The use of artistic forms to look at aesthetic issues offers a medium that can capture and communicate the felt experience, the affect, and something of the tacit knowledge of the day-to-day, moment-to-moment reality of organizations. Not just the cleaned-up, instrumental concerns of 'the business', but the messy, unordered side as well . . . a holistic way to get at the whole of the experience, something that the intellectualization and abstraction of traditional organizational research often seems to miss' (Taylor and Hansen, 2005, p1224).

If Hope (2016), Batty (2016), Wood et al (2018), Berbary (2011), Ladkin and Taylor (2010), Springborg (2010), Taylor and Hansen (2005) are correct about the value of creative practice for understanding phenomena through a different lens, then why does such 'confusion' as described by Dibben et al (2017) remain? Could it be that the debate continues to be held back by a definitional dispute? Could it be that Denis, Langley, Sergi (2012) cite Wood (2005), but do not appear to expand upon his contribution – and, by extension, that of Dibben et al (2017) – precisely because they do not agree with his/their definition of 'leadership'?

According to Whitehead (1929/1978), language is only a technical 'approximation of general truths' of experience and, therefore, the only possible start for knowledge of leadership must be with experience. Dibben et al (2017) argue that more recent leadership scholars see leadership as a centre of affective and cognitive experience, factors of activity and not 'clean-cut connections produced by efforts put into them by clear cut individuals already given to lying in the way of experience' (Whitehead 1929/1978; Dibben et al, 2017, p179). In contrast, according to Dibben et al (2017), leadership is a position or role taken by people possessing their own thoughts, emotions, purposes, that is not reducible to sentences, propositions, titles and discourse. Furthermore, Dibben

et al (2017) challenge the adequacy of viewing relations in the 'exchange-based terms' of classic and conventional approaches and call for an investigation of leadership as an intra-subjective process 'in the midst of things and (immanent) relations' (Ibid).

The problem for traditional leadership discourse is that in this process philosophy perspective, 'leaders have no essence or substances beyond exhibiting those characteristics that cause us to see, feel, and think about them in a particular occasion of experience' (Whitehead, 1967a, p176; Dibben et al, 2017, p179). Many scholars in the field are likely to disagree with the authors' definition, ie. 'What you say is leadership is *not* what I/we say is leadership.' The question for Dibben et al (2017) is whether or not, in challenging the *concept* of leadership by asserting that leaders have no objective essence or substance, might they be merely establishing their own form of narrow lens approach, one that lacks the balance identified by Deleuze and Guattari (1994) and Mintzberg (2005), thereby creating another binary either/or situation where it is either the process philosophical perspective or it is not? In short, might Dibben et al (2107) be advocating an approach where process philosophy takes precedence over science and art?

As a consequence of this perceived definitional dispute, in my PhD project, I am daring to set aside the respective ontological positions. I am daring to allow in the novel creative insights of art and the dynamic iterative learning in the form of actions and experiments of craft (Mintzberg, 2005) in order to allow leaders to have both an objective essence *and* an affective becoming based on an intra-subjective occasion of experience. Rather than the narrow lens attack of alternative positions, I am seeking to create an environment 'in the midst of things and (immanent) relations' (Dibben et al, 2017) yet also acknowledge the objective presence of leadership and management in organizational life as millions of people understand it (Parks, 2005; Springborg, 2010). With a view to by-passing the definitional disputes and binary language of leadership, I am experimenting with a world that can *let it be* and that seeks to rediscover balance – to untangle some of the knots – through a variety of means, including through creative practice?

Perhaps the term 'leadership' is too large for us now.

In order to address any impasse by removing – or floating to one side for a moment – the definitional dispute so that the field of leadership research might have more room for experimentation and play, perhaps we simply need other terms. Perhaps we need to move beyond the vast array of historical adjectives for leadership such as heroic, transactional, inspirational, adaptive, situational, ethical, spiritual, transformational, visionary, relational and, the title of this paper included, authentic, to name a few. Whilst the use of such adjectives has enabled great progress in the field of leadership studies, might it have simultaneously resulted in us 'circling the same buoys'? Perhaps we are expecting too much from one central word: 'leadership'. For example, might the adoption of a portmanteau term such as *'leaderaft'* be employed as an expression of our attention to affective internal relations, especially 'ordinary affects' (Gherardi, 2017a) that provides a balanced atmosphere attunement between the verbal (logic), the visual (imagination) and the visceral (experience) (Mintzberg, 2005, p.93) within the broader leadership experience.

A Case for *'leaderaft'*?

Consider the term 'leadership' in the banking sector as an example. In 2014, the salary of Ian Narev, the CEO of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, increased by about A$300,000 to almost $8.1

million including a base rate, incentives and shares according to the bank's annual report (Pash, 2014). Measured against other major bank CEO's, Narev is paid less than contemporaries Mike Smith at ANZ Bank who received about A$10.4 million and Westpac Bank's Gail Kelly with A$9.2 million (Ibid). One must assume that such remuneration is reward for what could only be described as successful leadership of their organizations. Yet the scandalous actions of banking officials over many years, exposed in the 2018 banking Royal Commission, have been widely condemned as an example of 'undeniable shortcomings by the financial institutions' leadership' – in other words, failed leadership. So, despite the issue being far more complex than this brief summary, the reasonable question can be posed: Which form of leadership has been on display in the banking sector – successful leadership or failed leadership? And, if the latter, how do we explain the exorbitant executive salaries? How can we begin to know what was missing that resulted in so-called 'failure'? Hence, the question: Is the term 'leadership' too large for us now?

Even as I write these words about pay rates and executive bonuses in Australian dollar terms, the words are jarring, not because executives may or may not be overpaid but because the words feel out of kilter with the words that have gone before in this paper. I can sense in my body that the scientific economic facts are part of a different discussion – a different language – to the affective internal relations that are the central focus of the paper. They are only one part of the more complete story of this phenomenon we call 'leadership'.

In the spirit of 'creative novelty', in a nautical/maritime reference to a 'ship':

> Consider a massive cruise liner, its sheer size, weight and complexity making it so difficult to change its course. At the rear of this 'leader-ship' is an almost impenetrable external façade known as the 'stern' which is visible, tangible and scientifically constructed of high grade steel.

> Located within the stern is the 'aft', an entirely internal space not visible from the outside of the vessel, an intangible void, but an important space which houses a key piece of equipment – the rudder – a critically important instrument that helps to steer the course of the vessel. (Chakraborty, 2017)

> Perched high above the deck of this cumbersome cruise liner, sits the life-raft. Not only is this raft a symbol of safety, security and the preservation of life in violent, unpredictable seas, but it is also a smaller, more nimble, manoeuvrable craft that allows the traveller to reach places that are inaccessible to the larger ship.

> Consider, then, an alternative maritime term for a life-raft. As a manager in the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs), I was introduced to this term by a Customs marine unit officer involved in the interception of asylum seekers trying to enter Australian shores on Suspected Illegal Entry Vessels (SIEVs). The alternative maritime term for a life-raft is a *'tender'*. A *'tender'* is routinely deployed in the maritime industry to transport passengers and crew from the larger ship to the shore when the sheer size of the larger vessel prevents it from *connecting* with its surrounding natural environment (Crouch, 2015).

From stern . . . to aft . . . to raft . . . to tender . . .

Might this help to represent the balance sought by Mintzberg (2005) between science, art and craft; the shared learning between science, art and philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1994); and the tenderness or 'daring to care' of Adler (2010)?

So, I am proposing a portmanteau term such as *'leaderaft'* with a view to helping us to access the less visible, intangible, unmeasurable, sensory, non-binary, embodied internal relations and 'ordinary affects' (Gherardi, 2017) within the leadership experience of relational dynamics in organizations. Experience then consciousness; body then mind (Dibben at al., 2017).

Latour (2004) maintains that 'to have a body is to learn to be affected, meaning effectuated, moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans. If you are not engaged in this learning you become insensitive, dumb, you 'drop dead' (Latour, 2004, p.205).

Addressing management learning, Minztberg (2005) believes that insensitive, mercenary organizational behaviour is partly a product of MBA programs that:

> 'attract a disproportionate share of people with these characteristics – impatient, aggressive, self-serving – and then launch them on fast tracks to positions of influence in society. Because the education is rooted in no industry or organization, is anchored in no particular context, it encourages a style of management that is likewise impatient, aggressive, and self-serving, obsessed with being "on top" to manipulate the "bottom line," "downsizing" to raise "shareholder value." This, in other words, is a style of management devoid of leadership' (Mintzberg, 2005, p.92).

And there is the rub. Rather than being devoid of leadership, a viable argument against Mintzberg would conclude that reducing costs and increasing shareholder value is, in fact, a demonstration of exemplary leadership. Indeed, organization executive reward systems appear to actively support this view of leadership, most prominently in the banking sector (Pash, 2014).

As evidenced in corporate scandals, an Australian Royal Commission into Banking and Financial Services (2018), a Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse (2017), some major organizations and industries appear to have lost a significant degree of their care, their balance, their morality, their respect, their sense of common humanity, their tenderness towards others.

Does this represent a failure of leadership in these highly successful, profitable, well-led organizations? Or might it, more specifically, be an absence of reflective focus on *'leaderaft'* that has caused the leader-ship to become unbalanced and off-course . . . ?

In the same portmanteau stream as the invention of the term 'precariat' in labour relations and the neo-liberal casualization of the workforce (Standing, 2011), which has advanced the debate and created new possibilities for global labour markets, so, too, might '*leaderaft*' help to create a tiny fissure or crack that shines a light on new possibilities? And one method with potential to assist this focus on affective, embodied experience is the creative-critical driving force that results in a creative work (Lee et al., 2015).

It is important to stress that any invented term is merely another form of intellectual shorthand. To avoid 'circling the same buoys' once again, the 'intellectual strait jacket' created by mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself (Dibben et al, 2017) equally applies to an invented term

such as '*leaderaft*' so care must be taken in its use (if any). However, a degree of stabilising balance and harmony might be possible, if we do not forget that it is only an invented 'fix' to help us to view leadership through a new lens, just as we 'fix' (order) the world with organization chart titles and terms such as leader, follower, manager, employee, and so on, that help organizations – including human beings within them – to gain a necessary sense of order, governance, stability and control so they can safely survive and prosper, only to forget that we have done so (Woolgar, 1988) believing our 'fix' to be a one true source of reality; a reality that gives power to its 'owners'.

Conclusion

In order to 'navigate unchartered territories', Ladkin and Taylor (2010) explore variations on the theme of leadership as art and highlight the value of 'sense-making' embodiment, leaders 'staying with their senses' longer to allow emergent data from their physical senses to inform their actions/responses rather than jumping to ideas of what is happening through habitual cognitive analysis. Leadership, like art, is 'experienced' by processes through which they are created.

To create the experience of containing and working with contradictions and paradox is central for both art and for leadership to work with light and shadow, particularly the shadows of corporate scandals and unethical organizational behaviour. Like creative practice artefacts, Gherardi employs case studies (2017a) and vignettes (2017b) such as 'cruel optimism' to 'shed light on how practices may be sustained by competing forms of attachments that sometimes may enter into open conflict and negotiation and some other time may coexist along a multiplicity of intersecting and non-communicating planes' (Gherardi, 2017a, p.218). As I approach a second milestone in my PhD candidature, at times, feeling vulnerable and tangled in knots, I am attempting to explore possibilities by remaining mindful that what matters is not what happens to us but what each of us make of what happens to us (Dibben et al, 2017). By allowing the vagueness of affect to potentially provide 'a way of engaging with "experience" shorn of some of its humanistic garb' (Brown and Tucker, 2010, p.232), new insights may emerge. As Gherardi observes: 'Paying attention and noticing ordinary affects means to devote an analytic attention to how affect in working practices creates an atmosphere in a workplace . . . [which] does not mean a search for rationalistic explanations of what escapes cognition . . . Rather it implies a search in noticing and writing in a . . . more-than-representationalism language . . .' (Gherardi, 2017a, p.212; Lorimer, 2005, p.84). For Lorimer (2005) this is to avoid dichotomist thinking and, I contend, is where the potential exists for creative writing to assist.

Rather than continuing to work in black-and-white binary ways, the turn to ordinary affects 'circulate colour, vibrate, surround and envelope bodies and things that happen to hang together in what is seen as a practice' (Gherardi, 2017a, p.218) and provides hope for viewing leadership differently. Similarly, and importantly, so too, does the Colour Wheel of Practice-Research provide hope where the creative practice is both the object of the study, the method to research that object and the result of the process; where, embedded in the creative practice is a research process which emerges because of engagement with the practice itself (Hope, 2016, p.83).

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