EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR A COMMON WORLD

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ABSTRACT

This study of educational leadership attempts to take the unexpected into account, acknowledging that while leadership in public education often appears to be about control, or causing certain things to happen, it is dependent on human interactions that have unpredictable yet significant effects on others. This consideration gives rise to a different conception of educational leadership, one that is not dependent on prescribed steps and factors, but arises from both fleeting and sustained interactions and the sense that others make of them. Frequently the conventional literature on educational leadership offers a series of steps, diagrams or frameworks to simplify and communicate what educational leadership is, and these approaches have their uses. However, they tend to wring the life out of the concept while trying to nail it down. Stories about leadership, on the other hand, communicate its complexity and sheer human unpredictability in a more multidimensional way. When we are with others, what we do and say, "'produces' stories with or without intention, as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things" (Arendt, 1958, p. 184).

Stories arise, but conceptual tools are a way of making sense of them. The concepts used in the analysis and discussion are: the tension between schooling and education; Hannah Arendt's (1958) notions of the public, private and social; and Arendt's concepts of labour, work and action. These concepts are applied to leadership in public education to describe a new way of conceptualizing educational leadership. This is leadership that acknowledges and utilizes the interdependence of the public and private as a way of educating students to appreciate their individuality while being prepared to be with others in a public setting as part of a democratic society.

Schooling does not often foster this kind of education, and can actually limit interactions that support it as described above. Leaders who aspire to be educational in their practice need to recognize that school is where students are contained, but education is more about fostering students' opportunities to develop and expand their sense of who they are by interacting with others in open, receptive and reflective ways.

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SCHOOLED IN EDUCATION

"What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5)

In some primal way teaching seems to evoke the same behaviour in us as new teachers that we experienced as children in the classroom. We hear the words of our former teachers coming out of our mouths, and wonder how things could have come to this. This is not what we wanted to be as teachers. Most of us hoped we could somehow set off in a new direction and teach the way we wanted to be taught, however fleeting those moments may have been for us when we were in school. The last thing we expected to do is rely on the old saws of classroom management – barking out "Put your pens down," or "Eyes on your own paper", or even worse, "Megan, put the mirror away". But how can it be otherwise? A beginning teacher has no immediate experience, and is doomed to dredge up old scripts from teachers past until he or she figures out what it means to be a teacher.

I went into teaching assuming that order and a systematic approach would prevail in the classroom, and I would teach and my students would learn. Having been a fairly good student, I had no idea that the classroom could be a punishing place of complete mystification to many students, and sometimes to their teachers. My student teaching in high school English was unremarkable at best, and focused on doing what my sponsor teachers expected of me. I had no time, during that artificial stint of practice teaching, to reflect much on the meaning students were making of what I was teaching, nor was I encouraged to do so. Looking back on this, I think as adults we all assumed that our view

of what we were teaching was the most important part of the enterprise, and our perspectives would invariably be good for students. Predictably, my first year of "real" teaching was full of surprises, and the same can be said for the rest of my career as a teacher, consultant, school administrator and bureaucrat. And while the surprises may be different now, they are still coming, and happily so. This project is above all a way of paying tribute to the unexpected, which in the end is what adds the richness to our experiences. This unexpectedness also adds a certain depth and texture to the idea of educational leadership, though capturing the uncertainty of leadership in words has proven to be challenging.

A Novice at Work: Encounters with the Unexpected

As a beginning teacher I found my students were surprisingly willful, and created their own meaning from what I thought I was teaching them. They did far more to shape me as a teacher than I did to shape them as learners. They taught me what education was, as they were so profoundly impervious to schooling. Many of my students were this way by temperament, but two students in my first year of teaching, Joseph and Terry, were that way by design.

While I was an English teacher, I had deliberately pursued some background in teaching reading to make myself more marketable, and as it turned out, this and some luck helped me get my first job. Along with teaching English, I was hired in a suburban school district to run a learning assistance program and work with students 13 to 15 years old who had reading and other academic problems. Part of the job was to identify these "problems" by marching struggling students through a series of diagnostic reading and math tests. Gradually I was to build a short-term clientele based on this diagnosis, apply

the appropriate instructional antidote, and send them back to class in repaired condition.

Joseph and Terry, both over-aged at 16, were my first students, and they didn't need any tests, because it was clear they had problems that were beyond repair. Sending them to me was the first and last response, because there was clearly nothing else to be done with them. Since I was busy setting up the room in a brand new school and they were eager to help, we got along famously. But I was already wondering what I would do with them once the classroom set up was finished.

Joseph was kind, large and had the look of someone who was concentrating a little too hard. He was, of course, because it took a lot of concentration for him to figure things out, though in the end he always did. I felt a kinship with Joseph, as I knew once the room was ready I would have to figure a few things out myself. My strategy of obtaining a specialized set of skills had worked to get me a job, but I felt inadequate when it came to actually using them. While I was thrilled to be a teacher, in these early days Joseph and I were preoccupied with wondering what we were supposed to do, and both of us tended to view the world with a furrowed brow.

Terry was smaller than Joseph, and had blonde hair and eyes that were as blue and blank as a Wedgewood plate. Unlike Joseph, he didn't seem to be concentrating much at all, though he had a lot to say about everything. I had to learn to decode his speech, as he had his own way of pronouncing things. This included my name, which Terry pronounced "Miss Dough" or something close to that, was not at all close to my name. While Joseph seemed to be born the way he was, Terry had been hit by a car at the age of four. The accident had left him with garbled speech and stunned eyes that looked out on the world as if he were still four and the car hadn't hit him yet, but he'd seen it coming.

The horror of this accident brought me up short each time I saw Terry's cheerful mother, who was in the habit of darting in the room to ask how he was, or bring him his lunch, or just to say hello. I had my own blue-eyed boy at home, not yet four, but very capable of suddenly rushing out into the street in that headlong way children meet the world, innocent of its dangers or guileless in their faith that someone will protect them. Every time I saw Terry's mother I thought about how she must have ached each day from her long-ago failure to protect him from the car.

Regardless of what haunted the past, Joseph, Terry and I got our sunny room set up just the way we wanted it in a few short days, and then I had to begin thinking about their education. All my training was suddenly useless, as Joseph couldn't even read level A of the reading workbook, or actually write anything at all, and Terry couldn't sit at a table long enough to allow me to discover, let alone repair, his problems, even if that were possible. My first students had rendered the whole premise of my job suspect. It seemed an unfavorable way to begin a career.

My Education Begins

As it turned out it was the best possible way, as Joseph and Terry taught me more about education and paying attention to what really matters than I could ever hope to teach them. Befuddled as the three of us were, it was clear that I would not be able to put them through some paces in a workbook and convince myself I was teaching them anything, let alone educating them. While some students I met later went through the ritualized motions of schooling in a genial if disengaged way, Joseph and Terry didn't have those motions at their disposal, and they never would.

Joseph took matters into his own hands, as he formed a friendship with the

custodian and designed his own education his own way. He spent part of the day with him, and part of it in some elective courses he had chosen. Terry followed suit, as the two of them had become inseparable by then. Joseph, and therefore Terry, took a liking to drama class, and they were soon the lighting and stagecraft experts of the department. No performance went on without them, and through some unspoken leap of faith on the part of the drama teacher, they soon were viewed as indispensable to all productions, large or small. In effect, Joseph and Terry went from setting up my classroom to setting up the whole school. While they were at it, they set up their place and space in the school in terms of who they were and what they could become by being there.

It would be tempting to say that I played a role in this crafting of an education from the standard ingredients of schooling and the highly individual natures of Joseph and Terry, but this is far from the truth. In reality Joseph and Terry had more to do with creating their own education by simply becoming part of what we were at the school and connecting with that in a natural way. They were exemplifying Greene's (1978) description of education, a process whereby students are "not only creating value for themselves, they are creating themselves; they are moving towards more significant, more understandable lives…" (p. 49). This arguably links to the larger purpose of education, "…the initiation of people into a worth-while form of life" (Peters 1973, p.16).

Terry never learned to talk the way we did, but we learned to understand him. And Joseph never learned to read text, but he read his situation, and knew what needed to be done to ensure that he learned something valuable at school. I was a bystander in this process, but Joseph and Terry were introducing me to all the educational possibilities in schooling, if I took the time to look for them. By virtue of

their poor fit with the conventional structures available in the school, they made new places for their learning. Ironically, Joseph and Terry, because of their inability to fit into prescribed subjects and classes, learned how to learn by filling in the spaces between the structures with their own agenda. This was my first teaching job, and by chance it put me straight in the path of what Greene (1997) calls the "continuing tension" between education and the institutions called schools".

The Challenge of Schooling

After that first year of learning by accident, I went on to work with many more students as a teacher and school principal, and a good number of them were poor fits with school for reasons that were harder to see than Joseph and Terry's obvious challenges. Since I was trained to teach reading, I inherited most of the students who struggled and thrashed in the effort to learn. As I learned, reading was a problem, but it was the least of their particular problems. In spite of this layering of problems, or maybe because of it, what Greene would term their "the texts of their social realities" were always in the foreground in the classroom. I had to learn to read these individual texts before we could even begin to understand each other, let alone get near the curriculum. And the social realities many of them brought from home, layered with years of school failure and desperation, were often revealed in a blend of bravado and fear. This resulted in unbridled classroom behaviour that left me, at the end of the day, raw, exhausted and wondering what on earth it really meant to be a teacher anyway.

While at times my struggling students would burn with enthusiasm for what they were learning, more frequently they seemed to be chafing at the sheer confinement of their day and what I expected of them. And what I expected of them, as I look back on it

now, was to behave like school children, that is, arrive on time for class, bring a pen (though I gave up on this one fairly quickly), stay quietly in their seats, stay focused on whatever task that we were doing, and actually complete it and hand it in. In short, I was schooling them, or at least trying to get them to behave in a school-like fashion.

How they behaved, from what I could see, was hard to predict, let alone control. They seemed more cooperative when we were doing things that somehow related to their interests or experiences, as opposed to reading text and writing out answers to questions. Yet it seemed that the read and write routine was expected of me, along with keeping everyone relatively quiet. Unfortunately this approach seemed to inspire my students to nothing but new heights of creativity in terms of distracting their peers and generally misbehaving. This included expertly manipulating the public arena of the classroom to create embarrassing moments for me that made it clear any authority I had existed at their whim. Some days I felt more like a circus lion tamer than a teacher, as I tried to coax my students into performing tricks that made them appear to be learning. It was clear that they had no interest in this particular performance, and most of their energy went into trying to knock the whip out of my hand.

However, as I felt my way through those first years of trying to be a teacher, I began to realize that when I had the opportunity to recognize and respond to my students as individuals, the schooling seemed to go better. Nothing made this clearer to me than my experiences with Rick, who saw me for extra help because he refused to produce written work. He never handed in any assignments, and when he did write, his words sprawled across the page as ill-shaped block letters that were almost illegible. While his writing was minimal, his verbal output was non-stop. He had a certain witty charm and

boundless enthusiasm for everything that didn't involve writing. In fact he was optimistic and exuded confidence despite his dismal failure in school.

Rick looked like a miniature version of a motorcycle biker, and walked like one too, with a rolling and confident gait. In spite of all this bravado, he had the innocent sunny face of a cherub. It was clear that whoever he became, his personality would lead him there.

Once I came to understand and appreciate his strengths, we struck a deal. I was on his side, and he was on mine. This relationship actually resulted in some written work at times, and he was proud of himself, though he felt obliged to complain as he wrote things down. As far as I was concerned, even his grumbling had a certain conciliatory charm to it, and I felt we were making progress.

This happy state of affairs continued until I took over Rick's grade 8 English class mid year, then we moved into two separate relationships. We still had our amiable back and forth in the small and relatively private learning assistance class, but in the English class it was as if we had never met before. He spent his time falling out of his chair, throwing paper, making loud comments and generally disrupting everything within his reach. When I pressed him on his behaviour, he would pound his desk in frustration. Needless to say, I had no success in getting him to comply, and often had to send him out of the classroom. Conveniently, there was an empty classroom next door which I tried to use as a holding tank for the rambunctious Rick. This also proved futile, as he would pound on the shared wall between the classrooms, poke his head in the door and do everything possible to gain access to his peers, or at least get their attention. He wanted so much to be with us, and yet had no idea how to make that work. At that point, neither

did I.

Beginning to Understand the Lessons

Over time my students taught me to understand the question I asked myself at the end of each day - what it meant to be a teacher - and that long-ago struggle between schooling them and coming to understand what it means to educate them is what this project is all about. This struggle is an ongoing systemic one, and continues to be at the heart of what we have come to call leadership in education. I have moved on to many other roles in public education since then, but the lessons learned from my unruly first students have launched me on a career's worth of inquiry, even as I left the schools and the classrooms where I started. However, all these roles are serving the same purpose, educating children. Putting words and actions to that purpose is important at a time when the larger realms of public education, like the schools I worked in, are caught up in what Hargreaves (2003) terms "…a defining moment in educational history…" As Hargreaves describes it:

> In many parts of the world, the rightful quest for higher educational standards has degenerated into a compulsive obsession with standardization. By and large, our schools are neither preparing students to work well in the knowledge economy nor to live well in a strong civil society. Instead of promoting economic invention and social integration, too many schools are becoming mired in the regulations and routines of soulless standardization. (p. 2)

As Hargreaves sees it, there is a pressing need to explore and affirm what it means to be educated in the face of the conflicting and relentless demands put on public education to serve contradictory ends. Different perspectives from varied leadership

positions I've held in public education have done nothing to convince me that this

struggle has a tidy resolution and that one "true" purpose is destined to prevail in the end.

What Makes Leadership Educational?

I am writing about a way of making sense of educational leadership that takes the

unexpected into account, and acknowledges that while leadership in public education

often appears to be about control, or causing certain things to happen, it isn't really about

this at all, but about human interactions that have unpredictable yet significant effects on

others. Yet how does the intuitive and subjective world of relationships and interactions

stand still long enough for examination, and how does it connect with educational

leadership? That is the question I'm trying to answer.

This particular quest may sound theoretical to the point of being annoying and not

practical at all. I can vouch for the fact that it's difficult to put this unexpected quality of

leadership into words that resonate with other people, but that's what I'm trying to do. I

have spent years trying to understand the dynamic of leadership, have read widely on the

topic, and been exposed to the best thinkers in the field. Even more significantly, I have

been stimulated, challenged and enriched by others I have worked with in leadership

positions. The professional relationships I have had are most significant simply because

they have to do with interacting with other people and learning from them. In reading

and hearing about the many elegant theories, conceptual frameworks and practical steps

pertaining to leadership, I have always felt that something is missing. The missing part

has to do with the essential humanness of the actual experiences we have with others, a

recipe for messy and unforeseeable outcomes, simply because we all experience things in

such individual ways, yet constantly talk and interact with each other in our lives

together. Writing about messiness is difficult, because it won't stay in boxes and doesn't lend itself to following steps in sequence. Putting this unruly human dynamic into words is daunting, and making it comprehensible to others in the course of writing this thesis has often seemed impossibly challenging.

Frequently the literature on educational leadership offers a series of steps, diagrams or frameworks to simplify and communicate what leadership is, and these approaches have their uses. However they tend to wring the life out of the concept while trying to nail it down. Stories about leadership, on the other hand, communicate its complexity and sheer human unpredictability in a more multidimensional way. For this reason stories have more potential to capture the complicated and nuanced nature of leadership in a way that makes sense to others and connects with their own experiences. When we are with others, what we do and say, "'produces' stories with or without intention, as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things" (Arendt, 1958, p. 184).

Stories have their power then, but often seem too subjective and specific to carry much weight in terms of informing theory around educational leadership. This leads full circle back to steps and blueprints based on research that recommends that leaders create school district plans for improvement with "five broad components" (Fullan, 2006, p.74), or consider "four conditions for the collective wisdom of crowds to be activated" (Fullan, 2006, p. 39). I do not intend to directly critique or debate these theoretical "components" and "conditions." Instead I want to consider what leadership means for practitioners "on the ground," who live in a place of ever-shifting and unpredictable components and conditions.

The Human Condition: "Enacted Stories"

I'll be using stories to illustrate the concepts I discuss, simply because stories live and breathe for others in a way that concepts alone cannot muster. Stories can make the complexity of experiences (that graphs and charts and conceptual frameworks try so hard to simplify) comprehensible to others, perhaps because something in them speaks to them as individuals.

Yet these stories need to be linked by a lattice of connected ideas or they stand alone, interesting perhaps, but not contributing to an overall understanding of the concept of educational leadership. Most of the conceptual tools used in this project are derived from the writing of Hannah Arendt, and more specifically from *The Human Condition*, published in 1958.

Arendt, born in 1906, grew up in Germany and completed a doctorate in philosophy in 1929. She fled to Paris in 1933 as Nazi persecution of people of Jewish descent became more prevalent in Germany. Arendt and her husband moved to New York in 1941 after World War II began in Europe, and they had been briefly detained as enemy aliens. The bulk of her writing in political philosophy was done after this move, and clearly her early experiences, combined with her academic background in philosophy, led her to a persistent inquiry into the nature of freedom in the context of politics and political life. *The Human Condition* is her attempt to capture what this condition is, and a primary aspect of it is that whatever we do inevitably involves and affects others. As Arendt (1958) puts it in her prologue, "What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing" (p. 5).

I am drawn to her writing, though frankly it is often off-putting in its complexity.

Just when I think I have come to understand Arendt, I find on re reading that she has included a dimension I overlooked, or introduced an idea I hadn't understood on first reading, thus upsetting the applecart in terms of how I was piecing her ideas together. And yet Arendt is one of the few writers who not only captures, but insists on, the unpredictability of the effects of what we do when we interact with others, or within what she terms the "web of human relationships". As she puts it, "It is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose" (1958, p. 184).

Arendt refuses to smooth and flatten her ideas and lay them out neatly before us, and this makes her writing convoluted at times. Yet she forces us to come to terms with the fact that we can't control how ideas and interactions play themselves out in the experiences of others. In my view, coming to understand leadership means embracing this unpredictability while pursuing the idea of consciously initiating new things with and for others.

With this in mind, in this thesis I am using a series of nested concepts to explore the idea of educational leadership. Many of these concepts have an oppositional relationship, at least on the surface. And yet they are not always as opposing as they seem, and examining the tension between them can be a catalyst for uncovering connections and deepening understandings. What follows is an overview of these concepts and how they relate to each other. While the treatment here is superficial, later chapters will expand on them. This initial view provides a map of how these concepts both connect and separate various ideas around educational leadership.

Schooling and Education

While often these terms, schooling and education, are used synonymously, they are not necessarily the same thing. As Sizer (1997) puts it, " *Public education* as a practical matter in America is operationally (and politically) thus considered in fact the same as *public schooling*, even though young Americans likely learn as much or more of real importance beyond their classrooms as within them" (p. 37). Sizer observes that, "Going to school is the bottom line. Knowing something for that experience is hoped for but - if one carefully follows the way public authorities invest their money and energy - that intent appears to be far less critical than for the student to simply show up" (p. 36). Others (Greene, 1997, Fenstermacher, 1997, Peters, 1973, Dewey, 1916) have commented on the distinction between education and schooling. As Greene (1997) states:

> Education, as both concept and undertaking, is in continuing tension with the institutions called schools. Education, after all, has to do with engaging live human beings in activities of meaning-making, dialogue and reflective understanding of a variety of texts, including the texts of their social realities. Growing, becoming different, becoming informed and articulate: all these are involved in the project called education, a project that must be chosen by persons intentionally and cooperatively involved in learning how to learn (p. 305).

Education, then, has to do with preparing children for participating as an individual adult among others in a democracy that encourages a free exchange of ideas and understandings that continue to grow. Schooling is more concerned with bureaucratic structures and expectations as preparation for future employment, training

for behaving in certain ways and credentialing certain types of learning. Its purpose is to organize large numbers of children and quantify learning. Subsequent discussion will build on these dueling concepts of schooling and education, as they are in relentless combat in terms of how different individuals and agencies view the purposes of public education. Put simply, one view is that it exists to launch a life intended to pursue understandings and the other is that it is meant to quantify and credential learning in specific areas. Educational leaders need to navigate between these two purposes in a way that opens up multiple possibilities for students to understand themselves and others while accommodating the structures and policies that under gird public schooling as an institution. While this may sound like a weak compromise, in practice it requires insight, persistence, and more than a little courage.

The tension between education and schooling can produce what Cuban (1992) terms "value conflicts" or dilemmas that resist a problem solving approach, despite all efforts to address them as problems seeking a remedy. These constant tensions, such as that between creating time for students to express their opinions in classrooms and addressing all the topics in the curriculum, are opportunities for educational leadership. This is simply because they require responses that involve examining and acting on the values implicit in both goals.

The Public, Private and Social

Recognizing value conflicts that are inherent in the cross purposes of education and schooling is one thing, but understanding the source of these conflicts is another. Arendt (1958) offers the idea of different realms for human interactions, the public, private and social, as one way of coming to understand this. She characterizes the

distinction between the private and public in this way, "The most elementary meaning of the two realms indicates that there are things that need to be hidden and others that need to be displayed publicly if they are to exist at all" (p. 73). This sounds deceptively simple, and in fact it is. Arendt's use of the concepts of public and private is laden with complexity, as even a cursory reading of *The Human Condition* will demonstrate. And yet this basic public/private distinction can be at the root of many situations that educational leaders encounter. In short, the private individual needs respect and protection, yet also needs to learn to interact as an individual among others in the public, or what Arendt often terms "the world". As she puts it, "No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature's wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings" (p. 22). Both of these realms, public and private, require space and acknowledgment within schools, and I will argue that creating this space in a conscious way is a significant aspect of educational leadership.

Confounding matters is what Arendt terms the "social" realm, or society, which "expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (p. 40). Arendt believes that the social has intruded immeasurably on both the public and private realms, swamping out individualism and the ability to "act" or initiate something new and replacing it with the expectation to conform. It is not difficult to connect the social with the institutional structures of public schooling, and in fact Arendt herself (1968), in what could be viewed as an overstatement, states that school is "the institution we interpose between the private

domain of the home and the world in order to make the transition from the family to the world possible at all" (p. 188-189).

Educational importance of preserving the public and private. Creating private and public spaces within this "social" institution of schooling allows room for its educational purposes to emerge, and this requires leadership that extends beyond creating rules and structures. Instead it begins to address who we are along with how we need to be as we interact with each other. The private is significant, as it is where what makes us distinct, our individuality, is forged and nurtured. Without it our sense of who we are becomes eroded and diluted when we are with others. As Benhabib (2000) puts it:

> A privately owned place means one that provides the self with a center, with a shelter, with a place in which to unfold capacities, dreams and memories, to nurture the wounds of the ego, and to lend to it that depth of feeling that, as Arendt puts it, allows it to "[rise] into sight from some darker ground." (p. 213)

> However, a life conducted completely in private has significant limitations. The public, as a place of appearance and commonality, is less sheltered, but equally important. First, as Arendt (1958) puts it, "For us, appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves – constitutes reality" (p. 50). Secondly, "The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together, and yet prevents us falling all over each other, so to speak" (p. 52).

An awareness of the interdependence of the public and private, or the educational importance of the distinct self appearing and engaged in interaction with others, can transcend the social, or at the minimum, keep it in its place. The public and private, then, are key to education as Greene (1997) describes it, "Growing, becoming different,

becoming informed and articulate: all these are involved in the project called education, a project that must be chosen by persons intentionally and cooperatively involved in learning how to learn" (p. 305).

Labour, Work and Action

In Arendt's (1958) view, what we do, whether in public or private, can be viewed as three distinct types of activity. Labour consists of the repetitive tasks that are necessary to sustain life – for example, cleaning, cooking, caretaking, farming and the like. As Arendt points out, and anyone who has laboured will attest, the fruits of labour are consumed immediately, only to launch another round of labour. On the other hand, what Arendt terms "work" is associated with producing and maintaining a permanent product. This work can produce anything from reports to tools to what we call "consumer goods". The relative permanence of these products is one thing that distinguishes "work" from "labour".

In contrast to these product-based activities, Arendt (1958) describes action as how individuals assert their individuality by speaking and acting when they are among others:

> With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and is not prompted by utility, like work. It may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join but it is never conditioned by them, its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning

something new on our own initiative. To act, in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to begin, to set something into motion (p. 176-177).

This idea of action as leadership is pivotal to this project, as it addresses the issue of what we actually do as educational leaders, once we have come to understand the tension between education and schooling and the interplay between public, private and social. The idea of action leads to another tension, the difference between "ruling" and "leading" (Arendt, 1958). If leading is linked to action, ruling is "the notion that men can lawfully and politically live together only when some are entitled to command and others are forced to obey" (p. 222). A person who rules expects others to comply with what is, whereas a leader creates the chance for them to start something new.

The web of relationships. This idea leads to the final concept that I intend to use to illuminate the idea of educational leadership. This is Arendt's (1958) notion of the web of relationships that surrounds us and makes narrative meaning of our actions both because of us and in spite of us.   I do not mean to imply that this is the last piece of the puzzle, and putting it in place will make everything clear, as this is far from the case. Arendt (1958) uses the metaphor of a web to describe the interconnected relationships that lie in between us as individuals interacting with others. This web, like all webs, is practically invisible, yet resilient and capable of influencing us in innumerable ways. As Arendt states:

> The realm of human affairs, strictly speaking, consists of the web of human relationships which exists wherever men live together. The disclosure of the "who" through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always fall into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt.

Together they start a new process which eventually emerges as the unique life

story of the newcomer, affecting uniquely the life stories of all those with whom

he comes into contact (p. 183-184).

The concept of the web of relationships appeals because it begins to get at the

intangible yet profound influence of human interactions on what we do as leaders. It also

addresses how actions become represented in stories rather than graphics and flow charts.

As I stated earlier, human interactions are not something to be taken for granted, glossed

over or changed by policies and structures. In fact, Arendt adds even more power to this

idea of the web of relationships by describing the unpredictable effects that it has on

actions, or its "boundlessness", "It is because of this already existing web of

relationships, with its innumerable conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost

never achieves its purpose, but it is also because of this medium, in which acting alone is

real, that it "produces" stories with or without intention…" (p, 184).

This idea of intentionality and lack of it begins to get at the unpredictability of

human interactions, or what Arendt (1958) terms their "boundlessness". This separation

of intent and consequences is dangerous terrain for ruling, yet part and parcel of leading.

Educational leaders act in full knowledge that what they choose to do in public will

reverberate in a variety of ways they have not anticipated. More to the point, they

appreciate the risk and promise of surrendering what they say and do to a larger public

narrative.

Review of Conceptual Tools

I view these somewhat opposing ideas: schooling/education; public/private

/social; labour/work/action distinct, yet related. In practice they are related as they are all

surrounded by the "web of relationships" that both transforms them and defines them in public. As tools they can build on each other and help to describe aspects of educational leadership that are rarely addressed. Tensions such as those contained in these concepts frequently provide the backdrop and the catalyst for leaders, and they are frequently derived from the conflicting purposes of education and schooling. These tensions result in dilemmas that lack simple win-lose solutions, but can be better seen and understood through the lenses of public, private and social that Arendt (1958) provides. Seeing however, is not doing, and ultimately leadership becomes wrapped up and defined by what we say or do. In this sense we are defined as leaders in terms of our labour, work and the actions we take, all described and defined as a result of interaction with others. What we do becomes part of the web of relationships that surrounds us, or grist for the mill of narrative. This web then, provides the intangible links between all of us as we lead our public lives. Stories are the results of these connections as our actions and words become enfolded, told and retold within this web until it "produces stories with or without intention as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things" (Arendt, 1958, p. 184).

These stories will not sit tidily in these connected concepts in the way I have just described them. Instead they can take unexpected turns and detours and arrive at surprising destinations. And not so surprisingly, most of our understandings and learning about leadership, and the meaning of education itself, come in the wake of contemplating these unexpected outcomes. And this takes me back to some of my first surprises as a teacher, which is how I began this chapter.

Lessons of Practice

There is never a tidy solution for the most important things that happen in education, as much as a mind seeking rationality might search for it. The resolutions, such as they are, often lie in unexpected places instead of at the end of a logical sequence of steps to address the problem. Joseph and Terry, my first students, taught me this. They were uneducable in the traditional sense, and I spent many hours trying to figure out how to solve the problem they presented. Yet they took action on their own to make sense of their education, and educated me in the process.

To be open to lessons like these, and act upon those understandings leaders must be what Greene (1978) terms "wide awake" to overcome

> our tendency to perceive our everyday reality as a given – objectively defined, impervious to change. Taking it for granted, we do not realize that that reality, like all others, is an interpreted one. It presents itself to us as it does because we have learned to understand it in standard ways (p. 44).

Greene invites us to challenge these interpretations by being wide awake, and developing "the sense of agency required for living a moral life" (p. 44) and acting accordingly.

While understanding the promises and possibilities in education, educational leaders need to be fully aware of the pragmatic realities of schooling. The tensions between pragmatics and promise define the role as much as anything, and can either immobilize leaders in the former or inspire them to reach for fulfilling the latter. Perhaps the art of educational leadership lies in understanding things in a way that opens our eyes to possibilities rather than forcing us to look for tidy solutions.

The remarkable promise of this public education is the idea that all children, regardless of background, are entitled to be educated, and thereby prepared to lead a good and worthwhile life. This promise is inherent in school children themselves and their relentless exploration of the world as a place completely new to them. A promise is also made by using the word "public" to describe "education", as public is an inclusive term which evokes the welfare of people as a whole. Ironically the notion of public also opens the door to the multiple views about how and why that promise should be fulfilled.

This tension is inherent in what Arendt (1958) describes as the nature of the term "public" which "signifies the world itself." Arendt goes on to observe that "…the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time" (p. 52). With these words Arendt sets the scene for the perennial struggle of public education to meet conflicting aims while serving the common good. We collectively uphold the chalice of education, brimming with all that is good and hopeful for our future.   However, when it comes time to actually consume it, the brew gets mixed reviews – and it always will, as education means different things to different people.

Despite the contradictions and complexities inherent in serving these conflicting ideals, the concept of public education is the crucible of all our hopes and dreams as a democratic society, a place where our children mingle and are melded in preparation for carrying on our democratic principles when they become adults. However, these ideals and aspirations are often mired in the time-honoured patterns of schooling, such as bell schedules, unconnected and forgettable pieces of information which must be retained for tests then forgotten, and rules which in many instances have more to do with adult working conditions than children's learning conditions. These practices seem to be

closer to Hargreave's (2004) "soulless standardization" than helping students to "live well in a strong civil society".

This does not necessarily mean that all is lost. Meier (1995), a pioneer in the creation of small public schools based on inquiry and democratic principles, puts it this way:

> The question is not, is it possible to educate all our children well? but rather, Do we want to do it badly enough? …the task of creating environments where all kids can experience the power of their ideas requires unsettling not only our accepted organization of schooling and our unspoken and unacknowledged agreement about the purposes of schools. Taking this task seriously means calling into question our definitions of intelligence and the ways in which we judge each other. And taking it seriously means accepting public responsibility for the shared future of the next generation. (p. 4)

Hargreaves (2003) however, points out that educational reforms such as those described by Meier have proven difficult to replicate and sustain, as at times some theories of change present educational reform as:

> …a technical, neutral process of pressure and support that was emptied of all controversy and values. It was the failure to address such values and controversies head-on in the process of change; to tackle issues of race, color and injustice; to challenge deep-seated beliefs about the incapacity of children in poor or minority families; and to resist political cowardice and tendencies to compromise in the face of elite parents' pressure that ultimately undermined the reforms. (p. 59)

Greene puts it even more baldly, "But when it comes to schools the dominant voices are still those of the officials who assume the objective worth of certain kinds of knowledge, who take for granted that the schools' main mission is to meet national economic and technical needs" (Greene, 1995, p.9).

While Greene's contempt for officials is clear, it does speak to the potential for leadership positions to make meaning out of the purposes of public education. As one of those "officials" Greene sees as so misguided about the purposes of education, I feel deeply obligated to explore the potential of leadership and how it can best serve public education. This is not to say that we must throw away all traditional structures and beliefs about schooling in order to truly educate our students. This is neither realistic nor particularly practical. However, we can become more thoughtful, articulate and intentional about how and why we are educating our students, and this is a role for leadership in schools and school systems. And just maybe, if we do this in a thoughtful way, it is truly possible to "educate our children well" (Meier, 1995), in every sense of the word. It will require, as Arendt (1958) puts it, that we "think what we are doing". It is my hope that ultimately the conceptual tools used in the following chapters will help us think and act in ways that contribute to their education.

Chapter 2 examines the key notions of schooling and education, the public, private and social along with labour, work and action in more detail. This chapter includes some critique of these ideas along with examples of how they can be applied to public education. Chapter 3 specifically applies these ideas to educational leadership, and Chapter 4 examines the importance of recognizing who students are as private individuals as part of the process of educating them. The final chapter addresses the

importance of creating supportive public spaces in schools so that students have the

opportunity to better understand themselves and their connections with others as part of

their education.

CHAPTER 2:

TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub;
It is the center hole that makes it useful.
Shape clay into a vessel;
It is the space within that makes it useful.
Cut doors and windows for a room;
It is the holes which make it useful.
Therefore benefit comes from what is there;
Usefulness from what is not there.
Tao Te Ching 11

The quote above may seem like a cryptic way to introduce the conceptual framework for examining educational leadership, as it is more about creating spaces than building structures. We often think of leaders as people who build a reassuring vision of reality for the rest of us, one in which "what is not there" has no place among the certainties that fill the world as they see it and define it for us.

A televised U.S. presidential candidate debate I watched recently reminded me about these popular truisms around leadership. To some degree we are all willing hostages to the idea that a leader finds the right path, makes the right decision and holds to it, no matter what. This makes it easier for the rest of us, as there is no space for the discomfort of indecision or uncertainty. There is a righteous, square-jawed appeal to this decisiveness that is often equated with leadership. More mythological than outright wrong, this idea is pervasive, and was in full flower during this particular debate. The candidates were peppered with questions, including an assortment streamed in via You Tube. The streamed ones, in particular, tended to be black and white questions on abortion, the war in Iraq, and illegal immigration – are you for or against it? The suitable answers were black and white too - against abortion and illegal immigrants, for the war.

Or this was the case until one of the You Tube questions went something like this, "Your answer will tell me everything I need to know about you. Do you believe every word in this book?" The camera then zoomed in on the Bible the questioner was holding. Each candidate tried to give the impression that he resolutely believed in the Bible, but each slipped then slid on the "every word" part of the question. Vague words like "metaphor" or "intent" began to appear in the answers. One candidate allowed that maybe Jonah didn't literally get swallowed by a whale and live to tell the tale, but he certainly believed in the lesson that story was trying to teach. He did not say exactly what that lesson was, but sounded very sure it was a good and believable one. Even in the unambiguous world of presidential campaigns, uncertainty reared its head that night.

The whole tendency to seek certainty reminds me of an unsettling conversation I recently overheard between two boys in their early teens who were walking past my house. They had just walked past the small synagogue on the corner of my street. One asked the other what that building was for, and the other said it was a church for Jewish people. He then added, "I hate Jews." The other one asked him why, and he said, "I just do."

Whether that boy stays fixed in his opinion of Jewish people until adulthood depends on a lot of things, including what he is learning at home and what he has been exposed to in other aspects of his life. However, it also depends on whether he has the opportunity to become educated, or open to the ideas of others, whether their ideas stem from religion, culture, race, family or other individual experiences. And while what he encounters in all aspects of his life may vary, hopefully at school he will encounter an education that encourages him to be open to different ways of thinking, and to think

deeply about his views and those of others, so that "I just do," does not stand as a rationale for any of his opinions into adulthood, and he becomes open to thinking and talking about them with others. As he grows from a child to a man my hope is that he becomes less certain as he comes to understand that there is more than one way to think about things, and that he has been taught to do this. For this to happen he needs to be with people who think this way, and lead him to this understanding by the way they interact with others.

Leadership: An Uncertain Proposition

My point here is though this idea that leadership equals certainty seems to be built into people, leadership is anything but a certain proposition. Even if one may feel certain about doing particular things as a leader, the only real certainties are the unexpected reactions and consequences that follow it. In the context of educational leadership "the utility of non existence" is that it provides the space for unanticipated reactions, opinions and debates about what has happened and what will happen.   Conventional thinking about leadership is that to acknowledge this multiplicity of outcomes is weak and indecisive, yet to ignore it, and assume there is one predictable outcome to what we do, is delusional. It is also incompatible with the plurality of beliefs that are part and parcel of the public and the school systems that are intended to serve it. For this reason we need to look at a different concept of educational leadership that acknowledges, and even celebrates, this plurality. For this reason I am choosing to use three conceptual lenses to focus on the whole question of educational leadership in order to better understand what it is, and what it can be.   The three concepts and how they lead to a new conception of educational leadership will be used as major headings within Chapter 2:

1. the conflict between schooling and education;

2. Hannah Arendt's distinction between public, private and social;

3. Arendt's notions of labour, work and action

4. a new conception of educational leadership.

These are very broad organizers. This chapter will discuss these ideas in depth and elaborate on them as concepts that I plan to use to reconceptualize the role of educational leadership in public education. Chapter 3 will then move into more specific applications and implications of these concepts in relation to schools, and school systems and educational leadership.

Schooling and Education: Not Really the Same Thing

Though these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not really the same thing at all. They are built on different assumptions and values, and produce a clash of values that is a constant element within the institutions that house public education (Egan, 1997; Osborne, 2008). There is a perpetual conflict between schooling, or the bureaucratic structures associated with organizing children's learning, and education, or preparing them to live as individuals in a democratic society. The tensions, or cross purposes, between schooling and education have been noted by many including Greene (1997) Cullingford (2002), and Osborne (2008). Being educated is closely linked with the idea of democracy, or that people have learned to meet life as individuals who are clear on their beliefs but open to new experiences and prepared to respect and engage with the views of others. Schooling, as Osborne (2008) describes it, is more about training:

…the creation of compulsory public schooling in which students followed an

officially prescribed curriculum, using officially authorized textbooks, taught by

officially licensed teachers, and supervised by officially appointed inspectors, had

little to do with education in any real sense of that word, but much to do with the

socialization and training of the young, and especially of the children of the

working classes and in North America of immigrants, the so-called "dangerous

classes" who could not be trusted to respect prevailing social norms. (p. 24)

This seems to have little to do with being open and inquiring, and a lot to do with

knowing and accepting what one is supposed to do. At the same time, Osborne (2008)

freely acknowledges that the "advancing democratization of social and political life" in

the 20th century created an expectation for schools to do more than train students, "as

democratic citizens are not born, but have to be made, and that the personal qualities and

social norms that underlie democracy need to be taught, and that schools are potentially

the best places for teaching them" (p. 31).

According to Osborne, democracy consists of two components: 1. the ability to

knowledgeably engage in dialogue regarding the various views, alternatives, and choices

that are part and parcel of a democracy; and 2. sharing a sense of community and

interdependence with people "who do not necessarily share our values or agree with our

beliefs" (p. 31).

While no one in public education would disagree with this goal conceptually, the

evidence that we actively strive for it in schools is sometimes hard to find. This is

perhaps the paradox of public education – while it sets out to offer all children boundless

options and possibilities as future citizens of a pluralistic democracy, it often defines

success during their childhood in terms of schooling, that is, in tightly wrapped ways

that limit their choices and demand conformity (Barber 1997, Sizer 1997). While we try to aim our children at the stars through education, in reality we often tether them to the familiar earth-bound landmarks of schooling. As Hargreaves (2003) expresses this duality:

> Yet instead of fostering creativity and ingenuity, more and more school systems have become obsessed with imposing and micromanaging curricular uniformity. In place of ambitious missions of compassion and community, schools and teachers have been squeezed into the tunnel vision of test scores, achievement targets and league tables of accountability. (p. 1)

I am assuming that conflicts between the purposes of education and those of schooling are here to stay, so hoping for one of them to prevail in a conclusive way is to hope in vain. However, coming to understand the oppositional dynamic between the values of education and those of schooling involves more than just naming them and declaring them in conflict. This is not a duel to the death, but simply awareness that this duality is part and parcel of the landscape of educational leadership. Further, keeping the educational aspects of public education in the foreground, that is, remembering and acting on our commitment to prepare students to participate in the democracy that spawned the notion of public education in the first place, is key to leadership in an educational setting. This sense of living and participating in a democracy is not propagated automatically, but must be learned and practiced in order to be "created anew in each generation" (0sbourne, 2008, p. 31). Learning and practicing democratic participation is not, however, always in the foreground in the day-to-day life of schools.

Going to School

There is a thin patina of order imposed by the routines of grades, courses, schedules, bells, late slips and report cards that have come to define schooling. And in fact, many of these things serve useful functions. Without some form of organization, schools would not be able to account for their students at all, let alone ensure their safety, teach them something and report out on their progress in learning it. So I am not trying to vilify schooling here, but simply observing that its good intentions – safety, coherence and organization, can sometimes detract from the educational side of the enterprise, which involves a certain appreciation of diversity and unpredictability. Conformity and predictability drive schooling, whereas the fostering of education can be highly individual, unpredictable and even chaotic because of its dependence on human connections.

While the 5 year olds who enter the school system are honored for their uniqueness, their distinct experiences and different ways of interpreting the world, the 17 and 18 year olds who leave it have been compared, graded, sorted and grouped along the way in order to organize them into manageable units of certified success and failure. Appreciating children as individuals can get lost along the way, along with fostering an appreciation of others in them. I often think if my own early students had been less openly rebellious I may not have been pushed to meet them on their own terms, or even come close to educating them, and for that I thank them.

Education should result in people who can think and act as thoughtful and critical individuals in a democratic system. The purpose of education is not to produce people who have passed a certain number of courses and are therefore entitled to call themselves

educated. This giving of diplomas that occurs to mark the end of schooling looks good on paper, but says little about how a person lives a life or sees the world. However, the larger portion of students' and teachers' time is devoted to schooling, and more specifically, teaching, testing, memorizing things and evaluating and credentialing retention of these things. These routines of schooling are so pervasive that they keep individuality and thoughtful interactions with others at bay, all in the name of organization, predictability, good behaviour and standards. In an unconscious way, we in schools try to create and credential a uniform learning experience that cannot really exist, given the unique way that each individual experiences and makes sense of things they encounter outside of school.   As Cullingford (2002) puts it, "The most significant ambiguity of school is that between school and the experiences of home, neighbourhood, community and society as a whole" (p. 1).

If we take the time to ask about the sense students are making of their lives in school, often the wide gap between what they experience and what we think we are doing for them is startling. As I think of my previously mentioned class of rebellious grade 8 students, the first thing I acknowledge is they taught me more about education than anyone who gave me a teaching certificate. They were lively and inquisitive about everything - except school. They had failed in school so often that they had no confidence in themselves, and little reason to change that attitude. Instead of using their energy and curiosity to improve their school performance, most of it went into disrupting my carefully planned lessons, in a genial but persistent way.

In desperation at one point, I decided that one way to motivate them might be to let them make up the questions for an upcoming social studies exam themselves.

Looking back on it, in a clumsy sort of way I was attempting to give them some ownership and control over their learning to get them more engaged in what we were doing. I was too much of a novice to question why I was giving them a test in the first place, as I'd learned that despite their unique struggles with school, they craved having tests and books like everyone else. The trappings of schooling made them feel "normal" though they were generally unsuccessful at using these trappings to good effect. I thought we could review for the test by sharing the answers to questions that they designed. As an added bonus, since I planned to use their questions for the actual exam, I thought they might feel more confident going into it if we had discussed the answers together.

While my intentions were good, things didn't turn out exactly the way I hoped they would. In the end I was the one who did all the learning, because the questions my students made up told me surprising things about what they thought a test was. Their questions were almost impossible to answer because they focused on the tiniest details in the textbook in a random sort of way. "What type of horse did William of Normandy ride in the Battle of Hastings and when was this battle?" was a typical example.

In part these questions reflected my students' lack of expertise in designing test questions, though my expertise at that early stage of teaching was only marginally better. But the student "test" questions were also a good example of their view of testing and their school experiences. The bottom line was that unless an individual had a photographic memory, he or she wouldn't be able to answer most of the questions my students created. They were all based on recalling minute facts, and the students told me they were trying to make them "tricky", so they were asking a lot of "hard stuff". They assumed that one of the purposes of the test was to trip up as many of them as possible

and ensure that they didn't succeed. This test creation activity turned out to be very

useful information for me, as it told me a lot about how these struggling students felt

about tests – they were designed to lead them to make as many mistakes as possible. And

that meant the designer of the test, the teacher, was there to engineer their failure.

For these students, the disconnect between what happened in school - tests,

homework, and compliance, and their lives as curious individuals engaged in a "…never-

ending conversation about what it means to be human and to live together with other

human beings" (Osborne, 2008, p. 33) was profound. And there was no doubt they were

engaged in "never-ending conversation about what it means to be human", most of which

was going on simultaneously as I struggled to teach them the finer points of longitude

and latitude on an outdated map of the world.

Yet these same students could describe a snow storm like this:

It's the shovel gently scraping;

And the snowflakes like startled glass

Then the thick snowy evening

Like a hill upon the road,

And the porch is softly swept

And the blizzard comes again.

While this may not be perfect iambic pentameter and may be derivative, it was

written by a child who failed in school but was acutely tuned into the sights and feelings

in the world around him. What I learned here was when I moved off the map of the world

and to places that they knew and recognized, my students blossomed, and felt successful,

and forgot all about the trickery of school and their failures and began to think about

expressing their everyday lives in words. After a while they started writing these poems together, and sharing them as the unique expression of what they had experienced. We took to going on "poetry walks" and they would come back and write about what they had seen, and more importantly, how they felt about it. In an unconscious way I had moved from schooling them to educating them, though at the time all I was aware of is that they responded better to the poetry walk than they did to longitude and latitude. I was sure of this when I taught the same class the following year and realized that they still had no clue about longitude and latitude, but somehow thought better of themselves as learners than they did when I met them in grade 8, though they still suffered from serious allergies to schooling.

Despite the school system's earnest attempts to regulate their learning and standardize what they learn, individuals slip free of the system that has been so labouriously created for them and make their own sense of it. There is a gap between intent and outcomes that is often not identified, i.e. that individuals continue to exist and make unique sense of their experiences in spite of the schooling systems that surround them. This gap between individual experiences and being prepared to live in community with others is the very space that educational leaders need to utilize to foster experiences that are educational for students. If this does not happen, this space will quickly be filled with school routines that overshadow individual experiences and leave little time for exchange of ideas. In this way schooling can subsume the educational purposes in public education.

Yet there is a certain tangible appeal in these organizational things. They have the aforementioned allure of certainty, as they create a sense of predictability, safety and

structure. It is easy to see how they have come to be equated with education in the

popular mindset. But keeping the tidy trappings of schooling well oiled and running

smoothly, while important, is not necessarily educational leadership. This then, begs the

question of what education is and how it transcends the familiar structures and rituals of

schooling.

The Meaning of Education

What follows is an elaboration on what education means in the views of a

selection of scholars and practitioners in the area of educational philosophy.

Peters (1973) defines education as "…the initiation of people into a worth-while

form of life", then points out that determining an aim beyond this destroys the essence of

the definition. He further elaborates on what it means to be educated:

> …"education" implies that a man's outlook is transformed by what he
>
> knows…For how a man lives depends upon what he sees and understands. An
>
> educated person…is one whose whole range of actions, reactions and activities is
>
> gradually transformed by the deepening and widening of his understanding and
>
> sensitivity…to be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel
>
> with a different view. So what is required is not feverish preparation for
>
> something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion and taste at
>
> worthwhile things that lie to hand. (p. 19, 20)

Many educational theorists would not take issue with this definition at this level

of abstraction, and in fact Peters is joined in spirit by others with similar views. For

example, Greene (1996) elaborates on the notion that:

> …education, after all, has to do with engaging live human beings in activities of

meaning making, dialogue and reflective understanding of a variety of texts, including the texts of their social realities. Growing, becoming informed and articulate; all of these are involved in the project called education, a project that must be chosen by persons intentionally and cooperatively involved in learning to learn. (p. 305)

Meier (1995) holds similar beliefs, as represented in the following question, "And it turns out that public schools, in new and different forms, are the best vehicle for nourishing the extraordinary untapped capacities of all our children. The question is not, Is it possible to educate all children well? But rather, Do we want to do it badly enough?" (p. 4).

Fenstermacher (1997) takes a different approach towards the same end, emphasizing the moral nature of teaching and how it links with the purposes of education:

…teaching becomes nearly incomprehensible when disconnected from its fundamental purposes…moral qualities are learned – acquired in the course of a lived experience. If there are not models for them, no obvious or even subtle pressure to adopt moral qualities, not hints, no homilies, not maxims, and no opportunity to initiate moral action, moral virtues may be missed, perhaps never to be acquired. (p. 134)

While these definitions all sound like something we aim to strive for in education, they are all expressed in abstract ways that range from seductively poetic to purely rhetorical. It is difficult to distill any operational implications from them, but the question of what education is in practice becomes important in order to further the

discussion I have begun. The idea of education needs to be anchored to some sort of

reality in order to link it with the practice of educational leadership.

A good and worthwhile life. Coulter and Wiens (2008) make two significant

points about education that start us down this path. The first is that Socrates, Aristotle and

Plato, as key participants in the first recorded debates about education, or how to best

prepare children to make contributions to the public world they will enter as adults,

agreed on one point - education should foster and support *eduaimonia*, which Coulter and

Wiens choose to translate as meaning a "good and worthwhile life" (p.11). Briefly

stated, Socrates and Plato saw knowledge as the access route and guide to this sort of life,

while Aristotle considered pure knowledge somewhat impractical until it was applied in

the right time and way. The ability to apply knowledge, or act with wisdom and

understanding, comes from experience gained from being with people, including those

who understand and practice acting in ways that contribute to the experiences of others in

positive ways. This sort of practical wisdom is termed *phronesis*, which Aristotle

distinguished from *sophia*, a wisdom gained from knowing and contemplating ideas that

were not necessarily ever applied in practical terms. This distinction is very similar to the

common theory/practice debate that persists in education to this day. The idea is that

knowledge alone, untempered by the wisdom gained from applying it in the untidy

context of experiences with others, is not always a good guide to making decisions or

choosing a course of action.

Along with linking education to a "good and worthwhile life" lived in relation to

others, Coulter and Wiens (2008) establish that defining education once and for all is

impossible in light of the pluralism that characterizes our reality, as inevitably "large

pluralist societies struggle to decide what counts as education-especially if they are liberal in the sense of allowing people the freedom to determine for themselves their own good and worthwhile lives" (p. 13). Given this reality, defining education leads to more questions than answers. But Coulter and Wiens (2008) make the point that this debate is not only inevitable, but desirable, once we "connect 'education' with another word with a range of modern usages, 'democracy' " (p.15).

This is because:

The central educational responsibility becomes preparing people to engage with their equals in deciding how they will live together…no easy task. Indeed, democracy and education both depend on cycles of provoking, understanding, nurturing and sometimes temporarily resolving differences among people who often have very different perspectives on the world. (p. 16)

Lost in the day to day. However, this leadership responsibility frequently becomes lost in the day-to-day school world of books, curriculum guides and prescribed instructional time, and as a result education becomes defined as these things in themselves. Larger educational goals become lost in translation, and this is a significant loss. To lead in an educational sense as defined above means to transcend the certainties of schooling and become open to the unpredictable interplay of ideas, understandings and relationships that need to be acknowledged as part of the journey of becoming educated. The uneven and sometimes uncomfortable terrain along the way, consisting of new, inconsistent and nonconforming views and opinions, leads directly to the dilemmas of leadership,

This is because they work against the flow of schooling, which is explicitly and implicitly bent on organizing things for the comforts of conformity, regulation and certainty.

It's not enough to say that education is not schooling, and this is a dilemma, and leave it at that. The promise made by the idea of public education is that all students will be prepared and allowed to participate in a democratic society and lead a "good and worthwhile life" (Coulter and Wiens, 2008). This involves the ability and opportunity to engage with others in a way that invites a meaningful exchange of ideas and perspectives about the quality of their lives together. This includes recognizing what is good about it, along with frank and inclusive dialogue about what needs further attention. A person who is educated has an appetite for this ongoing collective quest and the ability to engage in dialogue about it with others. They are continually engaged in "growing, becoming informed and articulate" (Greene, 1996) because they have learned how to be this way. In short, they are educated.

Leading educationally. Educational leaders, then, are constantly buffeted by multiple expectations and assumptions around the purpose of public education. These purposes include training, indoctrinating, transmitting knowledge, creating opportunities for individual development and preparing students to participate as full and involved members of a democratic system and community. Leaders are expected to somehow meet all these conflicting agendas, a task which is almost impossible to articulate, let alone complete successfully (Egan 1997). Egan sees these conflicting goals as individual development, socialization, which is related to conforming and being employed, and the acquisition of knowledge. As he states, "…each of these aims is incompatible in

profound ways with the other two. As with prisons' aims to punish and to rehabilitate, the more we work to achieve one of the schools' aims, the more difficult it becomes to achieve the others" (p. 10). And in case this isn't discouraging enough, Egan finishes off with this comment, "At its best, schooling is a set of flaccid compromises among these three great and powerful ideas" (p. 24). Egan has his own way of laying down the gauntlet, but the point is that there is an inherent conflict within the purposes of public education that presents challenges for its leaders. I have chosen to view this conflict as embedded in the contradictions between the purposes of schooling and those of education. Briefly put, it's the difference between learning to conform with others' expectations and learning to understand, think and act as an individual connected to others through both differences and what links us together. Further, I am suggesting that leadership involves focusing on what is educational and creating opportunities for it to happen within and without the familiar hallways of schooling.

Lenses on Leadership: The Public, Private and Social

The disconnect between schooling and education leads directly to the second set of ideas that I intend to use to examine educational leadership. Hannah Arendt's (1958) notions of private individuals appearing in public spaces, where their actions become caught up in interpretative narratives produced by the "web of relationships" (p. 183) that exists there, provide promising conceptual tools to help describe leadership and how it connects with education in the democratic tradition. Arendt (1958) also accounts for the bureaucracy of schooling and how it distracts us from educational purposes with her notion of the "social" or as she describes it, a "society" that "expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing numerable and various rules, all of which

tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (p. 40).

As indicated in Chapter 1, the concepts I am using to further explore the idea of leadership that is educational are chiefly derived from Arendt's work, and most specifically from her major work of political philosophy, *The Human Condition* (1958). Aptly titled, this book is as complex and contradictory as human nature itself. At the same time Arendt (1958) succeeds in capturing nuanced aspects of private and public life that generally refuse to stand still for analysis. One way she pins these abstract things down long enough to examine them is by using distinctions between things, or typologies, that capture both the idea and how it is distinct from other ideas. Her notions of public, private and social, along with her view of human activity as labour, work or action, form the basis of the ideas that I will use to discuss leadership that serves educational purposes. Key among these ideas is that leadership involves action, or "...doing something in such a way that we both become and reveal who we are" (Stenmark, 2003). Arendt (1958) expresses it this way, "In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world…" (p. 179).

When it comes to complex things such as human behaviour, typologies often break down in use and begin to blur and over lap. They can eventually raise more questions than they answer. Arendt's typologies are no different, but fortunately there is a body of scholarly work that seeks to illuminate her ideas from different angles. I will include the perspectives of other Arendt scholars such as Benhabib (2000), Canovan (1978, 1992) and Elshtain (1995) as a way to define Arendt's ideas more clearly and add

a certain limberness to their application to public education.

At the same time, it will be important to make some reference to the antecedents of Arendt's work, as they are significant in terms of contextualizing it. I do not intend to cover this area in great detail, but neglecting it completely is a disservice to her thinking. As a young German intellectual in the period between World Wars I and II, Arendt studied philosophy, and her ideas about how the individual, with all the distinct perspectives and freedoms that implies, acts in relation to others were strongly influenced by European philosophers such as Imannuel Kant and Martin Heidigger. Her thinking reflects how she drew on their ideas to look for ways to explain how one could remain distinct, yet interact in meaningful ways with others without negating the self. The tension here is between preserving individual freedom and rights and being a part of a community that involves others. Arendt appears to be seeking workable points on the continuum between unbridled individuality and oppressive conformity in order to address this. She is seeking a balanced location of the self in relation to others that allows for the preservation of individuality, yet is open to interacting with others and engaging with their points of view.

What defined her in many ways, and led her to a stance on the self in relation to others that was both political and philosophical, was her experience as a Jewish intellectual in Europe during World War II. The negation of who she was, a Jew in Germany at a time when Jews were being stripped of their rights and identities, could not help but affect her thinking on the self and others, the private and the public. This, coupled with her philosophical roots and the rise of totalitarianism, galvanized her thinking, or as Benhabib (2000) puts it:

When Hannah Arendt left Germany to go to Paris in 1933 she had been a student of classical German philosophy as well as a young Jewess caught in the throes of history. Any presentation of her thought that does not emphasize the formative experience of German philosophy as well as of Jewish politics would be grossly inadequate, because German "Existenz philosophy" of the 1920's and in particular the thought of Martin Heidigger, as well as her political experiences as a German Jewish intellectual are the dual sources of her philosophy. (p. 47)

Though she rarely wrote specifically about public education, Arendt's work on the role of the individual with others and the actions that are taken in relation to others seems to naturally lead to educational applications. As Gordon (2001) puts it, Arendt feels that, "education should be aimed at preparing the young to a life of action, to a life of involvement in and transformation of the world" (p. 53).

Arendt (1958) provides a perspective that is useful for discussing educational leadership, that is, leadership that takes the opportunity to explore and fulfill the purposes of public education as they have been previously described, particularly as these purposes relate to preparing students to take their places as adults in a democratic system. This view includes the concepts of public and private spaces, and the intrusion of the "social" into both. Arendt has written on these topics herself, accompanied by a considerable body of critique and analysis by other scholars. These concepts are frustrating to work with at times, as Arendt defines them in contradictory ways and sometimes keeps them so distinct they become unwieldy to use. Benhabib (2000) comments that while Arendt's method of analysis can be credited with "throwing unprecedented light on social and political phenomena; at the same time it often leaves us confused as which level Arendt is

operating on" (p.124). Regardless of the potential for confusion, the "light" that Arendt's ideas can shed on educational leadership may help to illuminate certain facets of it that are not commonly discussed.

After some discussion of these ideas, using both Arendt and contributions from other scholars, I intend to propose a workable definition of each realm, the private, the public and the social, along with Arendt's notions of labour, work and action, in order to appropriate them for understanding educational leadership.

The Private

Arendt (1958) described the private as "that natural association whose center is the home (*oikas*) and the family" (p. 24). She is consistent in describing the private as related to household and family, and the activities within it as related to the maintenance of life. She terms these activities labour, and characterizes them as repetitive and related to "bodily functions" and "material concerns". Arendt goes on to say that what makes the private household distinct from the public realm is that those within it are linked through pursuing their basic survival needs – nourishment and reproduction. In short, the purpose of the private is to preserve life, and the main concerns of the private are the repetitive housekeeping and survival tasks necessary to do so. As she puts it, "Natural community in the household therefore was born of necessity, and necessity ruled over all activities performed within it" (p. 30).

Arendt (1958) distinguishes between the public and the private in another way. The difference is "the distinction between things that should be shown and things that should be hidden…The most elementary meaning of the two realms indicates that there are things than need to be hidden and others that need to be displayed publicly if they are

to exist at all" (p. 72-73). For example, confidential conversations between two trusted

colleagues are meant to remain that way. Things may be said, such a speculation about

the motives of another employee, may be enlightening to the two parties involved.

However, if these things are said publicly, they could be misinterpreted and do damage

all around. At the same time, an idea about a new way of doing things has no use until it

is publicly explained, as no one can access it. Arendt (1958) goes on to observe that,

historically, activities connected with the physical functions of survival have been hidden

from public view, and laments the fact that we are in an age "which no longer believes

that bodily functions and material concerns should be hidden" (p. 73). Arendt has further

concerns about the erosion of the private which adds a new dimension to what it means.

" The greatest threat here, however, is not the abolition of private ownership of wealth

but the abolition of private property in the sense of a tangible, worldly place of one's

own" P. 70). She goes on to say, "…that the four walls of one's private property offer

the only reliable hiding place from the common public world, not only from everything

that goes on in it but also from its very publicity, from being seen and being heard" (p.

71). Privacy in this sense is a sanctuary to protect the individual from what Arendt terms

the relentless "light of publicity" (p. 71).

     Three views of the private. Arendt (1958), then, provides us with three angles on

the private, a place that: relates to the home and family; is hidden from view; and offers

shelter and protection from what lies outside the boundaries of the home. Benhabib

(2000) echoes this last notion of the private as a place of sanctuary, but adds that the

home is necessary for the development of the individual. "…the home not only lends the

self the depth without which it is nothing but a shadow in the streets, but the home also

provides the space that protects, nurtures and makes the individual fit to appear in the

public realm" (p. 213). We need the private in order to for us to become who we are as

individuals, and we need it to protect and maintain this away from what Arendt (1958)

terms the relentless "light of publicity" p. 71.

This elaboration on the home as a sanctuary, that it is a place that harbours and

enhances the self away from the public, seems particularly relevant to children and their

school experiences. What I mean by this is that recognition of the relevance of the

private lives of students at home, and the creation of protected space for them to express

themselves as individuals, is one significant aspect of educational leadership. In this way

we help them become "fit to appear in the public realm" by allowing them to explore and

define who they are.   If this is the case, a significant part of our role as educational

leaders is to acknowledge that each individual we work with, whether child, teacher or

parent, as unique and filled with unique potential as an individual.

The private in schools. This recognition of the individual sounds like a given,

and a simplistic one at that. Most teachers and administrators would say that the

individuality of their students is important to them, and that they spend a great deal of

time dealing with their individual needs. But as Cullingford (2002) so clearly observes,

"The organization of the school, from the individual's entry to the playground, from

tentative waiting, to the assemblies, to the incarceration in school, to the release, is

dependent on a structure and ethos of homogeneity" (p. 7).

The key word here is "organization", which is what children, and by proxy, their

families, experience as school, regardless of the individual intents of the adults who work

there. Cullingford (2002) lets children speak for themselves, and what they say reveals

the gap between our intent as educators and their experiences all too clearly. When asked if any of her teachers ever discussed what school was for, this 17-year-old student responded:

> No. Not really. I don't think they tend to spend a lot of time with people who just get on with it, and do whatever they want. You know, it's like the people who don't tend to behave. They're the ones who get talking to all the time, so…If you do what they want you to do they don't really bother talking to you, really, so…
>
> (p. 53)

This view, that the teacher is not really there "to get on with you" (p. 53), but to get on with the lesson, and that the best course of action is to conform and get on with it yourself, is pervasive in the interviews that Cullingford (2002) conducted.

This leads to a consideration of the children who do get more attention, those who stick out for one reason or another. Often their private lives are what makes the intersection with school a contentious one, for reasons that are discussed among staff, but rarely in non-judgemental terms. While the private lives of students can be places of nurturing love and shelter, they can also harbour and hide experiences that are destructive, and negate and distort the sense of self that is trying to emerge. Some children, because of poverty or family stress and dysfunction, find more sanctuary at school than at home, even if they often are being reprimanded because they are tardy, absent too often or defiant. This rendition of the early life of Yvonne Johnson, a Cree woman who eventually found a way to speak about the abuse that was unspeakable in her private life, illustrates

this point:

> …there was usually no place to run or hide; eventually a child has to surface in the home where it lives. All I could do was try to know the events of the day in the house, watch if a growing sense of argument or anger or violence was developing and be ready to make some kind of distance from it for myself; wherever I was in the house, to know where, to know how I could disappear. (Weibe, 1998, p. 78)

Alternatively, the private realm can be so individual in terms of values and customs that revealing this in a public way carries its own risk. Benhabib (2008) provides the example of 3 French Muslim school girls, Fatima, Leila and Samira, who openly defied their school and wore their headscarves to class, though these religious symbols had been banned by school authorities.

In so doing, Benhabib contends that they:

> ...brought their cultural and religious differences into open manifestation. They used the symbol of the home to gain entry into the public sphere by retaining the modesty required of them by Islam in covering their heads, yet at the same time they left the home to become public actors in a civil public space in which they defied the state. (p. 3)

The private individual. The private then, as the home and family, can be viewed as a sanctuary, or a hidden place of secrets or cultural differences. Regardless, the private is the forging ground for the unique individual who appears in public, or in the case of children, comes to school each day. These private lives of students surround them, invisible to many who are only focused on organizational things, yet ready to be

respected, developed, ignored or negated, depending on what happens in school. And children, since they are emerging from their homes as individuals for the first time, need to feel that their private lives at home, the things that make them unique, have value there. If Cullingford's (2002) observations on school children's comments are any indication, this is not necessarily the case. "When we explore the inner thoughts of young children and what interests them we are reminded of a real gap between the formal demands of the curriculum and the parallel, sometimes quite separate, lives of the pupils" (p. 7).

The importance of the unique private lives of school children, and the need to protect and respect them, is an important consideration for those who aspire to educational leadership. If children are protected and valued as individuals they are better prepared to participate in the public aspects of their school and adult lives with a sense of legitimized identity.

As Benhabib (2000) expresses it:

This means that the private sphere, in the sense of the domestic-reproductive domain of the household, is just as essential to world-sustenance as the public realm is. Without the nurturance and protection of the child in this sphere, the public realm would not be inhabited by individuals but by shadows without selves. (p. 137)

The Public

If the private realm of the home shapes and protects students as individuals, Arendt's (1958) notion of the public exposes them to the ideas of others, and gives them the opportunity to represent themselves to and with others. Arendt (1958) discusses the

public as a place where people, "having mastered the necessities of sheer life" (p. 37), and being freed from labour and work, interact and share their views as equals. While this can be a significant aspect of the public, it somehow has a formality that precludes more everyday experiences. One has to look more carefully to find a place in her schema for the less formal public interactions that are part of everyday life.

A space of appearance. A significant aspect of the public is simply the fact that individuals show up, or appear, among others. Arendt (1958) does acknowledge this less formal sense of the public, tucked away in the following comments, "The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized" (p. 199).

This less formal and structured sense of the public, "the space of appearance" is particularly compatible with schools and school experiences. For while schools are known as public institutions, ideally they support a variety of informal public experiences within their formal structures, while they provide space and protection for children as private individuals. These publics can range from small groups or teams to particular classes to the entire school. Whether large or small, compared to the privacy or their homes, schools create and support a number of publics.

Appearing in a common world. In the context of education, the public needs to be defined in two ways that Arendt (1958) has provided. One is simply appearing among others. As Arendt puts it, "For us appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves – constitutes reality" (p, 50). The other is interacting

publicly in a way that goes beyond private interests and encountering the views of others.

Arendt (1958) terms this being part of a "common world" in the sense that "…the term 'public' signifies the world itself in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it" (p. 52). She goes on to say that, "…to live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time." (p. 52). This "common world" shared with others does not negate the private, but draws it out for others to see it, while demanding that we see and hear the views of others. The private is no longer sheltered or hidden, but is revealed as people interact with others in a common public that is distinct from the hidden private world that shelters them as individuals. We need the public because appearing there defines us for others and vice versa, defines others for us. The public creates a reality based on our interactions with others. But the public is also more than this; it connects us with others and forces us to recognize what links us with them. Being in public is part of a process of connecting with others and defining the world collectively despite our differences.

It is the idea of being an active member of a public common world that most closely links with the idea of education as preparation for life in a democracy, a place where people, as Coulter and Wiens (2008) put it, "engage with their equals" as "…people with the character, knowledge and understanding to listen carefully to others and figure out how to create a common world together" (p. 16).

And indeed there is a public life in schools, but it may not be exactly what or where we think it is. Cullingford's (2002) interviews with students shed an interesting

light on what public life consists of from their perspective:

> From the pupils' point of view, if not that of the National curriculum, social skills
> are at the centre of what they learn in schools. Schools are, in many ways, the
> perfect locus for observing the behaviour of people. They are crowded. They are
> full of movement. They need control and discipline. They are dependent on good
> organization, both crowd control and persuasion. They are also very hierarchical.
> There are many levels of command of which pupils are aware…They experience
> the more secret pleasures of understanding and friendship, and they undergo the
> tensions of groups, favourites, and outsiders. (p. 96).

While students are definitely appearing and interacting with others, for the most part, this does not sound at all like creating a "common world together" (Coulter and Wiens, 2008) but more like surviving one that is imposed on them by their schools. What is left to them as individuals is the "secret" friendships and rivalries that they develop with other students, exclusive of the adults who are supposed to be educating them. The way Cullingford describes these relationships, they have no connection with education and preparing students to live democratically, but just "happen", because students are in an environment with others and are therefore in a position to observe their behaviour. To connect the idea of educational leadership and preparing students for appearing and participating in a "common world" more strongly, it is important to look at the idea of the public from some different angles. For the public is not one amorphous mass of people, but many publics that are inclusive sometimes and exclusive at other times.

To make the distinctions and connections between public and private, schooling and education and the implications for educational leadership, it is important at this point

to dig a little deeper into the ideas about the public that Arendt offers. Many scholars have their own views of Arendt's idea of the public, and these insights will be useful as a way to refine and reflect on her description of it. What follows is a brief review of some of these perspectives for the purpose of bringing critique and further clarity to the concept of the public and how it relates to educational leadership.

Exclusive publics. This idea of exclusive publics has to do with the fact that in certain instances, some people are allowed to appear with others and contribute, while others are not. Exclusive publics are so commonplace that often we forget to remember that some voices are not being heard. To use an example at hand, not all parents who have children in schools are able to participate in deliberations or open discussions of the directions the school may be heading. Some parents' time is limited by employment obligations, lack of English, or a general discomfort with school based on their own experiences as school children. An even more obvious example of an excluded public is the one that automatically excludes the children who have come to school to get an education. As we have seen from Cullingford's (2002) research, students don't get a say in terms of the purpose of school, let alone what happens there. Their main role seems to be to listen to all the talk that is aimed at them. An elaboration on the idea of exclusive publics is relevant to schools and schools systems, as an awareness of who is speaking and who is silent and how to make space for them to speak is salient to leadership that is all about creating public spaces for the exchange of ideas. Exclusive publics are so commonplace that we can forget to remember the voices that are missing.

The public has been the topic of some debate (Benhabib, 2000, Fraser, 1992, Habermas, 1992). Fraser (1992) describes Habermas' definition of the public sphere as,

"…a body of 'private persons' assembled to discuss matters of 'public concern' or 'common interest'" (p.112). She observes that the bourgeois public sphere described by Habermas, due to a presumed separation of society and state, was "supposed to underpin a form of public discussion that excluded 'private interests' " (p.113). Fraser believes that as more varied voices joined the public sphere, a hegemony of the male bourgeois emerged and dominated the discourse, creating exclusions of gender and class within the public.

There is a scholarly recognition of and response to the idea of exclusive publics. Habermas (1992) responded to feminist critique in his own piece, entitled "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere", acknowledging that "feminist literature has sensitized our awareness to the patriarchal character of the public sphere (p. 427).

Arendt herself is not immune to claims that her notion of the public was exclusive and elitist. Canovan (1978) points out a "serious inconsistency" in Arendt's thinking:

> However, if Arendt in some moods can seem preeminently the theorist of
> participatory democracy, she can also be read as an elitist of almost
> Nietzschean intensity. She attributes totalitarianism largely to the rise of
> "mass society"; she expresses contempt not only for the act of labouring
> but for the characteristic tastes and dispositions of labourers; and she
> shows what is, for a modern political thinker, a truly astonishing lack of
> interest in the social and economic welfare of the many, except in so far as
> the struggle to achieve it poses a threat to the freedom of the few. (p. 6)

This serves as a reminder that while Arendt (1958) frequently uses the ancient Greek *polis* as an example of the public sphere she appears to be untroubled by the fact

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that women and slaves were not included as part of this public and were relegated to the home and labour necessary to maintain it.

In this regard, Tlaba (1987) remarks that:

In order to give a reason why slaves and women, as new beginnings, we excluded from the polis, she holds that human beings as new beginning are only potentially significant and miraculous. It is as beginners of new public actions that their distinct identities are achieved and confirmed. This seemingly slight shift in the meaning of human beginnings bears much significance, for it means not every being possesses a distinctly personal existence, but only those who come to be defined in some way in terms of the world. (p. 20)

Tlaba further observes that this stance "…does, however, restrict principled actions to great men and great movements of history. It is as if only great men who perform heroic acts are capable of principled action" (p. 19). This is an interesting observation, as while the Greek polis she refers to is exclusive of women and slaves, many of Arendt's (1958) comments about action and the public somewhat dispute the notion of action as single men "performing heroic acts".

"The connotation of courage, which we now feel to be an indispensable quality of the hero, is in fact already present in a willingness to act and speak at all, to insert one's self into the world and begin a story of one's own" (Arendt, 1958, p. 186).

The point about gender omission in the public as Arendt (1958) describes it, then, has been made and remade (e.g., Fraser, 1992; Benhabib, 2000; Canovan, 1992; Habermas, 1996; Tlaba, 1987). It is an easy target for critique, and it still exists, as do

exclusions because of race, poverty and social standing. As pervasive as the exclusive public is, this does not mean that those who are excluded are necessarily silenced. Fraser's (1993) view is that they simply create various alternate publics that allow them to exchange ideas on an equal footing in multiple publics. In other words, exclusive publics breed subaltern publics.

Multiple publics. Multiple publics are more difficult to categorize, as they represent so many diverse views and consist of so many alternate voices. There is much that has been written on this topic. Habermas (1992), for example, allows that his monolithic notion of the public sphere has been confounded by the emergence of electronic mass media, which serves to expand the classic definition of the public space and compound its diversity, or what Arendt (1958) might term the span of the differences contained in its plurality. Plurality can be compounded when there are multiple publics.

Habermas (1992) questions the ability of the members of a civil society to have an authentic and communicative voice in the midst of a cacophony of such competing views and positions. Finally, he "admits the coexistence of competing public spheres" and acknowledges that the concept of public changes if one "takes account of the dynamics of those processes of communication that are excluded from the dominant public sphere" (p. 425).

Fraser (1992) characterizes these excluded publics as "subaltern counterpublics, consisting of "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs" (p. 423). If anything this plurality is escalating daily with rampant use of web connectivity and access to create public narratives, document events

and express opinions. It's an extension of Arendt's public that needs to be reckoned with, though my purpose here is to simply acknowledge it as hosting numerous multiple publics.

This talk of multiple publics may seem too broad and complex to be relevant in the small and contained world of the schoolhouse, but I would propose that it is very germane to educational purposes, and therefore educational leadership. If being educated means to be prepared to enter into a democratic public area and exchange ideas with others, the idea of recognizing multiple publics is a significant part of exercising leadership, as it expands the definition of others. And if educational leadership involves making room for public and private spaces in school, awareness of these many publics is important, as they are represented in schools as surely as they are in the community. In this sense, no idea of this nature, i.e. multiple or excluded publics, is too broad or abstract to be applied to public education, as it represents all these publics, because their children go to school.

So while the concept of the public as a place to simply appear, and secondly, to interact with others as equals, is key to its application to educational leadership, the multifaceted nature of the public that affects schools and school communities needs consideration and recognition. Educational leaders need to be aware that publics can be exclusive by nature and secondly, that there is never simply one public to contend with, but several. Recognition of the reality of multiple publics can make the notion of leadership more comprehensible, if not simpler. To add to the complexity of the situation, the public and private, while distinct, are both connected to and dependent on each other, so the interplay between them needs to be recognized as part of the process of

making space for both of them as an educational leader. As we shall see, Arendt (1958) recognized that the two are interdependent, though she does not always appear to do so.

Public and private as connected spaces. While Arendt has been noted for her fidelity to the idea of a distinct separation between the private and public (Elshtain 1995), she is clearly aware of the permeable nature of these distinctions, as her following description of the public demonstrates:

> For us appearance-something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves-constitutes reality. Compared with the reality which comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate life – the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses- lead an uncertain and shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance. The most current of such transformations occurs in storytelling and generally in artistic transposition of individual experiences. (Arendt, 1958, p. 50)

Though she does not say so, it is clear that this process is not reversible; once things become public they take on a life of their own and can no longer be viewed as private. By defining the public as that accessible space where private experiences are articulated, Arendt demonstrates that her notions of public and private are not as circumscribed and detached from each other as has sometimes been implied. As Benhabib (2000) has stated, "We not only owe to Hannah Arendt's political philosophy the recovery of the public as a central category for all democratic-liberal politics; we also are indebted to her for the insight that the public and the private are interdependent" (p. 211). The private creates and protects the individual, nurturing and maintaining what is

unique in each person. Without the private to create and protect it, the sense of who we are as individuals would be unclear or stunted, and we would not bring a unique identity to the public. The public relies on the private to help people define and refine themselves before they begin to interact with others. Without the private, "the public realm would not be inhabited by individuals but by shadows without selves" (Benhabib, 2000, p. 137. Schools can compromise both the public and private if we do not, as educational leaders, take the time to understand and make space for each of them.

As Arendt (1968) points out, school is the place where we tell our children, "This is our world" (p 189). All the things the world is, and can be, coalesce in schools, a place that exists in order to introduce the continual stream of "newcomers into the world" (Levinson, 2001). Part of that introduction is helping these newcomers learn how to appear and interact with others, and part is protecting them from too much exposure, as it can erode their sense of who they are as private individuals. Part of educating students is consciously helping them move from private to public and public to private. This is not always simple or fluid. Intruding on the private and public, and sometimes making them difficult to preserve, is a third realm, one that Arendt (1958) terms the "social".

The Social

Separate from the public and private, the social, in Arendt's (1958) words, "has finally, after several centuries of development, reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength" (p. 41). This is a definitive comment, and her writing consistently reflects a distaste for the social realm. This is somewhat problematic, as it will become clear that the bureaucracies that define are derived from Arendt's social realm. For that reason I have chosen to include it

as a concept that is key to further distinguishing the tension between schooling and education. More specifically, the aspects of schooling that subvert educational goals and reinforce the organizational purposes of schooling fall into the realm of the social in several ways. For this reason it is important to explore Arendt's notion of the social and discuss its implications for educational leadership.

Arendt begins by describing the social as a realm that has irrevocably transcended the public and the private, and refers to it somewhat disdainfully as "…the rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems, and organizational devices…" (p. 38). This emergence of things that were previously cloaked by the private into a realm where they are visible to all is key to Arendt's idea of the social. It has become a kind of faux public that smothers the exchange of individual ideas among equals that should thrive in the ideal public, while it hangs out mundane and previously private laundry where it is visible to all. In her view, the maintenance of life, formerly a private household function, has been subsumed by the social realm, chiefly in terms of large scale economic activities that purport to ensure our survival until the "two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never ending stream of the life process itself" (p. 33). The public has become altered by the fact that "action, speech and thought are primarily superstructures upon social interest" (p. 33).

Arendt's description of the "social" is convoluted, and several scholars have noted that Arendt's thinking around it appears murky. Pitkin (1998) comments that she finds Arendt's description of the social in *The Human Condition* elusive at best, as does Canovan (1992).

Canovan complains that, "Arendt's use of the term 'society' and her

accompanying distinction between 'the social' and 'the political' are notoriously hard to grasp. Few readers feel confident that they can see exactly what she is getting at, and even fewer find her view persuasive" (p. 116).

After noting Arendt's vague use of terminology in describing the social, Pitkin (1998) then takes issue with her habitual vilification of it, commenting:

It's like a science fiction fantasy: Arendt writes about the social as if an evil monster from outer space, entirely external to and separate from us, had fallen upon us intent on debilitating, absorbing, and ultimately destroying us, gobbling up our distinct individuality and turning us into robots that mechanically serve its purposes. Such a science-fiction vision, coming from a thinker whose main effort was to teach human agency and freedom as part of a realistic understanding- that human institutions are humanly made, and that it is therefore up to us to change them, - is truly astonishing. (p. 4)

While tempting, it is not enough to leave Arendt's idea of the "social" in this critiqued and disheveled state and move on to concepts that are easier to work with. The "social" is highly relevant to the process of schooling and schools, just as the "public" and "private" are linked to education. It is important to gain a working description of the "social" to begin to understand leadership that is educational rather than focused on schooling. Benhabib (2000) clarifies and distills the essence of Arendt's (1958) sometimes rambling thinking on the "social" into three general ideas: commodity exchange; conformity; and the related "rule by nobody" (Arendt, 1958, p. 40) that is embodied in bureaucracies.

The "social": three related aspects. I am terming the following aspects of the social related, as they all are linked by their tendency to subsume individual differences with a layer of common expectations for behaviour. These expectations wring the individuality out of situations and people, and often over ride the idea of inclusive democratic dialogue with a set of mass expectations around prescribed interests.

Commodity exchange. The first idea is that the "social" is "glorified national housekeeping in economic and pecuniary matters" (Benhabib, 2000, p. 23). Put another way, "the social refers to the growth of a "capitalist commodity exchange economy" (p. 23). Activities that were originally intended to sustain life in the private realm such as labour, have now become commodities so that "everything, including labor power, could be bought and sold as a commodity in the marketplace" (Benhabib, 2000, p. 23). In a comment that sheds some light on Arendt's idea of the "social", Benhabib adds that "…with the transformation of all objects and potentially all aspects of physical reality into an object of 'property' and with the uprooting of human beings themselves from their embedded identities in communities, a process of social disembedding and cultural leveling occurs" (p. 25). In other words, as Arendt (1958) puts it, "...distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual" (p. 41). This first idea, that commodity exchange has become the glue that binds individuals when they are together into one sticky mass of economic interest, is a key component of the social. Further, this idea of commodity exchange is very much alive in schools, as they are seen as places that "commodify" students and prepare them to contribute to the general economy as employees. This idea connects with the notion that the purpose of school is to prepare students for jobs. "What is clear is that pupils are supposed to strive to do well in

examinations. This is the end in itself and the accepted justification is that good qualifications lead to good jobs" (Cullingford, 2002, p. 54).

Conformity. The idea of commodity exchange leading to a "social disembedding and cultural levelling" (Benhabib, 2000, p. 25) connects to another facet of the social, that of creating and expecting conformity. To Arendt (1958) the social represents a distortion of the Greek notion of *polis* or the public, in that the social has subsumed the idea of public debate among equals and produced a set of mass expectations and rules designed to create conformity and serve economic ends. There is no artful intersection of open public dialogue and private distinct individuals here, as this all becomes homogenized into a set of common expectations about how people should behave. Arendt (1958) sees this as "imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (p. 40). This idea of an emphasis on conformity is key to Arendt's (1958) description of the "social", or what she sometimes terms "mass society." As she puts it, "…mass society has devoured all strata of the nation and 'social behaviour' has become the standard for all regions of life" (Arendt, 1958, p. 45). So instead of a "common world" that draws us together as individuals "…as a table is located between those who sit around it" (p. 52) the expectations of mass society create a table that traps us, as there is only one way to sit at it, and no room to move away from it. This leads to a third aspect of the social, the bureaucratic structures that formalize this conformity, which Arendt (1958) terms "the rule by nobody" (p. 40).

"Rule by nobody": impersonal bureaucracies. "The rule by nobody" is what Arendt (1958) feels has supplanted monarchical rule, or rule by a defined somebody:

But this nobody, the assumed one interest of society as a whole in economics as

well as the assumed one opinion of polite society in the salon, does not cease to

rule for having lost its personality. As we know from the most social form of

government, that is, from bureaucracy…the rule by nobody is not necessarily no-

rule; it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its

cruelest and most tyrannical versions. (p. 40)

It's fair to assume that the certain circumstances Arendt refers to include her own

experiences with the government bureaucracies of Nazi Germany, hence the vehemence

of her last sentence. However, Arendt's (1958) point is well taken; rule by an invisible

and amorphous organization that has a life of its own consisting of "pure administration"

(p, 41) of rules and procedures has an uncomfortable ring of familiarity when applied to

schools and school systems. As Cullingford (2002) expresses this, based on numerous

interviews with students:

It as if the whole edifice of school were so implacable that pupils have to learn to

submit to it. Teachers were always to be seen to be in control, the people with the

power who had to be pleased. The duty of the pupil was to guess how to fit into

this expectation. Now the teachers are seen to be representing other people's wills

in turn, seeking out the best means to adapt to the requirements of results and

inspection. Children conceive of schools as places where power is distributed

downwards, and where they themselves have little or no voice. (p. 37)

This seems a far cry from a protected private space or a public that consists of

what Arendt (1958) terms a "common world" created jointly with others. It does

however, evoke images of "the rule by nobody", hierarchical and faceless, especially

when it comes to the teahers and the unseen pressures that affect them, along with the inability of students to have a place to express their views.

Schools as "social" organizations. Elements of the social as described above are clearly evident in schools, and bring the previously discussed contrast between schooling and education into sharper relief. What I have been terming "schooling" is a manifestation of Arendt's "social" realm as it is represented in schools, including commodity exchange, conformity and "the rule by nobody".

 The idea of schools as training facilities for future employees, that is, the idea of students as future commodities to be exchanged as employees, is clearly one of the goals attributed to schools (Cullingford, 2002; Egan, 1997) and represents a "social" agenda. This also accounts for the habitual intrusion of government agendas such as healthy eating and physical fitness into school curricula. Generally these are initiatives indirectly run by an economic agenda – healthier citizens are less draining when it comes to government coffers, as are employable ones.

Secondly, as supported by students' accounts provided by Cullingford (2002), schools are about rules and obeying them. There is little tolerance for non-conformists:

> One of the consistent themes is the experience of school in the sense of being incarcerated, or being forced to do things, however unwillingly. Even if these are "for their own good." The rules, the inflexibility, the unshared assumptions become ends in themselves. It is as if that is what school is perceived as being for. (p. 55)

Not to belabour the point, but this excerpt from "Alcatraz: Inmate Regulations: 1956" bear an uncomfortable resemblance to parts of the "Student Handbook" my

students were given at the beginning of each year. While the tone is harsher than the one

used in schools, the hat, noise and no running rules sound uncomfortably familiar:

30. CELLHOUSE RULES

Caps are never worn in the cellhouse…WALK -- DO NOT RUN when moving

from one place to another.

Upon entering the cellhouse, remove your cap and walk directly and quietly to

your cell. Loud talking, loitering or visiting on the galleries, stairs or aisles is not

permitted. Don't enter any other inmate's cell at any time.

When you talk in the cellhouse, talk quietly. Don't create a disturbance. (Federal

Bureau of Prisons, 1956)

As for "the rule by nobody" (Arendt, 1958), the following quote echoes the idea

of a place that exists for its own rules, and has no need to articulate its purpose in any

human terms beyond that:

…there had been no discussion about the meaning of school or what it was for.

The very idea of raising the question was met with bewilderment, partly because

for years the pupils had brought their own assumptions to bear, and partly because

there must be an implicit social purpose understood, if not shared, by all.

(Cullingford, 2002, p. 52)

It is as if the unspoken and unexamined rules and procedures of school have

stolen its educational purposes, and filled the space with a bureaucracy that doesn't need

to justify itself, or entertain any questions about what it is for.

This may seem like a bleak way to end this section, and the clarity that the notion

of the "social" brings to the idea of schooling can be discouraging as well as

enlightening. And perhaps the most discouraging thing is that these "social" ideas about what is happening in school have been articulated by students speaking to Cullingford (2002) and his researchers, not adults talking about what they think is happening. If anything, children's view of schooling makes it important to conceptualize and discuss a view of leadership that is educational. And if education of students has to do with "…preparing people to engage with their equals in deciding how they will live together…" (Coulter and Wiens, 2008, p. 16), what educational leaders do and say while with them, teachers and parents, and what they invite them in turn to say, makes all the difference.   Again, Arendt (1958) provides some ideas about various types of activities that may help to begin a discussion of what educational leadership is, and what it is not. These are the activities she terms "labour", "work" and "action".

Labour, Work and Action

The process of exploring the Arendtian (1958) notions of public, private and social as a way of understanding educational leadership leads to a consideration of what leadership that seeks to educate students looks like. The activities Arendt (1958) terms "labour", "work" and "action" may help to shed some light on this. Arendt tends to associate labour, or the repetitive things that are meant to sustain life, with the private realm. She describes work, which is focused on creating a product for further use, as occurring in all three realms whereas action, or taking an initiative and beginning something new, can only occur in the public realm. She acknowledges that labour has become public, and that work can occur in private. These terms that Arendt uses are not simply ways of sorting out activities that are, or are not, leadership. As Benhabib (2000) points out, the simplest labour can reverberate in ways that have profound and

unanticipated effects on others (p.131). Conversely, the most deliberate and decisive actions may have effects that are completely different, or less significant, than those that were intended. It all has to do with the meaning that is made of them by others and how individuals act, speak and reveal themselves within the transformational "web of human relationships" (Arendt, 1958, p. 183) that connects them with others in public spaces. This meaning is created through what Arendt terms "stories with or without intention" that are produced "as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things" (p. 184).

Arendt's thinking puts words to the intangible, that is, leadership involves the sense that others make of who we are, rather than simply what we do. This all plays itself out in schools as narratives occurring in a setting characterized by the conflicting values between schooling and education. So the sense that others make of our actions depends on both their individual experiences and what they expect and assume about what we are doing. And this in turn comes from who they are as distinct individuals. Each individual is unique, and filters experiences through a distinct perspective. Anyone who has listened to different accounts of the same event can testify to this – one true and consistent version does not shine through, though most people believe they are telling the truth. An approximation of what happened comes through in the overlapping parts of each individual story. This idea, that leadership is based on interacting with others, and that this produces multiple legitimate perspectives and outcomes, has the potential to allow us to accept these uncertainties of interpretation rather than try to tame them with lock-step leadership formulas leading to predictable places.

Arendt (1968) views school as a preamble to the world, or a child's closest approximation of the world. "…and so, in relation to the child, school in a sense

represents the world, although it is not yet actually the world" (Arendt, 1968, p. 189). By this we can assume she is referring to the "common world" they will eventually be a part of as adults. It would seem possible to apply certain "worldly" concepts to schools in order to better understand how they can serve as an initiation into life as an adult in a democracy. With this in mind, Arendt's (1958) description of three types of human activity, "labor", "work" and "action", can perhaps shed further light on educational leadership in the world of the schoolhouse.

Like the notions of public, private and social, labour, work and action are not tidy typologies that sort out our activities and define what is leadership is and what it is not. In fact, one type of activity may become another, depending on how other individuals are involved and affected. These activities do not neatly divide themselves into things that happen in the "private", "social" or "public" either. Underlying this notion is the idea that what we do, whatever we may term it, is what leaves our imprint on the world. If we say or do nothing, for all practical purposes we do not exist, in public or private. Benhabib (2000) elaborates on both the interdependence of the public and private and the flexibility of notions of labour, work and action:

> Yet here in the household, we confront two very different kinds of activities: the daily labour of cooking, cleaning, mending tidying, and tending, and the caring and raising of children. The raising and education of children, in turn, are less like labor, and more like work; furthermore these activities are aspects of the human condition of natality…Action, immersed in a web of narratives and enacted stories, unfolds in this realm. (p. 137)

Arendt's ideas about different activities with different purposes do, however,

provide a way of talking about what individuals do in relation to leadership, and by putting words to that, hopefully educational leadership can be better understood. Key to this is the idea that in the context of public education, leadership involves preserving the protection of the private to shelter individuality, and opening up public spaces that allow children to prepare for appearing there as adults. What we do in school to mediate the world for them along the continuum of private to public is the essence of educating them. And while what we do may be redundant labour, such as making sure the building is clean, or the work of producing reports and bulletins, it is also action, as how these things are done is "immersed in a web of narratives and enacted stories" (Behanbib, 2000, p.137) that thrive and grow in the small public realms of schools.

Labour

Arendt (1958) states that "by laboring men produce the vital necessities that must be fed into the life process of the human body…the laboring activity itself must follow the cycle of life, the circular movement of our bodily functions, which means that the laboring activity never comes to an end as long as life lasts; it is endlessly repetitive." (p. 170). For this reason Arendt (1958) sees labour as having no end product:

> Unlike the productivity of work, which adds new objects to the human artifice, the productivity of labor power produces objects only incidentally and is primarily concerned with its own reproduction; since its power is not exhausted when its own reproduction has been secured, it can be used for the reproduction of more than one life process, but it never produces anything but life. (p. 88)

Arendt (1958) originally described labour as occurring exclusively in the home, or private realm. From the perspective of the ancient Greeks, her frequent point of

reference, labour sustained life at home so that citizens were free to interact in the public, or *polis,* without having to concern themselves with these more mundane activities. However, as she point out, " with the rise of society, that is, the rise of the 'household' (oika) or of economic activities to the public realm, housekeeping and matters pertaining formerly to the privates sphere of the family have become a collective concern" (p. 32). In other words, "…the activities connected with sheer survival taken on the attributes of a commodity are permitted to appear in public" (p. 46) and become part of the "rise of society" that infringes on it.

Labour in this more visible realm, whether it is cooking, cleaning, or gardening, still has no tangible end product, and still needs to be repeated, even if it is not as hidden in the private as it once was. To extend this idea somewhat, labour can be viewed as the cyclical activities that allow organizations to function, such as cleaning, routine maintenance, and provision of food, heat and shelter. Clearly labour has a significant role in schools and school systems, as school systems rely on housing children and staff in comfortable quarters that are, at the minimum, dry, heated and clean.

Work

In contrast, in Arendt's (1958) view work consists of creating products beyond what is needed to sustain life. "When we work we create an end product, or several of them because we desire the results for use, profit or to give the appearance of success" (Arendt, 1958 p.143). Unlike labour, which is repetitive and done to sustain life, work is product oriented and has an end point:

Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the

species' ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an "artificial" world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness. (Arendt, 1958, p. 7)

Work, or fabricating something for use, and how it complements the commodity exchange of the social was not lost on Arendt. She discusses work done by hands and tools as the realm of "homo faber", (man the maker) and how these products become public and thereby commercial:

Historically the last public realm, the last meeting place which is at least connected with the activity of *homo faber* is the exchange market on which his products are displayed. The commercial society, characteristic of the earlier stages of the modern age or the beginnings of manufacturing capitalism, spring from this "conspicuous production" with its concomitant hunger for universal possibilities of truck and barter, and its end came with the rise of labour and the labor society which replaced conspicuous production and its price with "conspicuous consumption" and its concomitant vanity. (p. 162)

Work, in the sense of producing a product for further use, is no stranger to schools and school systems. School buildings themselves are a product of work, as are the furniture, books, equipment and other physical resources that inhabit them. There is also a thriving commodity exchange that occurs in schools. Students produce assignments that are exchanged with teachers for marks and credentials. While no money changes hands, both products of work are commodities in the social realm of schooling. This does not even begin to describe the other work products that support the school

bureaucracy such as records, bulletins, policies, handouts, report cards etc. that make up

the major product produced by schools, aptly named "paperwork".

This type of "work", designed as it is to support the bureaucracy of schooling, is

firmly located in the social realm, and more specifically never needs to justify itself, as it

represents "the rule by nobody" (Arendt, 1958, p. 40). It is "rule by nobody" because for

the main part the "why" of it is rarely questioned, or even discussed, in schools. This is

not to say it has no value, but only that as part of the "social" realm, it serves the

purposes of schooling more aptly than those of education. "Action" is the third type of

activity Arendt discusses, and it is qualitatively very different than the repetitious "labor"

that sustains us physically and the "work" that produces enduring products.

Action

There are three aspects of action that Arendt uses to describe it. First, it initiates

something new. Second, it consists of speech and action. Third, it occurs in public, or

what she sometimes calls a "common world", surrounded and interpreted by what she

terms the "web of relationships" made up of others who share the public space.

Newness or natality. Unlike labour or work, action has the potential to begin

something new, because unique individuals initiate it. Arendt refers to this new and

unique quality of action as natality. According to Arendt (1958) a distinct view is natural

to the unique nature of each new individual, and this uniqueness, generated in private, is

represented in the human capacity for action in the public. Through action individuals

assert themselves as individuals and reveal who they are to others in distinctive ways:

The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected

from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again

is possible only because each man is unique, so that with each birth something

uniquely new comes into the world…If action as beginning corresponds to the

fact of birth, if it is the actualization of the human condition of natality. (p. 178)

So action initiates something new in and reveals the individual to others; it occurs

in public when the individual appears there. It differs from behaviour:

Whereas "behavior is the ideal typical activity of individuals insofar as the are the

bearers of social roles, that is, the bureaucrat, the businessman, the executive and

so on, "action" is individuating and individualizing behavior; it reveals the self

rather than concealing him or her behind the social mask. (Benhabib, 2000, p. 25)

This begs the question of what action actually looks like, and Arendt (1958)

proposes that it consists of speech and action.

Speech and action. For Arendt, speech and action are intertwined and

distinguish individuals when they appear among others; they are in turn the means of

appearance, or revealing our unique selves to others, and the initiation of something new:

Speech and action reveal this unique distinctiveness. Through them, men

distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are the modes in

which human beings appear to each other…With word and deed we insert

ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which

we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical

appearance. (p.176)

Arendt then, (1958) addresses the difference between speech and action, by

stating that speech is how we reveal ourselves in public, whereas action is more closely

connected with beginning something new. However, she concludes that speech is

necessary for an individual to engage in action, as "it becomes relevant only through the spoken word in which he identifies himself as the actor, announcing what he does, has done, and intends to do" (p. 179). This revelation of the individual through action shows "who" he or she is, as opposed to simply "what" one is. Further, this revelation of who we are is somewhat involuntary, as "it is more than likely that the "who" which appears so clearly and unmistakably to others remains hidden from the person himself…" (p. 179). What we say and do among others is how we define ourselves in public as private and unique individuals. That definition is initiated by us as individuals, but interpreted by others who filter it through their own perspectives and transform it into a public version that transcends the individual. This uncoupling of the individual intent and public interpretation of action is key to how Arendt's thinking provides some insights into educational leadership in school systems. This leads to a very significant aspect of action; that it occurs among others who make their own individual sense of it, regardless of the intents of the actor.

The public and plurality: boundless actions in the web of relationships. The public as Arendt portrays it is permanent, visible, and keeps people distinct yet united around common interests that transcend simple survival. There is space for them as private individuals, including the features that make them unique; this is the "plurality" of the public. Multiple views and unique experiences converge there.

At the same time these individual spaces are situated with, and in relation to, others. By necessity, being with others means that we encounter their distinct views and interact with them. Our uniqueness exists among and in relation to the uniqueness of others, and the public creates a reality based on appearing among others as an individual.

Arendt's significant point is that this public realm has a profound purpose in that it brings people together as equals around matters of common interest. This commonality captures and enfolds individuals while allowing them to remain distinct. We are in a constant interplay between the public and private in this sense, because we define ourselves as we exist in public as private individuals, yet become connected with others simply through the act of appearing and allowing them to interpret what we say and do, much as we are doing as we interact with them. As Arendt points out, "the public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak" (p.52).

This combination of being together yet remaining distinct is pivotal to Arendt's (1958) notion of the public. As she describes it, "…each man is unique, so that with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world" (p. 178). As we have seen, and Arendt refers to this newness as the "human condition of natality." In a related sense, she refers to the fact that unique individuals are with others in the public "living as a distinct and unique beings among equals" as "the human condition of plurality" (p. 178). Action, then, requires appearing in public, and revealing oneself through what we say and do while interacting with others. It exists in a public context defined by plurality, as distinct from conformity. Conformity, in Arendt's view, is the purvey of the social.

> If action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, if it is the actualization of the human condition of natality, then speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals. (p. 178)
>
> Shutz (1999) elaborates on this Arendtian idea of being distinct yet engaged with

others: "Arendt's work…emphasizes that to achieve local public spaces in which multiple individuals can work together, these unique aesthetic perspectives must be transformed to become relevant contributions to shared efforts" (p.78).   Action, then, belongs to the public. "Action, as distinguished from fabrication, is never possible in isolation; to be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act" (Arendt, 1958, p 188).

To give action a context within the public, Arendt offers two related concepts: the "web of relationships" and the unpredictability, or boundlessness, of our actions within this invisible web.

The web of relationships and interpreted narratives. Arendt describes the web of relationships as the connections that exist as a result of "men's acting and speaking directly *to* one another" (p. 183). She describes this space as a "subjective in-between that is not tangible, since there are no tangible objects into which it could solidify". (p. 183). However, "…for all its intangibility, this in-between is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common. We call this reality the 'web' of human relationships indicating by the metaphor its somewhat intangible quality" (p. 183). She goes on to observe that once our speech and actions encounter this web, they become part of a narrative we no longer author, and mingle with the "unique" life stories that others have brought there. This process only begins when individuals appear in the public, and yet as soon as this occurs, their words and actions become part of a larger context and become related and interpreted in different ways. Arendt compares this to the idea of history, and "the perplexing problem that although history owes its existence to men, it is still obviously not 'made' by them (p. 185). The plurality of the public and its narrative nature ensures one thing – action has unpredictable consequences. Arendt, (1958), notes

that through history "it has been a great temptation…to find a substitute for action in the hope that the realm of human affairs may escape the haphazardness and moral irresponsibility inherent in a plurality of agents" (p. 220). She goes on to say that, "generally speaking, they always amount to seeking shelter from action's calamities in an activity where one man, isolated from all others, remains master of his doings from beginning to end" (p. 220). This solution attempts to eliminate the public, but it is destined to fail, as it immediately gives rise to multiple subaltern publics that spring up to replace the one that has been repressed.

Related to the idea of boundlessness, Benhabib (2000) makes reference to "the necessary disjunction between intent and consequence" (p. 113). She also makes a second complementary point - action is immersed in this medium through the stories it "produces" (p. 113). The story overtakes and transcends the actor, which is both humbling and inevitable. When we act publicly, we reveal our identity as individuals and become part of a larger public narrative that surrounds us.

Arendt's idea of action involves the initiation of something new, consists of speech and action and takes on a life of its own once enacted, as it becomes woven into the unique narratives of others in the public. Instead of leading us down the well- trodden path of certainty, Arendt takes leaders on a journey that includes inadvertently revealing who they are by what they say and do in public. To add to the ambiguity, their actions become disconnected from their intents by the sense that people make of them and the unique stories that they tell each other about what has happened.

What good is action? This question may be a natural one in the wake of such an extended discussion of the various aspects of action. While labour sustains life, and work

produces objects, action is intangible and unpredictable. This unpredictability is the essence of action, for as Benhabib (2000) describes it, "Action is the only activity that goes on directly between humans, and it corresponds to the human condition of plurality. Plurality entails both equality and distinction…Through speech and action humans distinguish themselves from one another" (p. 109). Another way of looking at action is that it allows us to test the meaning of our beliefs by subjecting them to the beliefs of others, a key aspect of becoming educated.

Action is what gives our chance to start something new and express our individuality. At the same time it would be meaningless if it did not take place in the company of other people. They in turn make their own sense of our actions, allowing our newness, or natality, to be expressed and interpreted in the plurality of the public. This is qualitatively different than the repetitive nature of labour or the product-focused work. Yet both these things contain the seeds of action, especially in the context of education. As children are "newcomers," the simplest and most mundane activities are subject to their interpretations; the natality of children makes most of our interactions with them hold the potential of action in that they tell them how they fit in the world. This is all the more reason for us "to think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5).

Leading Educationally: The Conflicting Roles of Schooling and Educating

Education is "the notion that all children could and should be inventors of their own theories, critics of other people's ideas, analyzers of evidence and makers of their own personal marks on this most complex world" (Meier, 1995, p. 4). Leadership that fosters education in this sense is not so easy to explain, let alone organize according to a bell schedule. It involves both recognizing the potential that each child brings to school

each day, and finding ways that this individual potential can be expressed in relation to other people.   In short, education has to do with both recognizing the individuality of the young, and giving them opportunities to learn how to exchange ideas with others.

A heady enterprise to describe, let alone practice, it's easy to see why we so often seek the comfort of courses, grades and diplomas to define education, and link leadership with somehow coming up with a way of improving them. But I will propose that educational leadership involves bringing people together and giving them the space and opportunity to exchange ideas and develop understandings together. In other words, they need to feel both significant as individuals and interdependent with others. This is key to preparing them for a life as involved participants in a democratic society. Leadership then, rather than clearing a path for others to follow, is making a space for others to fill with ideas and possibilities.

This is a far riskier and uncertain path than the resolute trailblazing we associate with leadership, as it is impossible to be certain how others will utilize the space. In other words, educational leadership involves appreciating both the distinctness of private individuals and their unpredictable views as well as the importance of learning how to interact with others in a way that defines us as individuals in a shared public space. These "public spaces allow unique individuals to join in collaborative efforts while still maintaining distinct 'voices' " (Shutz, 1999). This shared space builds on the individual understandings we bring to it and creates an ever changing collective interpretation of events.

I am suggesting then, that educational leadership involves understanding that the tension between schooling and education is the source of many of the conflicting

demands placed on educational leaders. Paradoxically, the structures and processes of schools, the official setting for what we term education, obstinately work against educating students in a way the leads them to a deep understanding of themselves or others. These same structures and processes conspire willingly to school them, sometimes in fragmented pieces of information that seem disconnected with anything outside the four walls of the schoolhouse. Instead of creating understanding, learning comes to be defined in measurable bits of information packaged up in courses. Inevitably the two, schooling and education, exist side by side in educational organizations, and their competing goals – the reinforcement of certainty versus the exploration of uncertainty - lead to many of the dilemmas, confusion and contradictory values that characterize public education. The challenge as an educational leader is to resist any "flaccid compromise" (Egan, 1997) between these contradictory purposes, and instead find a way to open up the educational possibilities within them.

To act upon those understandings rather than simply trying to fix everything all the time, leaders must be what Greene (1978) terms "wide awake" (p. 43). Understanding the differences between education and schooling is key to this kind of wakefulness. Greene suggests we must overcome "our tendency to perceive our everyday reality as a given – objectively defined, impervious to change. Taking it for granted, we do not realize that reality, like all others, is an interpreted one. It presents itself to us as it does because we have learned to understand it in standard ways" (Greene, 1978 p. 44).

She goes on to say that for example, we "scarcely notice" the hierarchy of authority that dominates the lives of students and teachers, and come to take it for granted. To break free of this those in education, " have to break with the mechanical

life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual, even in what they conceive to be the virtuous, and ask the 'why' in which learning and moral reasoning begin" (p. 46). Cullingford (2002) has his own take on the situation, "It could be said that we live in the age of schooling, where institutions are expressions of the norms, if not the values, of society. Schools are so deeply embedded in modern culture and in the experience of individuals that they are rarely questioned" (p, 3). These views of school and the necessity to ask questions about what is taken for granted has implications for how designated educational leaders, such as school administrators, need to question interpreted realities and the structures and routines that support them. By question I do not mean discard them, but simply take the time to position them in the context of the schooling/education dilemmas that they confront on a daily basis. While our familiar structures and bureaucracies are useful, they are not more or less than ways to organize things. They are not the same thing as education, but merely provide some containers for it, keeping in mind that many significant educational experiences will not fit in tidy containers.

Another way to look at this is that to act on the promises and possibilities in education, educational leaders need to be fully aware of the uses and limitations of the practical realities of schooling. The competing values between the promise of education and the pragmatics of schooling circumscribe the role of leader and form the essence of many leadership challenges. These challenges rise up every day, in small and routine events that hopefully prompt some questions. Should the student who cheated on a test automatically get zero, or do we ask what prompted the cheating in the first place? If a student misses class on a regular basis, is this a license to exclude him or a chance to find

out what has made him exclude himself? While Greene's (1978) "wide awake" answer would be closer to the second response, as we'll see in later chapters, it is not necessarily the most common one. Perhaps then, the art of educational leadership lies in finding and defining the points of intersection between schooling and education in a way that opens our eyes to possibilities rather than forcing the situation into a boxed solution.

This has to do with the way the individual interacts as someone embedded in a collective setting with other people. Each challenge presents the opportunity to reveal oneself and exchange ideas with others in a way that leads to different understandings of the situation. In short, routine events have the potential to serve educational goals if we take the time to "to think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5). As a first step, thinking what we are doing involves recognizing education and educational purposes when we see them.

This begs the question of what we mean by leadership that is educational in the way I have described it above. I am referring to leadership that creates space for meaningful dialogue among people who feel that they are on an equal footing with others. Rather than filling this space with their own visions and new and improved procedures, educational leaders create the space, and invite others to join them in an exchange of ideas that leads to new understandings and ways of looking at things. This brings us to the next significant question, "What does Hannah Arendt have to do with educational leadership?"

Arendt and Educational Leadership

As a first response to that question, Arendt's concepts of public, private and social can help to bring the schooling/education dilemma into sharper focus.

Schooling, as the bureaucratic arm of public education, coincides with all three

aspects of Arendt's notion of the "social", conformity, commodity exchange and

the bureaucratic "rule by nobody" (Arendt, 1958, p.45).

Conformity, whether it comes to expectations for behaviour or what is supposed

to be learned in school, is the order of the day, so assumed that it is never discussed.

When large numbers of people are involved, conformity has its purposes; it can avoid an

unproductive chaos and act as a leveller. Rules and procedures, at least in theory, ensure

some fairness in that everyone gets the same rules to follow. However, unilaterally

applied rules can also negate the individuality of people and stifle their opportunity to

express themselves or commit to the enterprise. In relation to schools, Cullingford (2002)

states this most succinctly:

> The essential condition of school is obedience. The teachers make rules. In
>
> addition, the teachers set tasks. Rules of discipline are abetted by rules of
>
> standards. Poor work is punished whether pupils can help it or not. The result is
>
> the pressure to give up. 'I have to' embodies the essence of submission, doing
>
> what you do not 'want to'. (p. 37)

Compounding the "social" function of schooling is the idea that schools

are there as a type of incubator for the economy of the future; students need to be

trained in ways that ensure they will contribute to a profitable economy as adults.

The constant calls for schools to prepare students for the workplace, or teach them

to eat healthy foods, avoid drugs and otherwise guard their health either serve the

general economy or promise to eventually save it money in future health costs.

Schools are seen as shaping students as commodities to be "cashed in" in terms of

reduced future health costs and improved employability.

"The rule by nobody" that Arendt refers to when she describes the "social" is also alive and well in schools and school systems. Graduation criteria steadily channel students towards a diploma, like fish in a fish ladder. Teachers and administrators produce countless class size counts, student grades, enrolment projections, provincial assessment marks, and risk assessment forms, all at the beckoning of faceless and immutable forces that are never seen or questioned.

Schooling as an outcrop of the "social" as Arendt defines it, begins to take its place as inevitable, and a force to reckon with. However, these things should not be used to frame or define leadership that is educational in the way I have come to understand it. The bureaucratic structures of schooling must be put in perspective in the sense that they are not simply there to be served, but deserve to be questioned in terms of their "educational" purposes. This is a daunting path of everything but certainty, but is perhaps a more realistic idea of what leadership is than the idea that one resolute person has all the right answers, or that the lock-step formulas to produce "change" in education will actually change anything. Educational leaders need to look beyond bureaucracies to find their educational purpose, to prepare students to participate in and contribute to a shared public community based on democratic principles. This shared public is anything but predictable, though at times we act as if it should be. It is as if leaders are considered responsible for creating order and predictability out of the plurality of the public, but as Arendt (1958) points out, this is impossible.

"The frailty of human affairs": ruling and leading. This ambiguity of interpretation, the fact that what appears to be certainties from our perspective get blurred

and altered by the plurality of individual perceptions and experiences as our actions play themselves out, has an unbalancing effect on the popular equation between leadership and certainty discussed earlier in this chapter. And in fact, much of the informal thinking on educational leadership seems aimed at finding a surefire formula that ensures that certain actions produce certain outcomes. As Deal and Peterson (1994) put it, "Some argue that the main problems of schools are unclear goals, loosely coupled roles, remote supervision, unmeasured outcomes and insufficient coordination…The underlying belief is that rational analysis, careful planning, sound decisions and close supervision can solve most of the problems a school faces" (p. 11). Deal and Peterson go on to describe the counter argument – "The best way to remedy the situation is to have school leaders who understand the expressive side of the human experience. Such individuals infuse schools with a sense of pride, passion and purpose…The underlying belief is that what makes any organization work is an uncommon spirit, a culture that unites everyone together in a common quest" (p. 11-12). What is missing here is the acknowledgement that the "common quest" may take many unexpected twists and turns, dependent as it is on the plurality represented in "everyone". In addition, the fact that the quest is "common" does not necessarily validate it, or mean that it contributes to the common good. For example, genocide may be a common quest among certain factions at certain times, but it is not one that is defensible as a way of uniting a country or a religion.

Arendt (1958) has her own views on leadership styles, though she would not term them styles at all, and would more likely term them the "conditions" of human endeavours. She makes a distinction between leading through initiating action and what

she terms "ruling", and connects the latter with seeking an antidote for what she terms the "frustration" of "action" and its unpredictable results:

> Exasperation with the threefold frustration of action – the unpredictability of its outcome, the irreversibility of the process, and the anonymity of its authors – is almost as old as recorded history. It has always been a great temptation…to find a substitute for action in the hope that the realm of human affairs may escape the haphazardness and moral irresponsibility inherent in a plurality of agents. The remarkable monotony of the proposed solutions throughout our recorded history testifies to the elemental simplicity of the matter. Generally speaking, they always amount to seeking shelter from action's calamities in an activity where one man, isolated from all others, remains master of his doings from beginning to end. (p. 220)

According to Arendt, "the calamities of action all arise from the human condition of plurality, which is the condition *sine qua non* for that space of appearance which is the public realm. Hence the attempt to do away with this plurality is always tantamount to the abolition of the public realm itself" (p. 220).

Eliminating the public in order to remove the distracting and random effects of plurality is closely akin to replacing uncertainty with certainty. Arendt acknowledges that it is frequently driven by a desire for order as opposed to a desire for unilateral power. Rather than consciously eliminating democracy, it is seen as a way of imposing some order and predictability on a situation, or as Arendt (1958) phrases it, "Escape from the frailty of human affairs into the solidity of quiet and order …" (p. 222). She goes on to say that this order is based on "…the concept of rule, that is, the notion that men can

lawfully and politically live together only when some are entitled to command and others are forced to obey" (p. 222).

This idea is coupled with the distinction that Arendt (1958) makes between a "leader" and a "ruler":

Thus the role of the beginner and leader … changed into that of a ruler; the original interdependence of action, the dependence of the beginner and leader upon others for help and the dependence of his followers upon him for an occasion to act themselves, split into two altogether different functions: the function of giving commands, which became the prerogative of the ruler, and the function of executing them, which became the duty of his subjects. (p. 189)

This distinction Arendt (1958) makes between ruler and leader is an important one, as it partially explains the popular assumption that leading has to do with one individual leading others down a sure and certain path, as opposed to creating the opportunity for others to join in and act themselves. As she states, "…the successful ruler…may claim for himself what actually is the involvement of many…Through this claim the ruler monopolizes, so to speak, the strength of those without whose help he would never be able to achieve anything. Thus the delusion of extraordinary strength arises and with it the fallacy of the strong man who is powerful because he is alone" (p. 190).

This distinction between ruling and leading is rarely articulated, but comes bundled up with unspoken assumptions about what leading is. Leadership that is viewed as strong, surefooted and uncompromising is rulership; someone makes the rules and everyone else complies with them. This has its uses, particularly when it comes to

emergencies and life- threatening situations, but it has little to do with action in the sense of initiating something new that takes on life and meaning through connections with other people. The distinction between leadership and rulership goes beyond a "style" of leadership and positions leaders as initiators who act and leave space for others to act and react in response, and rulers who enforce rules assume that these rules will determine everything that happens.

After all the discussion of action, natality and boundlessness, rulership may seem like a naïve construct, but as Arendt (1958) notes above, it is a common reaction to the vagaries of plurality, and appears to offer an antidote for "the frailty of human affairs" in the assumed "solidity of quiet and order …" (p. 222). Arendt's distinction is a valuable one, and helps to explain the enduring appeal of the sure-footed and heroic leader, who will save us from ambiguity and dilemmas and lay out a smooth path for us to follow. While enduring, this view is doomed to disappoint and surely fails to educate. It is embodied in the rules and structures of schooling that create a comforting preordained purpose and direction. However this rulership in schools tries to prevail irrespective of the newcomers there who are desperately looking to adults to learn how to connect and be with others. Educational leadership has to do with returning their gaze and preparing them to take action in the public. We do this by taking action ourselves, and initiating things that allow them to be with others in a way that offers them both protection and room to learn to appear and connect with others. We are there to help them learn to move from private to public and from public to private.

The convergence of the public and private. As Benhabib (2000) has already put it earlier in this chapter, "…the home not only lends the self the depth without which

it is nothing but a shadow in the streets, but the home also provides the space that protects, nurtures and makes the individual fit to appear in the public realm" (p. 213). Protecting and fostering the growth of the unique individuals, adults and children, that converge on a school each day, a combination of recognizing their natality and making it safe for them to reveal it to others in public, begins to resonate with educational implications. Leaders are responsible for how people act in regard to each other, as this behaviour on their part ripples through the rest of the organization. What I mean by this is that if they respect the uniqueness that resides in others and make opportunities for them to safely reveal this in public exchange with others, it sends a message that this is how we act here. This is the power of educational leaders, whether they are parents, classroom teachers or administrators. They can make spaces for the private individual to be sheltered, and they can create publics that open up a dialogue that allows ideas to be exchanged in a way that recognizes what links us and what separates us in equal measure.

The public, however, is not simply a place to hold a bloodless debate or exchange of ideas; as Arendt (1958) points out, it is alive with an invisible "web of relationships" that constantly produces narratives that outstrip and subsume the original action that produced them. This is a significant point, as it colours and complicates the next logical question, "What does educational leadership look like?"

The alchemy of the web of relationships. The simple answer here is that leadership is action, in the Arendtian sense of initiating something new in public "With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance" (Arendt, 1958, p.176). This combination of newness and revelation

of the self to others is key to her idea of action, and it is not difficult to link action to leadership, especially in terms of its innovative and public aspects. Arendt separates labour and work from action, and defines them in terms of the repetitive drudgery of labour, or work that results in a product that is not immediately consumed. Both of these seem, on the surface, too mundane to have much to do with leadership. But things are not quite that simple. As Behhabib (2000) observes:

> Attempts to distinguish among types of human activity, such as labor, work and action in Arendt's case…are subject to a standard objection: it is pointed out that any complex human activity, from factory work, to writing a book, to making a meal, cannot simply be seen as an exemplar of a single action type…When human activities are considered as complex social relations and contextualized properly, what appears to be one type of activity may turn out to be another; or the same activity may instantiate more than one action type. (p. 131)

The "complex social relations" Benhabib refers to is Arendt's "web of relationships" that transforms what we say and do into something else, simply by virtue of the fact that it is interpreted from perspectives that are unique and different from ours, then retold from those perspectives. As Arendt (1958) pragmatically puts it, "…action almost never achieves its purpose…" (p. 184), but produces narratives that are told and retold in a way that transforms what was done by one person into something else again. This idea, that the web of relationships takes possession of what we do and immediately gives it unintended meanings, takes us back to the observations I made at the beginning of this chapter; leadership goes hand in hand with uncertainty, despite how people long for certainty from leaders.

Educational leadership, then, linked as it is with the idea of a democratic exchange of ideas, is intrinsically uncertain, and those who aspire to it need to come face to face with this idea. In effect, the relationships that surround us create the meaning of what we do, and that meaning is often filtered and shaped by people's perceptions of who we are. This in turn has been created through a series of interactions we have already had with them, and many of these have been so small and fleeting we may have forgotten them. But others have not, and these moments become part of a narrative that transcends our intents and defies our control.

Moreover, leadership is uncertain because it involves opening up private and public spaces within the bureaucracy that is public schooling. These spaces leave room for the protection of individuality along with the opportunity to engage with others and appreciate their perspectives in a safe and democratic environment. The results are predictably unpredictable, as the narratives produced by this public discourse grow, expand and fold back on each other in a recursive yet transformational way. To open up these spaces for dialogue takes courage and a conscious release of control, and that is perhaps the unacknowledged heroism of educational leadership. It involves a refusal to seek certainty in the comfort of the rules and regulations of the "social". Instead educational leaders need to seek the uncertainty of opening up space for creating a common world in dialogue with others.

Chapter 3 will apply Arendt's concepts to the practices and structures in schools and school systems in a more focused way. I will also begin to apply them to the idea of educational leadership. Having described these concepts in this chapter, it's now time to test their utility as tools that open the way to different ways of looking at familiar places.

CHAPTER 3:

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

CREATING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

> …with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. (Arendt, 1958)

In this chapter I utilize the concepts of the private, public and social that Arendt (1958) has provided and discuss how they relate to schooling, education and the idea of educational leadership. The intricacies of these ideas - public, private and social - can be both appealing and disconcerting. They are appealing in that they promise to shed light on leadership from unique angles. They are disconcerting in that they can easily remain abstract ideas, interesting to look at, but not particularly useful. This chapter will be devoted to applying them to certain broad realities of schools and school systems including their conflicting purposes, various approaches to educational reform and the many publics that surround schools and school districts. They are not practical until one can try them on for size and begin to use them. Hopefully this will also make them clearer. They have come densely packed in text, and it is time to pull off the packing and see what they can do to illuminate the broader context of public education and the idea of educational leadership.

Along with the three spheres of public, private and social, I intend to take a closer look at Arendt's (1958) notions of labour, work and action to examine the same thing – educational leadership. While action, in the sense of initiating something new in relation to others, is what Arendt most closely associates with leadership, I am proposing that labour and work can also have this effect, as the "web of relationships" that surrounds us

can create narratives that transform one type of activity into another one, simply because varied interpretations are created through multiple perspectives.

In addition, I will further develop the distinction Arendt (1958) makes between "leading" through "action" that affects and includes others in a variety of unpredictable ways, and "ruling". This idea, that an individual has the authority to compel others to behave in certain ways and the responsibility for what they do, is far from a relic of bygone eras, as the tenor of the previously mentioned presidential campaign debates clearly demonstrates. The yearning for order and escape from the vagaries of plurality often burdens leaders with the responsibility for single handedly resolving all issues and banishing uncertainty. As Arendt (1958) concludes, "Thus the delusion of extraordinary strength arises and with it the fallacy of the strong man who is powerful because he is alone" (p. 190).

Having described a variety of conceptual lenses in the previous chapter, it is time to start looking through them to try to see things more clearly, or at the minimum, differently. I will begin with schools themselves, and their role in relation to the public, private and social.

The Schoolhouse: Not Just Child's Play

When I refer to the "private", I am viewing it as that place of protection and sanctuary that allows the individual to grow and develop without the constant interactions reactions and interpretations that are part of the public realm. This private realm may include, but is not limited to, the home. The aspects of the "public" most relevant in schools are the ideas of appearing with others and then interacting with them in a common place around common interests. The "social", in the context of public

schooling, is represented in the centralized bureaucracies that educational leaders work within, with their structures, rules and the consequent "rule by nobody" that Arendt associates with this realm.

The idea that schools are places of importance in terms of both private and public lives is reinforced by Benhabib (2000): "Schools are not services; they are places of identity formation. In Arendtian language, a world is passed on to future generations not only in the family but also, and equally significantly, in the schools" (p. 151). Seen in this way, schools are places that bridge the public and private, ideally allowing for both to flourish in a place where young people prepare to become adults. More directly this means schools foster students' identities as private individuals and bring them into public spaces that give them the opportunity to engage with the views of others. They are at the first of many formal junctures of the public and private that they will encounter in their lives. The fact that this situation is so new to them makes school experiences imprint for life. Anyone who has admitted that he or she is a teacher at a party will vouch for this. People carry stories of pain and happiness from their school days that spill out of them the moment they meet a teacher socially, and they are stories they need to tell. Few of these stories are about what they learned in class, and most are about moments of interaction with others. Some are about the injustice a particular teacher may have done to them, and others are about a small moment of kindness. Whatever the memories are, they happen in school, the place that ushers them from the privacy of their homes to the wider public world.

Arendt (1968) contends that: "…in relation to the child, the school in a sense represents the word although it is not actually the world" (p.189). If school indeed

"represents the world", it is important to continue to question how content we are with how schools represent the world to students. For the world is not a tidy place of segmented experiences, predictable lessons and tests of understanding that arrive on pieces of paper at scheduled intervals. It could be argued that students' lives between classes have as much or more to do with being educated, or "Growing, becoming different, becoming informed and articulate" (Greene, 1996), as what happens within the more regulated environment of classrooms. At the minimum, these spaces in between classrooms, alive with the interactions, drama and confusion of coming to understand the world, need to be recognized as a significant part of children's education, distinct from their official "schooling".

As a high school principal I used to love the idea that each day would unfold like some improvised drama, unpredictable, intense, and yet somehow filled with the promise which is only found in the very young. That this promise was often expressed in unexpected and unbridled ways only added to its appeal for me. That space in schools between the more ordered experiences in the classroom, the interactive ebb and flow of halls and parking lots and class changes, made sense in an intuitive way. To all appearances this space between was chaos, yet there was a communicative energy running through things that gave it a sense of place and purpose. There is, in this predictable merging of individuals in between classes, a public place that resounds with the pluralities of purpose, opinion and background that characterize other publics.

"Social" Studies: Schooling and Education

I am proposing that much of the structural rigidity of schooling stems from the fact that the purpose of schooling, as opposed to education, is primarily social in the

Arendtian sense, in that it is intended to create conformity in students and assumes that this will result in outcomes that serve common ends. These outcomes include a well-prepared workforce and a population that "knows" certain things such as Canadian history, particular pieces of literature, core scientific principles and mathematical operations. The overall idea is that this prepares students to be generally useful members of society. All of these outcomes reinforce a certain bureaucratic overlay reflected in uniform outcomes taught to groups of children and standard criteria used to quantify and credential their learning.

Education, on the other hand, implies that "a man's outlook is transformed by what he knows…For how a man lives depends upon what he sees and understands" (Peters, 1973 p 19-20). This notion of becoming educated is a much deeper and more complex proposition than the common perception that simply passing courses and receiving a diploma means a person is educated. Education does not imply that specific skills and knowledge are irrelevant, but it "consists, essentially, in the initiation of others into a public world picked out by the language and concepts of a people and structured by rules governing their purposes and interactions with each other" (Peters, 1973, p. 26). The implication here is that this "initiation" provides the bridge between the child as a private individual and the public realm they will soon inhabit. However, the vehicles on that bridge often carry a heavy cargo of compliance and credentialing more closely related to schooling.

How "Social" are Schools Anyway?

To buttress the case that schools are primarily social and work on the assumption that it is possible to produce uniform outcomes, Cuban's (1990) insights are helpful to

understand the nature of public education as a social and symbolic institution. As Cuban notes, public education is in the forefront of the impact of shifting social values - often the first response to this change is to teach children the new and improved way of thinking or acting. The assumption, somewhat debatable, is that this early intervention will eliminate the problem by training students to think and act in a certain way. Furthermore, as Cuban pragmatically points out, it is politically convenient to address social issues through public education, as this does not cause wide-spread upheaval in the adult world, yet certainly looks as if something is being done to address the problem. Current examples of this time-honoured approach include efforts to encourage school boards to prevent bullying, obesity and drug abuse through programs in schools.

Cuban (1990) and Axelrod (1997) detail how schools were and are used to instill certain social values and "cure" certain problems. As mentioned, drug use and obesity are the current problems of the day. The assumption is that lessons given to the young about the dangers of drug use, the benefits of exercise and healthy eating will eliminate undesirable habits. The following government press release, put out by the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, is a current example of this classic approach:

MORE SCHOOLS RECEIVE FRUIT, VEGGIES AND FRIDGES

Following evaluation of a one-year pilot project in 10 schools last year, the ministries of Agriculture and Lands, Education, and Health have developed a plan to provide the fruit and vegetable program to up to 50 schools for 2007. The plan also calls for a phased expansion over the next three years to ensure that all B.C. public schools have an opportunity to participate in the program by 2010.

"Eating your fruits and veggies and drinking milk are all healthy choices that children should make on a daily basis," said Hogg. "The expansion of the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program will encourage and teach B.C. kids the positive outcomes of healthy eating." (2007)

Future health problems avoided – it's as simple as that, though we all know it isn't. This is not to say that encouraging healthy eating in schools is wrong, or even ineffectual. The above fruit and vegetable program has introduced many children to healthy foods that they haven't encountered before. But addressing health issues through schools is a good example of Cuban's (1990) cheerful maxim about the social role of schools, "When society gets an itch, schools get scratched" (p. 9). The preceding press release is a classic illustration of how schools are chronically used to address issues that extend far beyond their sphere of influence.

As testimony to the long-standing popularity of this strategy, Axelrod (1997) portrays Canadian schooling in the Victorian era as designed to instill values and ensure that children "fit in" with the established order. For boys, calisthenic programs were believed to "encourage 'manliness', thwart effeminacy and produce 'muscular Christians' to support a moral culture. Girls were taught sewing and other domestic arts, which paved the way for the emerging field of home economics, not to mention preparing them for a housekeeping career.

All the above examples, past and present, anchor schools in Arendt's social realm, as they imply that education is intended to shape children in a specific way rather than allow them to define themselves as individuals in a larger society. Cuban (1990) also points out that schools are not terribly effective at producing the desired social outcome,

but clearly this has not diminished the popularity of this idea. This misplaced optimism
is not surprising given Arendt's observation on the social that "…society always demands
that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has
only one opinion and one interest" (p. 39). As the above examples imply, schools are
habitually viewed as agents for this like minded result.

The Social: Here to Stay

Through the lenses of Arendt's notions of the public, private and social, the
dueling purposes between the public and private on one hand, and the social on the other,
can be seen to form the crux of the tension between education and schooling. Education
strives to prepare students for full participation in public life as distinct individuals, while
schooling aims to shape them into economically productive citizens in a social realm
where "those who did not keep the rules could be considered to be asocial or abnormal"
(Arendt, 1958, p. 42).   This is the paradox of public education – while it sets out to offer
all children boundless options and possibilities, it often defines learning in terms of
schooling, that is, in tightly wrapped ways that limit their choices and demand conformity
(Barber 1997, Sizer 1997). As Hargreaves (2003) puts it:

> Yet instead of fostering creativity and ingenuity, more and more schools
>
> systems have become obsessed with imposing and micromanaging
>
> curricular uniformity. In place of ambitions missions of compassion and
>
> community, schools and teachers have been squeezed into the tunnel
>
> vision of test scores, achievement targets and league tables of
>
> accountability. (p.1)
>
> While this statement reads like a death knell for education at the hands of

schooling, the two coexist in schools, and will continue to do so. Regardless of sincere intents to educate and what Arendt might view as the "social" intrusion of schooling into education, the schoolhouse realities of exams, buildings, schedules and social imperatives will likely continue to prevail. It is temping to blame the "social" as the culprit for all that is less than educationally ideal in public education. One can speculate that if schooling became less dominant, and schools became an agent for education in its purest sense, the ideal and real purposes would be aligned. However, schools as a representation of Arendt's social are here to stay, and while it is appealing to rail against the limitations of this, it is disingenuous to expect that things will change, as schools and their social purposes and structures have proven to be enduring. Schools are structured to be efficient bureaucracies and perceived that way in the public consciousness. The structures are there for a reason; without them institutions like schools would be haphazard, inequitable experiences that may not serve students as well as they could. For this reason they are likely destined to stay that way. This equity factor is coupled with the fact that schools are dependent on public funding and therefore serve "social" purposes, such a producing future employees, by both circumstances and definition. This presents a challenge for "educational" leaders: keeping the social purposes of schooling adequately fed and tended while creating opportunities for learning that is truly educational. This means learning that has the potential to transform "mere living" into "quality of life" (Peters 1973, p. 19-20) by learning to see and understand, rather than simply acquire information in order to get a credential.

It is the difference, for example, between telling children not to bully others in order to be "socially responsible" and win a certificate or prize, and launching them on an

inquiry that gives them the opportunity to develop empathy and a deeper understanding

of how as individuals they are connected to others and have responsibility towards them.

Sometimes one comment or action by an adult can do more to develop this understanding

than the most elaborate lesson plan on "social" responsibility, just as one thoughtless

gesture can undo it. So the question becomes, what is the role of the educational leaders

who work in this mélange of public, private and social domains?

The Public and Private: What's Educational Leadership Got To Do With It?

A first response to the question posed above may be to strive to bend schooling to

educational purposes, simply by force of will, policy revisions or individual leadership.

But as Arendt (1958) has already pointed out, this approach is destined to fail due to the

environment "plurality" or varied perceptions and experiences that comprise the public

embedded in schools and their purposes. Schools, with their reach into the future and

connections with multiple traditions embodied in the children that go there, are firmly

rooted in the plurality of the public. They do not lend themselves to being led by one

person in one way. They do however, lend themselves to "action" or initiating something

with "boundless" consequences:

> …because action, though it may proceed from nowhere, so to speak, acts into a
> medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process
> is a cause of new processes. Since action acts upon beings who are capable of
> their own actions, reaction, apart from being a response, is always a new action
> that strikes out on its own and affects others. (p. 190)

Leading in the sense of "ruling" cannot exist in this environment, as reflexive as

our urge to impose order and predictability on both actions and reactions is. The answer,

if there is one, lies in allowing individuals to define themselves in relation to others without prescribing or predicting what the effects of those interactions may be. As Gopnik (2004) puts it, "A guru gives us himself and then his system; a teacher gives us his subject, and then ourselves" (p. 90).

The leadership dynamic, if viewed in this way, becomes a question of the relationship between the self and others and the unique ways that our actions reverberate with others, depending on what they choose to make of them. It is far from a matter of certainty, and very much a matter of the interaction between the public and the private.

To apply the distinction between the public and private to educational leadership, it can be argued that leadership, if it is to be educational, involves creating public and private spaces within the "social" bureaucracy of schooling. In this way leaders can maximize the educational potential of children's school experiences. The private individual, still protected, becomes prepared to appear in public through learning to participate in a public realm of varied opinions and experiences that exists within a school. My focus here is on the intersection between the individual and the connected human environment of a school or school system. This occurs within what Arendt (1958) terms the "web of relationships" which creates a context for action in which "to take an initiative, to begin, to set something into motion" (p. 177).

I am proposing that leadership as action involves consciously opening up spaces within the "social" confines of schooling to allow for educational experiences. These experiences both protect the private and foster the public in a complementary way that launches students on a journey of coming to understand themselves and others. Understanding the relationship between Arendt's notions of public and private, then, has

the potential to help us create educational experiences in schools, or at the minimum, to know them when we see them.

The idea of the private has two dimensions that need to be applied in the context of educational leadership. One is that the private is a protected place, or sanctuary, that allows individuals to exist and develop in a sheltered and unfettered sort of way. The related idea is that the private is hidden and exists out of the sphere of public interaction and the judgments and narratives that occur there. There are times when this privacy needs to be part of educating students. Respecting and protecting who they are as individuals, and making it safe for them to conceal or reveal themselves when they choose to do so, is key to this idea. This is a far cry from using rules, procedures and public exposure to convince them to conform, nor does it mean neglecting to notice them as unique individuals. What it does mean is treating students, along with parents and staff, as if they individually matter, while making it safe for them to appear with others in public places and come to appreciate the ideas of others.

Schools are the rehearsal room for the public children will encounter as adults – a demi public, so to speak, where they begin to formally encounter others outside immediate family. This appearing and interacting with others creates the opportunity to take action. As Arendt (1958) describes it, "finding the right words at the right moment, quite apart from the information and communication they convey, is action (p. 25-26). If part of our educational purpose is to teach children to interact with others and take action, it seems helpful to view educational leadership as connected with the idea of taking action in the Arendtian sense. While action is not restricted to formal leaders, the idea of initiating something in this way provides a useful perspective on educational leadership.

A leader who creates both private and public places within an organization, a school or a classroom is allowing the container of schooling to hold educational experiences.   This is not a common way of describing educational leadership, which is usually portrayed as filling the container with specific contents designed to improve student achievement, enhance teaching or address some other predetermined outcome.

I once listened to a report from a Superintendent on a class size project his district had initiated. He explained how the primary students who were part of the project improved in reading when they were in smaller classes with teachers who had received specific training in teaching reading. But he went on to explain that the older students in the schools involved who were not in smaller classes did better too, even though they weren't part of the project. So in his view the smaller classes weren't really making the difference. When we pressed him on what else might have made the difference he paused for a moment and then said, "I'm not sure, but I think the teachers really started believing in all of them, and believing that they could succeed." This story has always stuck in my mind as an example of "boundlessness", or how A does not necessarily result in B.

In terms of the public and private, there are several things happening here. The assumption that the impressive gains in primary students' reading were a result of small class sizes, was publicly disavowed by the Superintendent. Based on analysis and conjecture, he determined that the difference was because these children were treated and perceived as individuals who brought the capacity to succeed into the classroom with them. This in turn made them successful as a group regardless of whether they had been exposed to the class size treatment. A simple thing, like speaking and acting as if your

students can succeed, possibly had more powerful and far-reaching effects than training

and smaller classes combined.

While this defies traditional logic on the surface, it makes sense in an Arendtian

sense, as it can be viewed as connected to the relationship between the public and the

private. Recognition of the potential of each distinct individual and what they bring to

the larger situation allows unexpected things to happen. Conversely, assuming they have

no potential ensures that they will never have the opportunity to reveal the possibilities

within them to others. This interplay between the private potential and the public

possibilities of our students is easily lost in the striving to ensure they improve that

defines the literature on school reform. While it is difficult to dispute the value of

offering students the best chance to succeed, it is hard not to take issue with the proposed

methods to do so.

Educational Leadership and School Reform: Uneasy Bedfellows

To begin to apply this idea of leadership as action, with its unpredictable effects

on others, it may be helpful to look at the literature on educational change, which has

become almost synonymous with educational leadership in recent years. It is interesting

to see how current educational change theory fares in terms of the idea of leadership as

creating space for the public and private in school systems and being open to the

unpredictable ways this space can be filled. Fullan (1993), who has spent most of his

career examining the idea of educational change, admits that:

> …we have been fighting an ultimately fruitless uphill battle…We have an
>
> educational system that is fundamentally conservative. The way that teachers are
>
> trained, the way that schools are organized, the way that the educational hierarchy

operates, and the way that education is treated by educational decision makers results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo than to change. (p.3)

The above statement resonates with Arendt's idea of the "social", from intractable unspoken rules to a steadfast conformity in the face of multiple pressures to change. While I agree with Fullan on this particular point, our paths diverge after that. Fullan tends to emphasize developing systemic "mindsets" (p. 4) that can be used as leverage to create organizations that are more receptive to change. In fact, this idea of addressing bureaucratic inertia with yet more bureaucracy, convinced that the right combination of policies and procedures will do the trick, is endemic to his work and that of others (Blankstein, 2004; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005;Sergiovanni, 1999). The idea in each instance seems to be to replace one "social" system with another, as if changing the rules will somehow create more appetite for change.

I am not implying that there is something faulty with the idea of changing schooling to better educate students. In itself, this is a worthy enterprise. I am simply pointing out that what is commonly termed "educational change" has little to do with education as the idea of "preparing people to engage with their equals in deciding how they will live together" (Coulter and Weins, 2008) and a lot to do with manipulating the "social" rules of schooling to help students improve their academic performance.

The idea of leadership as something that happens with and in relation to each other, rather than from one person acting on another, can get lost in these bureaucratic views, especially when educational leadership is linked with school reform. The idea of doing to others as opposed to doing something in relation to each other captures the essential difference between the school reform literature and the idea of educational

leadership viewed in Arendtian terms.

This literature on leadership and school reform is plentiful, and seems to be saying that leadership is simply about doing the "right" things to create the "right" outcome:

> For principals to improve their skills as instructional leaders, superintendents and other district level administrators must practice new supervisory behaviours such as role modelling, and enlightened strategies that encourage professional growth and provide needed organizational support…Because the principal's role is changing from that of building manager or administrator to instructional leader, the principal requires ongoing, substantive staff development and support to refine, extend and evaluate his supervisory skills (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p. 39).

While the above is a bit unclear about what this enlightened and enhanced supervision looks like, one thing is clear. Doing something to other people to change how they behave is the essence of this notion "instructional" leadership. This faith in a linear type of cause and effect is prevalent in the educational reform approach to leadership up to the present.

This idea is present in Fullan's (2001) description of a 1998 reform initiative in the San Diego School district:

> The overall plan is called "Blueprint for Student Success in a Standards-Based System: supporting Student Achievement in an Integrated Learning Environment." The emphasis is initially on literacy and now mathematics, including a number of prevention and intervention strategies destined to identify and correct learning problems early in a child's schooling. Major

investments and procedures have been established that provided literacy

and mathematics materials, and professional development for all school

leaders, staff developers, and peer coaches. Student achievement is

monitored closely at the individual, classroom, school and district levels.

A monthly report is issued by the district that discusses and updates

strategies being used and progress of the system.

Relationships are carefully coordinated. (p. 58-59)

These descriptions of leadership, as confident as they sound in the linear

relationship between cause and effect, seem closer to the false certainties of viewing

leaders as "rulers" who evoke compliance in others than to the pluralistic experiences in

schools or the foundational purposes of education – engaging the young in "growing,

becoming different, becoming informed and articulate…" (Greene, 1996). This

educational purpose is obscured within the mechanisms for prevention, intervention and

other procedures intended to "fix" whatever is theoretically wrong with public education,

the way one might approach a faulty appliance. The activities suggested in the quotes

above overlook the unpredictability of our actions, or what Arendt (1958) expresses as

the "boundless" effects of what we do within the web of relationships surrounding our

actions. "It is because of the already existing web of human relationships, with its

innumerable conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its

purpose…" (p. 184).

Much of the literature on educational leadership fails to recognize this, and

relationships are often viewed as something which can be "carefully coordinated" after

certain actions have been taken, or policies have been implemented (Fullan, 2001;

Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Zmuda, Kuklis and Kline, 2004; Fullan, 2003).

This assumption, however well intended, overlooks the fact that actions are launched, interpreted, acted upon or forgotten depending on the relationships and conversations that surround them. In short, school reform is frequently described as something to be strategically engineered to produce specific outcomes. In reality changing things, or "action" in the sense of initiating something new, lives or dies in the intangible and unpredictable public world of relationships, interpretations, words and actions.

"Who" and "what" we are. While the "tool kits" that come with much of the educational reform literature, such as ways to build teams and reach consensus, may be useful in certain situations, they send an implied message that following them will lead to a desired result. A sampling of the table of contents of *The Handbook for Smart School Teams* is evidence of the faith placed by the educational reform and leadership literature in what is done, as opposed to who is doing it and how it is being experienced:

CHAPTER 4: GROUP PROCESS AND PLANNING TOOLS

GROUP PROCESS TOOLS

Dialogue

Brainstorming

Affinity Diagram

Multivoting

Decision Matrix

Consensus Decision Making

(Conzemenius and O'Neill, 2002, p. IX)

While these tools hold the promise of wrangling the unpredictable dynamics of

public interactions to a useful place, they also imply converging on a specific point or decision. This overlooks what Arendt would term the "plurality" of the situation, that is, the fact that groups of people represent distinct views that perceive an interaction in a variety of individual ways. These "Group Process Tools" despite their intents, leave little space for the protected moments that allow people to reveal themselves to others in a safe way and say what they may be thinking unless they are used that way with skill and intent. Who we are as individuals is far more influential than the agenda of a meeting in terms of what we come to understand happened there. And what we leave the meeting thinking and understanding, our perceptions and intentions, are difficult to predict or control.

The educational reform literature is rife with views of educational leadership that emphasize the "what" of leadership, or what leaders should do and assumes that individuals will follow, like some sort of inert cargo. But this notion of individuals as cargo that is carried along by policies and directions is deceptive. It ignores the power of the public, and especially the many formal and informal publics that flow around schools and have minds, interpretations and stories of their own. We are drawn to the perceived certainties of steps and blueprints as it is disconcerting to admit that our actions can and will have unanticipated effects on others. It is also difficult to give words to a result that is so unpredictable and individual. It is far more comfortable to believe that, as stated earlier, the "right" actions will produce the "right" results. In reality, as Benhabib (2000) has observed, the only certainty is that the results of our action become "decoupled" from their intents as soon as we launch them.

Learning through schooling: another false certainty. This idea that the right combination of things produces a predictable result is also the basis for how schools are structured and operate in terms of student learning. It is very easy to become focused on the topics to be taught and forget that their overall purpose is to foster curiosity and an enhanced understanding of how things are; they are means but not ends. Literature and algebra then, are means to deepen understandings and sensitivities, but they are not the point of education as Peters (1973), Dewey (1916) and Greene (1996) describe it. In a similar way, the standard trappings of schooling such as schedules, credits, courses, grading and report cards often reinforce a misguided focus on means and ignore the ultimate purpose of education. Or, as previously mentioned, the "social" imperatives of schooling can have a larger foot print on the day-to-day landscape of schools and their activities than the more abstract and less immediate purposes of education. Schools serve this social purpose as they provide a captive audience and convenient setting to instill certain values. This explains why schools often are seen as the way to address social issues and why, as Cuban (1990) has expressed it, they keep getting "scratched" when policy makers get the itch to change things.

There can be such a focus on sustaining the structures that keep schools organized to address various social demands that there is a habitual failure to ask what it means to educate and how well we are educating our students to see themselves as individuals connected to others, rather than simply schooling them all to behave in a certain way. Leaders need to be wary of the tendency of public education to become so focused on schooling that it is exclusively defined by it in a self-replicating kind of way. It can also become easy to overlook the things that are educationally significant in the rush to serve

the business of schooling.

Speaking of this business, because of the structures that reinforce schooling and efficient delivery of information to large numbers of students, schools are a convenient place to address emerging issues. Axelrod (1997) has already provided an obvious example of the relationship between schools and the Arendtian idea of the social, or at least the socially acceptable way students should view gender roles, with his talk of early curriculum used for "encouraging manliness" and thwarting "effeminacy". One can only imagine the public outcry at the time if schools had been openly urged to encourage effeminacy and thwart manliness. Tellingly, this would cause a similar outcry today – one only has to recall the ongoing furor about recognizing same sex relationships in the curriculum to see that this is the case. Public schooling mirrors the values of the dominant public values, and any ripples in the reflection, especially regarding gender roles or sexual orientation, are cause for grave concern. This leads to revisiting the idea of exclusive publics, which are as alive and well in public education as they are in other settings.

Exclusive and subaltern publics. The exclusion of certain values and reinforcement of others along lines of gender and class still thrives in public schooling, albeit in a more tacit and unconscious way than Axelrod's description from an earlier era sounds. As soon as the term "exclusive" is linked with public, the plurality of the public becomes co-opted by the social. This exclusivity is couched, for example, in the common complaint that the parents who "really need" to meet with teachers always miss the official parent conference night, and fail to show up to discuss their child's lack of progress. This neediness is usually assigned to parents who are poor, struggling and

likely to have had dismal school experiences themselves. Having been part of many parent conferences that involved eight teachers and a school administrator sitting around a table telling mortified parents how poorly their child was doing, it's no mystery why these parents quickly tire of meeting with teachers. The conference is not aimed at enlisting them as partners with a legitimate view or voice; it feigns addressing the problem by transferring information about children's struggles in school to parents, as if that will somehow shift the responsibility where it belongs.

It is even more pronounced if this child is parented by a single mother, for once the term "single mother" is attached to a student, the situation is seen as problem fraught. This automatic assumption that mothers alone are inadequate parents, combined with their lack of time to join formal groups such as the Parent Advisory Council, guarantees that most of them will have no meaningful say in any private discourse between the home and school or any significant public discourse about the school. This exclusive public around schools is self reinforcing in the sense that middle class parents who have the verbal skills, time, resources and other wherewithal to team tag as advocates for their children will have a public voice, and those who do not are excluded. In a tacit but pervasive way, public schools are led and shaped by middle class values. If a parent is either a woman, uneducated or poor, she is likely not a full member of the public in public schools. If she is all three, she is excluded on two counts, gender and class.

Women then, are viewed as inadequate if they parent alone or are poor, and as a result they don't have full status as part of the public invested in public schooling. Women who are married have more influence, perhaps simply because they may have the time and resources to participate in the school community, but they are still often

relegated to organizing hot lunch sales and other fundraising rather than viewed as equal partners in the educational enterprise. Rather than supporting a public in the true sense of a place for people to interact as equals, this exclusion serves a "social" agenda. The voices that don't conform to conventional ideas about the roles of schools, students and parents are silenced or marginalized, and those that conform are reinforced. But of course, those excluded form a public of their own, what Fraser (1992) terms a "subaltern" public that vigorously discusses schools during chance meetings in shopping malls, grocery stores and soccer fields. They create their own reality around the schools their children attend, and the education they are receiving. These stories ripple across grocery stores and soccer fields, and eventually wash into schools in spite of themselves.

As an anonymous parent I used to listen to the sideline parent talk at my children's soccer games, marveling at how elaborate and passionate their stories about their children's school experiences were. Many of these stories revolved around how silenced the mothers, and they were always mothers, felt in the school and how they grieved for their children's pain, real or imagined. Others were about the "good" teacher that everyone wanted their child to have in grade 3. Tellingly, none were about the good principal that made them feel heard and welcome, but then that story lacks the immediacy and drama of the parent-child-teacher triangle. The point is that these mothers, middle class, conscientious enough to sit through weekly soccer games, articulate and eager to tell their stories, were participating in a public construction of the meaning of education among themselves, exclusive of the school's input, yet highly influential in terms of creating a public perception. Their weekly public meetings, ostensibly for watching children's soccer, gave them a shared space for discussing education, and it was public in

the sense that they participated as equals and their views were heard and respected.

Subaltern publics then, like exclusive publics, are relevant to the somewhat messy and unpredictable milieu of public schools and the public/private distinction. The private, social and public are intertwined and interdependent when it comes to school systems, schools, classrooms and school/community relationships. Subaltern publics, including children, parents, teachers, neighbours, community agencies, school administrators and politicians thrive, each acting upon each other and forming a flourishing colony of what Arendt (1958) terms "enacted stories" (p. 181). Educational leaders need to be conversant with all of these publics, and aware that they arise in surprising places.

While it seems almost comical to portray soccer moms as a subaltern public, they are exactly that, and will have their say regardless of what may be the exclusive nature of the official public in public education, which may seem indifferent to their input. One can only assume that this scenario repeats itself, with different conversations, among parents from other cultures, the preschool community, city hall employees, school administrators, teachers etc. forming a teeming, if informal, subaltern public, each with its own "enacted stories" (Arendt, 1958) about public education. But subaltern or not, these publics are inevitably a safe place for private individuals to express their views and exchange ideas with others. As a leader it is important to notice them, nurture them and pay attention to what they are saying in the public space they have been given or have chosen to take.

Beyond Schooling

This all begs the question of what making space for the public and private looks like. One way to imagine this is to filter relatively small and routine events thorough the public/private distinction. If, for instance, a child cheats on a test, we have a choice of responses. The student can receive a zero on the test as a punishment with no further discussion, or we can ask questions about what led to taking the risk of cheating in the first place. Since the "zero credit if you cheat" is a common consequence in classrooms, cheating and risking such a penalty invites us to look at what private motivation led to the situation. While this may or may not change the consequence, it tells the student that someone recognizes him or her as an individual with individual motives, rather than simply a "cheater". The idea of asking about the private motivation while avoiding any public mention of the situation to others is also significant. Public discussion in schools and classrooms, rather than an opportunity to exchange ideas, can easily be used to humiliate and silence others, as some of the stories in later chapters will illustrate.

Another everyday example of respecting the private and recognizing the challenge of making a public appearance is taking the time to ask why a student repeatedly misses a class, as opposed to simply ignoring or punishing him or her for doing so. This slight shift in view recognizes that there may be a reason he or she is choosing not to appear in class and gives the student the chance to articulate this to someone else. In this instance a student is given a chance to describe what is happening privately that has caused this opting out of that particular public. Even if the student does not engage in the conversation, he or she will likely remember being asked to do so.

This happens simply because someone asks a question and is willing to listen to

the answer. In both cases, cheating and missing class for no particular reason, the conventional response serves schooling, which is traditionally punitive when it comes to breaking the rules. The other allows for a private response from the student that recognizes individual motives and the risks of exposing these in public. One simply reinforces the rules; the other has the potential to educate. Leaving space for the student to articulate the private in a small and safe public of two is educational leadership, less showy, but perhaps more educationally significant, than utilizing the "Tools for Consensus" mentioned earlier.

Labour and Work in Relation to Action

Arendt (1958) describes action as follows:

…with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and it is not prompted by utility, like work…To act, in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to begin, to set something into motion. (p. 177)

The idea of setting something into motion is key to Arendt's idea of action as leadership. Another key aspect is the idea that action is what she terms "boundless…because action, though it may proceed from nowhere, so to speak, acts into a medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process is the cause of new processes" (p. 190).

In saying this Arendt is allowing leadership to include small but significant acts which occur between and among individuals, yet create a ripple effect among many

others. "The strength of the action process can never be reduced to a single deed with a definite outcome, but, on the contrary, can grow while its consequences multiply (Gordon, 2001). To stretch this notion further, action can arguably include labour, or work, as these routine activities can also create a chain reaction of events and processes. It all depends on how they are done and the context that surrounds them.

What accounts for this is Arendt's "web of relationships", as it persistently transforms and reinterprets what we say and what we do in public until it is more, or perhaps less, than what we intended. Benhabib (2000) explains it this way:

> Finally, making a meal, the quintessential example of the repetitive, ephemeral labour that serves the needs of a body in Arendt's view, may be an expressive act for a gourmet chef, just as it may be an act of love between two or more individuals. When human activities are considered as complex social relations, and contextualized properly, what appears to be one type of activity may turn out to be another; or the same activity may instantiate more than one action type. (p.131)

In terms of a school-based example, a routine interaction with a child can create a sense of belonging or further isolation, depending on the words chosen and how they are said. A small rule infraction can provoke a variety of responses. One is the "showdown" approach, which means the student is publicly chastised. This public humiliation can endure in the memory long after what provoked it has been forgotten. As we will see in a subsequent chapter, this misuse of public reprimand can fester and breed some elaborate revenge plots over time. The other is a private reminder about the rule and the reasons for it, which usually have something to do with the individual in relation to others. The

first response is a frequent one, and as a school administrator, a significant number of the "out of control" discipline issues I encountered had been inflamed by excessively public and punitive reactions on the part of another adult in the building before they got to the principal's office. As Arendt (1958) would put it, using the right words at this time around an ordinary situation can transcend a rule-bound response and yet still address the problem in a way that requires a child to rethink what he or she has done in terms of a transgression of the rights of others. These small moments can shape and reshape children's sense of who they are in relationship to the school, and by proxy, the world, well into the future.

Traditionally, as Cuban (1990) points out, leadership is perceived as big and bold decisions made by one dominant person who has the right solution. Arendt's idea of action suggests that in educational settings we need to recognize the leadership in fleeting but slowly rippling events between individuals that open up new possibilities, rather than seeing it as decisive actions on the part of one person that suddenly and profoundly reshape the course of events for everyone. As Levinson (2001) puts it, "Education can foster students' capacity for action or it can foreclose it" (p. 18). In essence, that is the challenge of leadership, fostering rather than foreclosing, despite all the tools at hand to do the latter.

This fostering may not be as straightforward as it sounds. In fact it's likely easier as a first reaction to foreclose and try to get control of events that way. Yet once something is done it takes on multiple meanings to multiple people, and this is the only predictable part of taking action. As Arendt (1958) puts it, "The disclosure of the 'who' through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always fall into an

already exiting web where their immediate consequences can be felt (p.184). Arendt describes this web as follows, "The realm of human affairs, strictly speaking, consists of the web of human relationships which exist wherever men live together" (p. 183-184).

Webs are resilient and almost invisible by nature. Arendt's idea of leadership, or action, that occurs in a place surrounded by preexisting connections and associations begins to capture the intricate human relationships that make up the public world, and by association, schools and school systems.

This web is very vibrant and immediate, and begins its work after any major or minor event in a school, be it fire, fight or something subtler. I recently witnessed a contained version of it that wove its way through a discussion with teachers about comments that had been made about them by students on the internet. While most of these discussions tend to focus on the comments students make about each other, in this case the concern was public critiques of teachers. The conversation began with a demand that as school district executive we should "come down hard on this type of activity" as it was very public and could damage their reputations as professionals. As the conversation continued, the unsettling notion that negative comments about an individual's teaching could be seen all over the world appeared to be the leading face of the problem. Various teachers were mentioning comments that were rumoured to be on Face Book about them. Whether the rumours were true or not was superceded by the idea that these comments were public. As it became clear that punishing the authors of these opinions was more or less impossible, the conversation moved to another agenda item, the idea of ongoing web-based student surveys about their school experiences. The results are used to keep student views in the foreground as schools plan programs and review procedures. I had

little hope that this idea would be well received given the heated conversation that had preceded it. Much to my surprise, after some reassurances that a staff would have a choice as to whether to implement the student survey or not, one of the teachers who had not commented yet observed that if students had a legitimate way to have input they may not feel so inclined to publicly critique their teachers.   It was a simple statement, and took some courage to make it, but not one person disputed it. So in one conversation we moved from the idea of leaders viewed as enforcers of rules that in some way could shut down a public space to an unexpected action in the Arendtian sense of inserting something new into a conversation that was trying to limit that space. While I brought the idea of the student survey for discussion to the group, I feared the prior conversation about curbing public comments about teachers on line had more or less doomed it as a viable topic. This individual's comment recast the plurality of that space and the views of students as something that could be legitimized through giving it a voice. This conversation, which lasted less than 30 minutes, ran the full gamut from the publication of the previously private, the repressive functions of the social and an affirmation of the public, mainly due to the action that one individual took to insert his view. The public story was written in that one conversation, and it changed from one of repressing alternate views to inviting them in – one person was responsible for that because he took action and chose "the right words at the right moment" (Arendt, 1958).

Labour and Work as Action

These intricacies of public narrative and discussion and the role of action within them are difficult to pin down, and don't often appear in the literature on effective educational leadership. But this sense of the public meaning made of events, and its role

as a factor in educational leadership, has something to do with understanding the public, private and social environment of schools, with their webs of relationships and competing demands for labour, work, action, non action and everything in between. The concepts of labour, work and action then, embedded in the "web of relationships" which surrounds them, may prove useful to further examine the complexities of educational leadership.

In my view educational leadership combines all three types of human endeavour, labour, work and action. A certain amount of labour must be done in order to sustain school buildings and keep them functioning. The same can be said for school districts and school systems. Heat must be provided, cleaning must occur, payrolls must be made, memos must be written and like the labour described by Arendt, it is "endlessly repetitive". While it may seem that this is done backstage and privately, in fact formal leaders are responsible for seeing that it is done, and this can be a very public responsibility. If a room is not cleaned properly, the parking lot remains clogged with snow too long, or the heat has failed in the building, the principal is held directly responsible for making certain that the situation is rectified. And if it is not, those affected quickly reach the conclusion that they and their needs are insignificant and don't really matter. Someone in a leadership position will bear the responsibility for how this is perceived, experienced and interpreted. Perhaps for this reason it would be impossible to find a school administrator who has not spent hours, if not days, engaged in trying to ensure that this labour takes place. It would also be difficult to find one who was not convinced this labour, while repetitive and frustrating, was necessary in terms of letting people know that they matter, which launches the ripple effect of action, though labour was its genesis.

Arendt (1958) defines work as efforts that produce a durable end product. Aside from the constant labour of cleaning, heating and maintaining buildings, schools are the sites of work in this sense of product, and plenty of it. If paper produced for communication is taken as one example, the flow of these products, from report cards to class lists to bulletins, is endless and all too durable, as proven by the overflowing filing cabinets in school offices.

As I have already mentioned, activities of this nature often send unanticipated messages that go beyond the labour or work itself. A room that is clean or a bulletin that communicates clearly or even picking up a piece of paper for someone send a message that someone took the trouble to do these things – and that people are valuable enough to warrant the trouble. As a result, there are blurred lines between labour, work and action in schools. Can the labour mentioned above, or the work associated with keeping schools running and communicating become action in the sense that it initiates something else for another individual. I believe this can be so, and that the very ordinariness of these things is part of their value.

I have begun an exploration of the tension between the conceived and actual purposes of public education (schooling versus education) in terms of the role that leadership plays in focusing on educational purposes. It is not simply a matter of resolving leadership dilemmas by eliminating faulty purposes that do not serve education and replacing them with the right ones that do. The more difficult challenge of leadership is to recognize and act upon the educational potential in schooling as it exists. This involves the capacity to see that mundane, repetitive tasks, or what Arendt would term "labor", send a message about how we are together as a collective made up of

individuals, and that small interactions in hallways speak publicly to educational purposes more persistently, and perhaps in the end more loudly, than the school principal's welcoming speeches on the first day of school and staff meeting soliloquies. Leadership is not really made up of eloquent speeches, decisive problem solving and informed commentary on teachers' lesson plans (though it does not exclude such things). But it is possible that Arendt's idea of action in the web or relationships, or the unplanned moments that speak to children and adults in words and actions about how we are together while recognizing them as distinct individuals, have an interconnected and more enduring effect than we imagine. This kind of leadership may involve seeing the educational possibilities in the ordinary routines of schooling such as handing out lockers or collecting fees. The difference is taking the time to understand the role these small schoolhouse routines, the labour and work of the place and the interactions that come with them, can play in sending messages about how we are together, and more importantly, how we can be together. It all depends on how these things are viewed and described within the web of relationships that connects us while it gives meaning to what we do.

A Backdrop of Interactions

Leadership can act on others by landing within the tightly woven backdrop of human interactions that occur day to day, if this "web of relationships" (Arendt, 1958) is recognized and utilized. This means recognizing individuals as unique but locating them among others in a meaningful way that creates spaces in schools for differing opinions and values as a matter of course. This backdrop, made up of ordinary interactions, can add resilience and openness to relationships when less ordinary things come along. It can

recognize and support children's natality, or capacity for newness, while introducing them to the plurality of the public realm and their role within it. There is space for both the public and private in schools if we choose, as leaders, to find it and make it available.

The less ordinary may include events that flare up and create very public dilemmas, but perhaps if all along the way there is space for differing opinions, and for "emphasizing…connectedness and interdependence, but allowing at the same time for multiple and somewhat conflicting spaces" (Shutz, 1999. p. 91). The dilemmas arising from conflicting values and expectations for public education will belong to everyone, and everyone can take a hand in addressing them in a public way. Rather than being seen as one person fixing the problem and filling the space by imposing a solution, leaders can be viewed as both creating and acting in a public space with others. This space allows for multiple views to be expressed with an eye towards a collectively experienced outcome or next episode, whatever it may be. In this way, people come to comprehend things differently, or as Peters (1973) says, take part in the process of becoming educated, and "travel with a different view" because they are open to the views of others.

If this is the case, educational leaders need to be dedicated to exploiting and exploring the educational possibilities that may lie dormant within in the confines of schooling and creating public and private spaces that allow for this exploration. They need to take action, regardless of the "encroachment of the social" (Arendt, 1958) in schooling, and give both students and adults opportunities to do the same. As Greene (1978) puts it, leaders need to be "wide awake" to the extraordinary possibilities which are inherent in the ordinary events of the school day.

Implications for Leadership

In discussing educational leadership I have taken a less circumscribed view of Arendt's idea of the private, public and social, along with blurring the lines between labour, work and action. I am letting them slip and slide together in an overlapping way, because, as stated earlier, tidy taxonomies cannot sustain themselves in the layers of the connected yet distinct experiences, values and perceptions that make up the public in public education, or for that matter, make up life itself.

Chapter 4 will focus on recognizing and protecting the private as the place that both protects and creates individuals. I will discuss how educational leaders need to appreciate and make space for this while they prepare students to participate in public life as adults. These two realms are not exclusive of each other, but as previously noted by Benhabib (2000, p. 211), "the public and private are interdependent". Much of educational leadership can be linked to appreciating the connections, implications, and complexities of each when it comes to preparing children to take their places as adults, "living as distinct and unique beings among others" (Arendt, 1958, p. 178).

The examples used in Chapter 4 and later in Chapter 5 are what Arendt (1958) terms "enacted stories" produced "with or without intention" (p. 184) as a result of actions taken within the "web or relationships". Some of them have already slipped beyond what specifically happened to become a composite story about no particular person, but about routine events that broke free of their ordinary nature in terms of their effect. Regardless, because they have already happened, they stand still long enough to allow for some examination, unlike the swift flow of real time events, which are often gone before we have thought to notice them.

And while these stories stand still for interpretation, they are as noteworthy for their flaws and missteps as for their successes. This lack of smooth perfection mirrors the realities of leadership, and illuminates aspects of it more clearly, and more humanly, than any logical steps to successful leadership could ever do. As Leonard Cohen (1992) puts it,

Forget your perfect offerings,

There is a crack, a crack in everything,

That's how the light gets in.

CHAPTER 4:

NOT YET THE WORLD, BUT NO LONGER HOME:

THE PUBLIC DEBUT OF THE PRIVATE

> As most students soon discover, those who follow the rules become known as good students; those who disobey them suffer the wrath of their teachers and additionally run the risk of being thought of as troublemakers or worse by teachers and classmates alike. (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993, pp. 12-13)

As distinct from the educational leadership literature, Chapter 3 spends considerable time on the interplay between the private realm of "who" someone is, and "what" they do as public people, as both these things are key to leadership. In fact, the world is constantly tugging and pulling at "who" one is, and revealing this publicly in "what" an individual says and does. Arguably the public nature of this is more pronounced among adults who have titles and expectations that trail along with them, making public ripples in their wake. However, all adults operate in the public realm for parts of their lives, and learning to do this with a respect for differences and an awareness of our interdependence can be viewed as foundational to education. Leadership in this context involves demonstrating this respect on a daily basis.

While schools host multiple adult publics within their communities, it is important to recognize that schools are also where children first officially venture out into the public world from their private family back yards, to be acknowledged and judged by others who do not really know them as distinct individuals. Every parent knows this, and many of their anxieties about school stem from that fact that from the first day of school and ever after, the outside world will influence and judge their child.

"The New Ones"

In the institutional fervor to organize large numbers of individuals into grades and classes (telling words in themselves), it is easy to forget that children each bring a unique private world with them through the doors of the school, and that this world continues to thrive and exist for them along side their emerging public identity there. Children haven't learned the art of masking who they are, since they are so fresh at beginning to find it. At the same time their new individuality, or what Arendt (1958) terms their "natality", can be fragile, and easily hidden and subsumed by their sense of what adults want them to be, or what a school compels them to be. We have already seen this in the students Cullingford (2002) interviewed on the purpose of school: "the rules, the inflexibility, the unshared assumptions become ends in themselves. It is as if that is what school is perceived as being *for*" (p. 55).

And yet this is not what we intend school to be, or hope that it is. Instead it is seen to be the foundation of the future and a supportive bridge between childhood and adulthood. The perception of school as an important space and place between the private, protected family world and the future demands of a public life as adults is not unique. Arendt (1968) observes that this juncture is particularly significant in the United States, where there is "extraordinary enthusiasm for what is new", and by association "greater attention paid and greater significance ascribed to the newcomers by birth, that is, the children, whom, when they had outgrown their childhood and were about to enter the community of adults as young people, the Greeks simply called the new ones" (p.176). Arendt goes on to observe that the "illusion that a new world is being built through the education of the children" (p. 177) is both prevalent and seductive. However, she

contends the reality is that "It is in the very nature of the human condition that each generation grows into an old world, so that to prepare a new generation for a new world can only mean that one wishes to strike from newcomer's hands their own chances at the new" (p. 177).

This tension between honouring children's newness to the world and shaping their experiences to serve the world already created is revealed in some observations made by Wells (1986) when comparing very young children's language experiences at home and in school:

> But not only do children speak less with an adult at school. In those conversations they do have, they get fewer turns, express a narrower range of meanings, and, in general, use grammatically less complex utterances. They also ask fewer questions, make fewer requests and initiate a much smaller proportion of conversations…Small wonder that some children have little to say or even appear to be lacking in conversational skills altogether. (p. 87)

In a similar vein, Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) make the following observation about the moral messages sent in classrooms, "As most students soon discover, those who follow the rules become known as good students; those who disobey them suffer the wrath of their teachers and additionally run the risk of being thought of as troublemakers or worse by teachers and classmates alike" (p. 13). The authors go on to note that when asked to write a letter of advice to new students, the vast majority of students will supply a list of the rules, "that being the best and most urgent advice they could think of offering" (p. 13). Cullingford's (2002) more recent observations indicate that this situation has not changed in a significant way.

It would seem that despite the progress made since Axelrod (1997) characterized the early rules of public schooling in Canada as to: "love God; defer to the master; be silent throughout class; clean the classroom; avoid idleness, and 'wash their hands and faces, also their feet if they are bare'" (p. 21), schools remain focused on preparing students for a life based on conformity rather than one which invites varied opinions and views to be spoken and heard.

Despite or perhaps because of plentiful examples of overbearing and insensitive treatment of students in schools, the literature on public schooling abounds with calls for them to be places where children can learn to take on their roles in a democratic society and be engaged and respected as individuals in a community, (Dewey, 1916; Greene 1988, 1995; Bean and Apple, 1995; Meier, 1995; Daniels, Bizar and Zemelman, 2001, Osborne, 2008)), to name but a few. And while the calls for this kind of public education are plentiful, the evidence that that the calls have been answered in a systemic way is sparse.

This is not for lack of trying. Many an aspiring educational reformer can tell rueful stories of how resistant parents, teachers and even students are to changing even minor aspects of secondary schooling. Starting later in the morning, despite ample research evidence that it suits the waking/sleeping patterns of adolescents, is resisted because it interferes with arriving in time for after school athletic events and plays havoc with bus schedules. A change in a timetable, for example, from a year-long to semestered system, brings out vociferous defenders of the status quo. The idea of altering the school year to a more balanced school calendar with attendance in the summer is viewed as an ominous threat to every daycare and transportation system in the

community, not to mention a menace to working conditions. Closing a school, even one that has an enrollment that has declined to almost nothing, puts communities in an uproar, and brings out defenders of the neighbourhood school as nothing else can. Schools and traditions go hand in hand, and separating the two invariably invokes wrath from all sides. Unfortunately, much of the allegiance is to the familiar structures of schooling rather than the purposes of education.

This gap between the reality of schooling and the ideals of education calls for leadership, or what Arendt (1958) would term "action" in the sense of an impulse that "springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative" (p. 177). The action, in essence involves supporting learning environments that respect children for what their unique natality, forged in the privacy of the home, brings to the school community. This small community is the anteroom of the public life they will lead as adults. And while in school they get their first opportunity to try out this unique self in the company of others, this is often left to happenstance when it can be an opportunity to teach them how and why they are connected with others.

As we have seen (Wells, 1986; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993, Cullingford, 2002), this private world of children is often barely acknowledged, let alone appreciated, in schools. If it is recognized, it is often for its detrimental effect on their learning or behaviour. We who work in schools have all heard children's school difficulties attributed to home factors from second language issues at home, to neglectful parents and everything in between- everything but school itself.

I once worked with a staff that felt overwhelmed by the fact that the children in

the school were "low" (in their terms) in their reading and writing and were never taken to the aquarium, or the museum or "anywhere" by their parents. Yet these children came from a culture that had a depth and history that told them more about how they fit in their families and in the world than any trip to the museum could match, but this was not part of the conversation, and rarely considered of value. The children were not recognized for "who" they were, but faulted for "what" they were not, middle class children from families that can afford outings to the places that are perceived to broaden children's horizons. It is very hard to learn to appear and interact with others if no one recognizes who you are in the first place.

This is perhaps a side effect of a zeal for predictability, organization and structures, the "social" realities of schools, rather than an intentional negation of children's individuality, but regardless it bears some attention. It is another example of the Arendtian (1958) distinction between "who" we are and "what" we are, except in this instance the expectations of "what" they should be in school overwhelm and negate the experiences of children, who have a new and fragile sense of "who" they are anyway.

The sense of what children should be, defined in an institutional way rather than building on the foundation of their individuality, creates an expectation to conform to public norms which buttresses the existing structures of schools more than it prepares emerging adults for public life as educated individuals. For this reason it is important to spend time focusing on the significance of the private and hidden lives that children live as they are ushered into the world through public education. If, as Benhabib (2000) says, "…the home…makes the individual fit to appear in the public realm" (p. 213), then this home demands recognition and respect from those who would educate children.

This private realm of students, whether safe sanctuary or treacherous and abusive, is a place rich in meaning and substance. It is intertwined with who they are, and is the roots of whom they will become, and it deserves to be noticed. As adults too, we are constantly drawing on and into these private experiences; they are the essence of who we are, and if our public and private selves are consciously connected they can render our public lives in a way that makes them more purposeful and comprehensible to us and others.

These private experiences are what bind us to life and how we live it. This recognition of who others are, and what has commonly and uniquely formed their experiences, is essential to taking action, as Arendt (1958) would put it, "as a distinct and unique being among equals" (p. 178). In this sense, it is an act of educational leadership to recognize what is unique in each student, parent and teacher we interact with. The public we want to create in schools needs to be viewed as a collective place of unique individuals rather than a set of structures and procedures to organize and homogenize them. This recognition of the individual is taking action in the Arendtian sense of "having the right words at the right moment" (Arendt, 1958, p. 25-26). If we respond to individuals in a way that allows them to recognize a validation of themselves in what is said, they can hear it.

Private Routes to Public Lives

Our private experiences, then, leave distinct fingerprints on each of us, and recognizing these impressions left on others is key to leadership, or taking action in the public realm. For these private experiences often create the rationale for what we do, yet have common threads that connect us to others in a visceral way. Once articulated, they

become experiences that make one feel "with others, and neither for nor against them – that is in sheer human togetherness" Arendt, 1958, p. 180).

At the same time these individual and unique lives, while webbed and connected, retain distinct and unpredictable qualities. As Arendt (1958) notes, "It is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose" (p. 184).

With this in mind, I include some reflections on life in my private backyard, as a child and later as a parent. I am using my own experiences here, as it is the only private world I can speak about with any authority; the only story truly mine to tell. Stories about others are simply my interpretation of what happened to them, and I don't feel entitled to interpret what happened to them privately, as by definition I never saw it happen.

I offer these private experiences somewhat reluctantly, as they become public in the telling, and subject to judgment. Hopefully they will simply serve as a reminder that each individual brings similar experiences to their public life each day, deep, varied, and essential to understanding who and what they are. It is not that my experiences are particularly unique, bound up as they are in the inevitable facts of living a life. They are uniquely untroubled compared to other lives, for my private life as a child was a place of safety, not the unpredictable and unsettling place it is for children too numerous to count.

It is easy to forget this difference when you come from a safe backyard of a childhood, until we are jolted into remembering it. I was once listening to a group of excited elementary students talking about organizing the school talent show. They seemed to be at the perfect juncture of the private and public, and it was fun to listen to them plan their next steps for the show. A snag appeared when it came out, one by one,

that none of them could get a ride to school the night of the show because they were not living with a parent; they were all "in care". This was the "care" of others paid to look after them because their parents were incapable of it. They were very matter-of-fact about this, and understandably did not mention what horrors had put them in this position, but the fact remained in this case their foster parents were not able or willing to drive them to things like school talent shows.   Far from expecting beaming parents in the audience, most of them would be grateful if a teacher could manage to pick them up the night of the show. This is simply a reminder that individuals carry the unique marks of their private lives with them, both bruises and badges, and each has no choice but to make distinct meaning from these private experiences.

So I offer mine as a story about routine things like playing in the back yard, grateful for how normal these things were for me and my children, and appreciative of the fact that everyone has their own stories, and none of us really has much control over the ingredients of our private lives as children.

Safe in the Backyard

We sat at my father's viewing, my brothers and me grown, and talked to my dad as if he were there, and would talk back. We told him things we probably wouldn't have said if things had been normal, because we told him that we loved him. Though he loved us too, that would have left him speechless dead or alive, as he didn't talk about love. He was wearing a suit, and a little string tie that he had taken to wearing when our family lived in Texas, and we were very small. He didn't really like suits and ties, so he would wear something like this to tell people he didn't really take the suit so seriously.

This tie seemed to pull us all back to a time when he was young and worked hard

to make our house fenced like a small fort in back, and while he was at it he built me a playhouse and something to climb on with a trapeze attached. He and my mother sometimes had cocktails with friends in this back yard, and I would fall asleep to my mother's voice and his laughter at these small parties, safe and protected within the fence he had built for us.

The thing now, as we sat there, was that he wasn't breathing, and that, more than anything, was all I could think about. I kept waiting for him to start up again, though I knew he wouldn't. For a long time I looked at him like that, not breathing and lying there on his back, as if he inhaled and then just stopped in the middle of it all, and that was what burned into me about his dying. That and knowing that the fenced yard he built for us was gone forever, though it was already long gone since the day I was 12 he left us all the first time.

Many years later his great grandson slept on my chest, all two months of him, and he breathed in rhythm with me, but double time for him. I felt, for a moment, completely happy, as if we two were wrapped in some harmony that transcends living and dying. This seeped into me - that my dad had finally exhaled that last breath, and that the new life in my arms breathed him into the future. This moment was only that and more than that, as quickly the sleepy breathing rhythm of two months became the grabbing, tasting impatience of one year as this baby began the journey to understand the world all over again, while we built fences to keep him safe in the private garden of our family.

As I mentioned when I began this private story, none of this is unique, and all of it speaks to the well-worn narrative paths of love, birth and death that run through our private lives. Yet it is unique to me, and has influenced the way I've come to understand

the private world of others, "…which does not cease to be singular if the same experience is multiplied innumerable times" (Arendt, 1958, p. 58).

The Blackberry Chronicles: The Public Emerges

We are surrounded by this relentless weaving and duplicating of private experiences between us and are both drawn to them and unsettled by how unpredictably they appear and connect with our lives. Even if we try to keep ourselves apart from the experiences of others, they will slowly encroach and become part of our lives. I learned this, at least metaphorically, over a summer spent wrestling and courting blackberry vines, while they relentlessly invaded the sanctuary of my backyard. That story needs to be told for all of this to make some sense.

As a young mother I lived in a small house that eventually could no longer contain my husband, me and our three young boys, who made the place burst with the physical way they took in the world. Before all this unbridled growth forced us to move to a larger house, I spent a summer with the youngest two in the small kingdom of the back yard, with a porch perched over the city, a swing made out of a tire and a sloping back yard which ended in two laurel bushes which begged the boys to climb them each day. This summer hangs in my memory as somehow apart from the rest of my life, unhurried and suspended in mid air. It was a time of small but significant things that enfolded my children and me in a private world where having lunch was the highlight of the day, the leafy place beside the house was a cool and shadowed mystery, and time and space began and ended at the back garden fence.

I noticed the blackberry vines early in the summer, suddenly spilling over the neighbour's fence in a thorny tangle. The leaves were emerald with perfect edges like

tiny teeth, lush and feral, but the fruit was pale and hard, still fringed with withered petals from the flowers that had quickly come and gone. The vines seemed bent on world domination, and each day new shoots took over more of the fence and tired shed that leaned against it. I kept a wary eye on them, as they grew while we weren't looking, and the thorns loomed larger than the tight green fruit. At first I resented this barbed interloper in our sunny back-yard world of finger painting, peanut butter picnics and lawn sprinklers.

But as the green berries ripened, first to mauve and then into a glistening plummy black, my wariness turned to desire, and I began to pick them in small numbers each day. The glossiest berries grew in the highest places, and lured me like sirens. I launched risky trips to the top of the shed and hatched fruitless plans to penetrate the middle of the tangle, all to try to get at the best berries. While I never fell off the roof of the shed, I was often caught by the thorny vines, and carried my prizes to the kitchen with scratched and bloodied hands. As the berries filled the refrigerator, I took to freezing them. Slowly and steadily the freezer was taken over by blackberries, dusky sapphires shrouded in plastic bags.

After this initial blackberry summer I went back to my winter world of working, with weekends reserved for outings to the aquarium and watching children's rain-soaked soccer games. The holiday in the backyard seemed as sealed as the jars of jam in the cupboard, a shimmering summer memory, neatly stored. The berries on the vine were wizened now, and most had already dropped to the ground as soft fermented casings for the tiny seeds.

More cursing warrior than gardener, my husband cut back the vines as they began

to wither. Bent and ravaged bones of summer, the dry vines and thorns looked almost

vulnerable now. Yet the blackberries resisted his pruning, and in the end he was

outmatched; they were only trimmed back far enough that the children couldn't

accidentally brush against them and scratch themselves. Naturally enough, the

blackberries returned in victory the next spring, gaining ground as they tumbled over the

fence and shed and into the yard.

For years after this indolent summer, long after we moved from this house, I

picked blackberries wherever I found them in public places – I couldn't resist the promise

in their ripeness, and spent hours making jam and bestowing the gleaming jars on

bewildered friends and family. Like a trove of jewels, the berries somehow justified all

my struggles with the interloping vines and thorns. The former backyard invaders had

become familiar allies and I sought them out.

Over time for me this blackberry tangle of interwoven vines and burnished fruit

has come to speak to something important. To me they have come to represent the

tangled "web of relationships" Arendt (1958) describes as "something which lies between

people and therefore can relate and bind them together" p. 182. This connection, which

Arendt describes as "overgrown with an altogether different in-between which consists of

deeds and words and owes its origin exclusively to men's acting and speaking directly *to*

one another" (p. 183), hovers over us, invading and surrounding our lives at every

opportunity.

Yet there is a renewal and hope in the resurgence of the wanton blackberry vines

each spring. To me they have come to stand for the unruly tangle which, despite our

efforts to smooth and sort it, comprises our daily reality. They represent the constant

twining and interconnectedness that occur around us and in spite of us as we live our public lives. While we can ignore it or disdain it, a perpetual woven and tumbled journey to fruition surrounds us as we live both our private and public lives. We can't reach this fruition without recognizing and understanding that the vine, as it grows, connects and turns in on itself again and again. If we hope in some way to act upon others, we need to comprehend and respect what it is that connects us with them, and what it is that makes them who they are as individuals.

Public Schools: Intersection of Public and Private

This interconnected way of seeing the public world seems strangely at odds with the school experiences described earlier in this chapter, which seem more intent on shaping students to fit an institutional reality than connecting their private and public experiences as a way of educating them. And at times this norming seems intent on stripping individual dignity in the name of conformity. All of us can recall moments of excruciating public humiliation as part of our school experience. My own story, mild in comparison to others, had to do with a teacher's discovery that my navy blue beret, officially part of our school uniform, deviated from the norm. During a surprise inspection of our hats, neatly hung on hooks at the back of the room, mine was singled out because it had tissue paper inserted in the inside brim. The tissue was publicly ripped out and flung on the floor, while the teacher barked, "And who does this hat belong to?" I can still remember the sense of mortification I felt for myself and more acutely for my mother, who was only trying to resize my oversized hat by inserting the tissue to fill the gap between it and my head. At the same time I was extremely relieved that, having spent her time creatively addressing the fitting problem, she hadn't yet sewn the required

nametag in the hat.

While this was another serious transgression on her part, it allowed me to greet the teacher's bellowed question with absolute silence. She was left standing surrounded by my discarded hat tissue, looking a bit foolish as she loomed over an audience of speechless and terrorized seven-year-olds. The justice of this, along with the injustice of the tissue flinging and the violation of my private life it represented, was not lost on me, and has influenced my professional dealings with students to this day. I learned at that moment that to destroy individual dignity breeds public compliance and private resentment, and the resentment will eventually win out. The second lesson learned is that classrooms and schools are the public realm for children, and to use this public space to violate their privacy and humiliate them is far too easy to do. At the same time, that ever-present classroom public can be a place that allows children to emerge and feel part of something bigger than themselves. Rather than humiliation, it can create confidence and caring and curiosity, if we seize the opportunities it presents to help them reveal themselves in public.

What I mean by this is to be "wide awake" (Greene, 1978) to the educational possibilities schools and classrooms present for rehearsing being part of a larger public. Schools provide a way of doing this in a protected environment that limits the risks, yet opens up children to the plurality that exists in this most everyday of places.

They key elements of the private are that it is hidden from the public, and can act as a protected and necessary space to nurture the individual. Conversely, it can act as a hidden place of misery for the individual, but regardless, it leaves unique marks on us. The public, on the other hand, involves being among others and recognizing what

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connects us all in a common place. It transcends the private, but does not negate it.

Schools are in the unique position of bridging the public and private for children, and

educational leaders, if they see themselves in this way, can broker and foster the quality

of that bridging. Another way of looking at this brokering and fostering is to see it as

adjusting the breadth and focus of children's experiences, from an attentive focus on the

individual to a broad view of the individual as one intricately and intimately connected

with others in an expansive "web of relationships".

Educational Leadership: Bridging the Gap

The gap between the public and the private in schools is a natural place for

leadership, or as Arendt (1958) would see it, a place, "To act…to take an initiative, to

begin, to set something into motion…" (p. 177). It is a place of exquisite vulnerability

for both children and adults, suspended as they are between themselves and others, yet is

easy to ignore, or simply miss. So recognizing this bridge, and acting in a way that keeps

it open to the new, but protected from overwhelming experiences, is the balance that

educational leaders need to strike. But the question remains – What does this delicate

balance look like in the everyday space of schools? For this open space between the

public and private is also overgrown with the "web of relationships" and filled with

conflicting agendas and purposes which make a sure-footed path difficult to find.

For example, creating new structures to replace old ones, the preferred solution of

many educational reformers, is usually self defeating. The old ones are dug in deep,

fastened tight to the comforting touchstones of traditional notions of schooling. If one is

bold enough to take this on, making a change that will benefit everyone is not even a

remote possibility in the environment of multilayered values that makes up public

education. As previously noted (Cuban, 1992), a lack of tidy solutions is endemic to the dilemmas that form a daily diet for educational leaders.

One time-honoured choice is to forge ahead, making decisions and using positions of authority to make "progress" in the name of instructional leadership. Initiatives such as supervision of instruction or acting as a "change agent" can sometimes imply that leading the way in these endeavours is synonymous with leadership. Evans (1996) in Blankstein (2004) contends that, "Studies of high-performing systems show that their leaders provide direction that is clear, strong and unambivalent…" (p. 25). Leithwood and Riehl are unequivocal (2003) that:

> Management approaches to accountability assume that effective school leadership conforms to what is sometimes labeled "strategic management". Those exercising this form of leadership are skilled in collecting and interpreting systematically collected data. They develop, with their staffs, clear manageable goals and priorities for school improvement. Progress in accomplishing such goals is carefully monitored and plans refined accordingly. (p. 24)

I am not necessarily arguing with the ideas presented here, but they have no chance of success unless they are filtered through the "web or relationships" which exists in the school, a factor that is rarely acknowledged as foundational to leadership. Often relationships are mentioned as a factor, as is the importance of building professional "Learning Communities" (Blankstein, 2004, Sergiovanni, 1994). But they are addressed in an ordered and rational way as if focusing on curriculum or other professional matters together will forge strong connections between people engaged in a common purpose. To his credit, Sergiovanni (1994) does acknowledge that "There is no recipe for

community building – no correlates, no workshop agenda, no training package. Community cannot be borrowed or bought." (p. 5).

A less frequently articulated approach is to recognize that all of us bring our private selves to our endeavours, and leaders must recognize that uniqueness in those they work with before they can introduce any newness, or initiate any actions which have a chance to impact on others in a positive way. Arendt's "web of relationships" prevails over all our actions, and what connects or "webs" these relationships is what we have in common, or the public threads of our private lives.

In this sense leadership has more to do with seeing and strengthening these threads of connection among people than with boldly breaking new ground and expecting others to follow. These links are what can bridge the gap between the ideal and the real, and create coherent and positive experiences for students, who arrive each day with bare and open hearts, yearning to be recognized as individuals. These common and articulated experiences have the same effect on parents, who send their hearts and hopes to school each day with their children, and crave recognition of the risk they are taking when they do this. It includes the experiences of teachers, who work in a strangely public yet isolated way. Their students watch their every move, and yet their peers rarely see them teach.

Before any of them can begin to work together on a common enterprise such as public education, they need to be acknowledged for who they are as private individuals, and what they bring to the enterprise as a result. As Arendt (1958) would express it, they need to be acknowledged for the natality they bring to the plurality of their public lives, or for "living as distinct individuals among equals" (p. 178).

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This acknowledgment is often bound up in small interactions that seem routine and insignificant. But in fact, the extraordinary often lurks in the incidentals of our lives together, hidden and only appearing if we care enough to look for it. Perhaps in terms of practicing educational leadership within Arendt's invisible web of relationships, "…in order to see we must forget the name of the thing we are looking at" (Patterson, 1985, p. 10).

Photographic Memories

It is no accident that the above quote is from Freeman Patterson, a well-known Canadian photographer, who goes on to say that "The art of seeing *is* the art of photography" (p. 6). In this vein, the "art of seeing" who people are, and recognizing what they bring from private worlds which connect them to a public community, is part of the art of leadership. And like photography, this involves seeing the ordinary in extraordinary ways. This "seeing" provides the impetus to act, or press the shutter button. The second part, equally important, is looking at the result and seeing something new, a background that was hidden before, or a light which angles unexpectedly across the print and illuminates something not consciously seen there before. Leadership involves a recursive process of acting, seeing and reflecting on what was seen, the better to take the next action.

This photographic metaphor works in other ways too, for people view leaders through lenses of their own making based on brief and sporadic interactions they have with them. They are pressing shutters of their own and considering the images that result in a constant and overlapping way. And while it is difficult to be aware of exactly when these "photos" are being taken, and how they are used to create a sense of who someone

is as a leader, the one certainty is that a public collage exists for each of us who appear in public, and it defines the public person in an uncannily accurate way. The image captures "who" someone is as well as "what" they do. And if these captured images resonate with the private experiences of others, they create a sense of connection that does more to set the actions, tone and culture of a place in motion than any isolated and conscious act of "strategic management", setting direction or building community could ever do. These individual and overlapping renderings of events, unpredictable yet inevitable, form the raw material of shared public spaces.

The True Meaning of Lockers

To illustrate the significance and influence of everyday interactions, during and after they occur, I offer this story of school lockers, and how, after I wrestled endlessly with organizing them, a student taught me how to really see them for what they were.

Every new secondary vice principal has likely been greeted with the information that assigning lockers will be one of a his/her organizational responsibilities. This task is traditionally given to the least senior member of the administrative team, as the senior partner has been eagerly awaiting release from this entry-level task. The hapless neophyte welcomes this, assuming that lockers will be far easier to master in a logical fashion than administrative nightmares such as fights in the halls, drunkenness at basketball games and disruptive strangers in the school.

This was my assumption as a new vice principal, unshaken even when I discovered that we had 500 fewer lockers than students in the school. Of course, what seemed like a strategic task of creating a fair algorithm for locker distribution quickly became a dilemma in spite of itself. My predecessor had made a map of the lockers in

the school, but it wasn't until I began to assign them that I realized the map was only the first clue in understanding the growing mystery of the lockers. Lockers parallel the life of a school; they are added, altered, deleted and moved in an organic fashion over the years, and in older schools they cluster in halls in fits and starts. The end result was that while they were numbered, none of them followed a numbered sequence in a sustained manner. This plays havoc with any algorithm, despite its elegance, as n, or the actual number of lockers, becomes impossible to determine. Some numbered sequences are interrupted because a door was added twenty years ago and 8 lockers were removed in the process. Other lockers, possible demolition refugees, were imported years ago to address a shortage, and remained in their temporary location eternally. Their numbers were connected with their previous lives, and had nothing to do with any numbers in the current location.

After trying valiantly to count mismatched lockers on the minuscule map, I realized my only hope was to go out into the halls and count and assign them by hand and eye, so to speak. I reasoned that this was also a good way to get to know the staff, as they had begun to come in to prepare for school opening. As a communicative opportunity this proved to be a bit of a double-edged sword. The first day worked well, as I met almost everyone, and it was clear that I was hard at work preparing the lockers for school opening. However by the third day, as I continued my public wrestling in the hall with locker assignments, I could tell that, polite as they were, the staff had begun to think perhaps I would be ultimately incompetent. As the first female vice principal ever at the school, it was beginning to look as if I couldn't even accomplish this most basic task of assigning lockers, let alone be relied on to break up fights and generally lay down

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the law to unruly students.   I was beginning to believe this myself, and started to grapple with the very real fear that I would be unable to sort out the lockers, let alone the locks, before school opening.   The galvanizing effect of this fear led me to spend most of Labour Day weekend assigning the lockers. I managed to slip these assignments into the teachers' homeroom packages in the early hours of the first day of school, chastened and exhausted by how difficult the lockers had proven to be. In hindsight I wonder why I didn't devise a streamlined way to assign them, such as letting students choose their own lockers. In reality they were switched around and between them all year, despite any assignments we made, but such is the power of tradition on the neophyte.

In Arendtian terms this was pure labour, as I felt my very survival depended on completing this task.   There was no gratification or pride in a job well done, but simply relief that it was finished - at least for this year.

In fact I quickly discovered that lockers are never finished, as they are constantly breaking, being assigned to new students, taken over by existing ones or being broken into as the school year progresses. Like rust, they never sleep. Due to their constant need for attention, the lockers quickly began to make sense to me, despite their postmodern indifference to sequence. Before very long I had mastered the problem of locker location and would breezily announce to a new student, "You'll be in locker 562. It's down the hall on your right next to locker 104."

To my credit, I had also begun to understand that this statement would have the same effect on the student that the lockers earlier had on me, complete disorientation and befuddlement. The difference was that I could choose to make the locker experience an opportunity for action, or sending a message to new students that their locker, their only

private space in the school, was important and deserved attention. The subtext, or the meaning made from this ordinary event, was that they and their school experiences truly mattered. In this spirit, I would take the opportunity to walk to the locker with the student, make sure it was empty, the combination lock worked and everything else was in order. At the same time this walk to the locker was an opportunity to answer questions, find out something about the student and invite further questions.

I would like to claim that I moved to this insightful stance in a conscious and deliberate way, but this is only partially true. The importance of lockers to students was brought home to me a few days after school started. Janelle approached me in tears and told me that someone had poured pop through the ventilation grates in her locker. Her new leather jacket, which she clutched as she spoke, appeared to be ruined. She knew her father would be angry and never buy her another one, but more to the point, she wept because what she thought was private and protected had been violated.   The jacket could be salvaged, but she was crushed because the safe space, which she thought belonged to her, had been violated. This would be a much more difficult salvaging job.

Janelle taught me what lockers were all about in the public world of students in schools. It had nothing to do with the process of assigning them, and everything to do with recognizing the significance of a small private space for each student. Knowing this made lockers become an opportunity for action rather than an administrative chore to endure, There were busy days when inspecting a violated locker or taking a new student to his or her locker was the last thing I had the time to do, but I did it anyway, because to neglect it would somehow diminish the importance of the student and his or her private space in the school.

While this is a small story, consisting of acts of connection around ordinary things, it should not be dismissed as inconsequential. These small acts help to bridge the private experiences that bond us in a public space. While every student needs a locker to store coats and books, what they are getting is a space that recognizes and belongs to them as individuals. Lockers are distributed and maintained to address their practical and emotional need for a defined private space in a place where they are constantly with others. The constant switching of lockers and locker mates after school opens speaks to the desire to connect their private lives with the lives of others they consider friends. While on the surface understanding and addressing students' needs through lockers may not seem as glamorous or significant as leading a school improvement effort. Mundane as it may be, it may do more in the end to help prepare students for a worthwhile life in which they are valued and value others. As such it may represent leadership, which is educational in the true sense of the word.

At first glance this seems at odds with the previously cited notions of educational leadership. These stress setting clear and consistent purposes to achieve academic success, monitoring results and somehow sustaining vibrant professional communities on this meager diet (Blankstein, 2004, Sergiovanni, 1994). But the difference is that instead of repeatedly articulating purposes in a specific way, small acts that send the message that individuals matter and we are connected in a common experience and purpose of learning and being together articulate purpose in a way which enfolds us all in a common place, a public we define for ourselves as a place to learn with and because of each other.

The Blanket Rule Comes Up Short

A final example of the power of these small interactions as a principal, one which haunts me to this day, is the story of Shannon, who at 16 was on a noisy, disruptive but inevitable road to perdition. Most people curb their individuality in public until they are sure it is safe to show it. Shannon had no such tendencies. Intelligent, defiant and unbridled, she hit the school like a bomb that year. By the end of the first month of school, everyone knew who she was. Wherever she went, she left a ripple of noise and conflict in her wake. She was unnaturally pale, with platinum blond hair, and it was impossible to miss her. She was constantly on the phone, and the unconfirmed rumour was that she worked part time as a prostitute. Whether that was true or not, she showed all the signs of being a girl who had been abused in some way, and was clearly abusing substances herself.

At school Shannon was either smoking in the wrong place, fighting, shouting or a combination of all three, and that was on her quiet days. By the second week of school she had distinguished herself with the staff by racing down the hall, shrieking, swearing and ultimately jumping on the back of a girl she considered a rival. She brought her down like a cat on the hunt, and then pummeled her until they were both howling in pain and rage. While this wasn't the best way for me to officially meet her, it was clearly my job as the new principal to separate the girls and decide on next steps.   This wasn't the moment that shaped our future relationship, but for some reason it didn't impair it either.

The telling moment had more to do with Shannon's fondness for smoking cigarettes in places like the front door of the school. The established penalty for this offence was that the culprit had to take a pair of garbage tongs and "beautify" a particular

part of the school that was littered with paper. While Shannon was adept at destroying

evidence to avoid being caught smoking in the wrong place, the day came when there

was no doubt she was doing this. Getting caught didn't seem to bother her as much as

the penalty. In fact she claimed to prefer expulsion to garbage duty, and loudly

proclaimed that she wouldn't do it – I could go ahead and expel her. In hindsight, what

Shannon was telling me was that the consequence was too publicly humiliating, and in

hindsight I agree with her, but at the time it seemed like the only effective deterrent at

hand for smoking in all the wrong places.

I had no doubt she meant this, so I told her I had a more executive level job for

her – taking down everything posted on the main hall bulletin boards that was out of date.

This was no brilliant move on my part, but a haphazard act of desperation, as I knew I

wouldn't win the showdown. She jumped at this executive job and had the boards current

in no time. The collision was averted, but more tellingly, she recognized that her dignity

had been saved. And I, only belatedly, understood how deeply it had been threatened by

what had become a routine penalty. In return for this accidental rescue of her sense of

who she was, she confined her smoking to more discreet spots after that. I'd like to say

that she mended her ways and became a model student, but that wasn't in her nature.

Perhaps more tellingly, she began to start small conversations with me at school, and

restricted her public brawling to weekends.

When it came time for me to leave the school, Shannon said goodbye in her own

fashion. She told me I couldn't go, and if I left she wouldn't be able to come to school

anymore. When I asked her why, she said, "I come here because I know you'll be

looking for me." I remember every word of that goodbye, while I have forgotten the

details of many others. Something about our interactions made Shannon feel she mattered, and the fact that she mattered in this large public space gave her a legitimacy that was in short supply in her life. As a postscript, Shannon actually did finish school, in spite of my leaving and no longer looking for her, which was the best possible outcome.

Overlapping Public and Private Selves

In summary, one aspect of leadership, or initiating action, has to do with reconciling the public and the private experiences which bring an individual to act, or understanding how "who" one is as a private individual connects with "what" one does in the public realm. The concepts of the private, hidden from view, and the public, where actions play themselves out in a "web of relationships" is most useful in terms of understanding oneself in a leadership role. This understanding can lead to an appreciation of the fact that the simplest actions, motivated by what we believe as private individuals, can have significant unanticipated effects on others. And while actions often do not have the effect we planned for, if they stem from an appreciation of what others, as individuals, bring to the public realm we live and work in, they have a chance to create a ripple of benefits that can transform how others experience their public roles.

If anything, this chapter has been about the power of the private to distinguish us, yet provide the roots of our links to others. It also recognizes the unique opportunities that schools, children's bridges between the private and public, have to enhance those links by understanding and respecting the private experiences that make them, "distinct and unique being among equals" (Arendt, 1958, p. 178). Chapter 5 will focus on educational leadership as a way of mediating the public and private experiences that constantly arise as part and parcel of schools and school systems.

CHAPTER 5:

ARENDT, EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC – "THIS IS OUR WORLD"

> The smallest act in the most limited circumstances bears the seed of the same boundlessness and unpredictability; one deed, one gesture, one word may suffice to change every constellation. In acting, in contradistinction to working, it is indeed true that we can never really know what we are doing. (Arendt, 1958, p. 180)

If schools are, as Arendt (1968) terms them, "not yet actually the world", in her view the adults in them are responsible for preparing children to appear in the public world that awaits them, saying to them in effect, "This is our world" (p. 189). Part of this is taking responsibility for preparing children for this appearance. This preparation can be deliberate, conscious and overt. It can also be embedded in things that are done in a less conscious way, yet have profound effects on how children define themselves in relation to others. The challenge for educational leaders of all kinds is to understand how clearly we send this preview of the world in all that we do, and to be mindful and intentional in terms of the message we send and the actions we take.

Leadership occurs among and in relationship to others. Chapter Five will include examples of how Arendt's concepts of private, public and social can be applied to specific examples of leadership in education. Through these examples I will also explore the idea of the distinction Arendt (1958) makes between "who" we are and "what" we are and how who we are inadvertently becomes apparent when we speak and act together in public spaces. We are prone to define ourselves in terms of "what" we are, yet anyone in a leadership position is constantly both revealing and encountering "who" they are in unexpected ways.   This conflict between the values of the public and "who" the private

person is can be the source of many leadership challenges.

Further, through recognizing the difference between schooling and education, and choosing to use this differentiating lens on the dilemmas we encounter, we can lead by acting and speaking in ways that maximize the educational potential of the situation in an intentional way. Part of that is recognizing the distinctions between the private, public and social in the Arendtian sense, and ensuring that there is space for the sliding scale between public and private in spite of the "social" purposes of schools as an institution. Arendt's (1968) view of education is relevant here, and I have left it for this chapter, as now is the time to apply her ideas more specifically to educational leadership. She speaks of ways of acknowledging the past when we educate our students, while keeping in mind that they are "newcomers…in a state of becoming" (p. 185) with all that implies about their vulnerability and potential. In her view the authority we have by virtue of being more experienced should not be used to shape them for our world, but to take responsibility for introducing them to the world as it is in the hopes that they will take action, or initiate something new that changes it into what it could be.

The illustrations in this chapter generally are not about specific individuals, but about the limitations and potential in particular situations. While these instances read as stories, they are fictionalized examples of particular events that have a recognizable pattern derived from many similar events I have encountered. The hope is that these composite illustrations will resonate with others because of the common patterns they reveal. An additional hope is that the conceptual tools I use to analyze them will allow new patterns to emerge for the reader over, under and beyond what is on the surface of them.

The first example "The Tight Ship Runs Aground", illustrates how a "social" notion of authority and control as leadership silences varied opinions. The plurality of the public is seen as a problem, because varied views are unpredictable and may defy the perceived authority of the leader.   However, suppressing discussion instead of allowing for productive public discourse creates an active "subaltern" public (Fraser, 1992) that rises and flourishes when divergent views are not recognized and addressed. The next, "The Art of Pleasing No One" is about the courage and focus required to act in a way that serves educational purposes when students defy the rules. In this instance the principal leads by taking responsibility for introducing students to the world (Arendt, 1968, Gordon, 2001) in spite of those who protest that the punishment is not severe enough. The third, "A Voice Rarely Heard" is about how what could have been the usual "bring and brag" gathering of adults to talk about their alternate graduation programs turned into a series of forums inviting students to talk about what education is for and how to create more opportunities to foster it in schools.   In each instance educational leadership opens up opportunities, while rulership tries to limit and contain them.

Schools: A Socially Constructed Preamble to the World

Arendt herself notes, in an essay entitled "Reflections on Little Rock" (Baehr, 2000, Ed.) "for the child himself, school is the first place away from home where he establishes contact with the public world that surrounds him and his family. This public world is not political but social, and the school is to the child what a job is to the adult" (p. 242). In case there was still any room for debate about the social nature of schools, Arendt ends it with this statement. Her position here puts the pressure on educational leaders to find ways to act educationally, or find space for the public exchange of ideas

while recognizing and protecting the private within the socially constructed institution of public schooling. I would be the first to acknowledge that this is far easier to write about than it is to do. Along with the difficulties of creating "private" and "public" spaces in an institution that is designed to homogenize both of them within the "social", leaders are in the position of involuntarily revealing "who" they are as soon as they are with other people. The public, with its plurality of views, weaves a constant narrative around leaders, interpreting what they do in a myriad of individual ways, and creating a public story that transcends both the actor and the audience. This includes varied interpretations of the intent of the original actions. All of this defies step-by-step approaches to leadership while it demands an exquisite level of self-awareness and receptivity to the views of others.

"Who" and "What" We Are: An Encounter with the "Social"

What leaders value and how they interact and express themselves in schools will send strong messages to children about the private, social and public world they live in Arendt, (1958), and how each relates to the other. An awareness of this relationship, along with sensitivity to the distinctions between schooling and education, or the "social" and "public" purposes of schools, may not reveal and resolve every leadership challenge encountered. However, it can make these events more comprehensible, and allow us to shape our responses in a more intentional way that opens the door to educational experiences for others.

Schools can be viewed as the point where children begin to think of themselves as part of a larger public context beyond the family. In Arendtian terms, in schools children's natality, which defines who they are as individuals, encounters the

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expectations of the social as well as the plurality, or multiple views, of the public. It is where they begin, speak and act within "the web of human relationships which exists wherever men live together" (Arendt, 1958 p.184*).* The emerging relationship between private and public and educating students to participate in public life is constricted by the "social" structures and purposes of schools. I use the word constricted deliberately, as in schools the "social" has a tenacious way of overshadowing the public and the private, busying itself with "imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action of outstanding achievement" (Arendt, 1958, p. 40). A key idea here is that leadership in education involves working within this social context of schooling, recognizing it for what it is, and taking action to create public and private spaces outside it that serve educational purposes. The relationship between the social on the one hand, and the public and the private on the other, has implications in terms of what we do as educational leaders.

Everything we do as educational leaders involves a conscious personal awareness of who one is, the individual forged in early private life, and the person revealed through public actions. I am proposing that on a personal level, natality and plurality, like the private and public, have a dynamic and overlapping relationship that frequently plays itself out within the dilemmas of leadership. By this I mean that "who" we are as individuals influences the actions we choose to take among others as leaders. Arendt (1958) expands on this idea by stating:

> This disclosure of the "who", in contradistinction to "what" somebody is – his
>
> qualities, gifts, talents and shortcomings, which he may display or hide – is

implicit in everything somebody says and does. It can be hidden only in complete silence and perfect passivity, but its disclosure can almost never be achieved as a willful purpose, as though one possessed and could dispose of this "who" in the same manner he has and can dispose of his qualities. On the contrary, it is more than likely that the "who" which appears so clearly and unmistakably to others, remains hidden from the person himself…always looking over his shoulder from behind and thus visible only to those he encounters. (p. 180-181)

I interpret this to mean that along with being aware of being with others in public, educational leaders need to develop a sense of who they are as private individuals, because they inadvertently reveal this to others with every thing they say and do. This idea that "who" we are is revealed when we appear in public is a strong argument for reflecting deeply before every action. This reflection is not always possible in the rapid-fire environment of school and school district decisions, because often what is done is reactive, immediate and very public. However, Arendt makes the point that there is a sense of private and public that needs to be accounted for and considered in the context of educational leadership, because what is otherwise hidden from us as individuals, our private values, are relentlessly revealed to others in our public actions.

Arendt's concepts of public, social and private, along with the idea of how clearly who we are as individuals is revealed to others when we act publicly, can serve as tools to help leaders understand the source of the dilemmas they encounter along with how they may be inclined to respond to them. Hopefully these understandings will help them take action in a way that makes the most of these situations as educational opportunities. If this understanding is brought to a situation it can help leaders avoid being caught up in

"what" they are supposed to do, as this is often bound up in the "social" desire to maintain conformity.

Leadership and Authority: A View Derived from Arendt

This leads to another view of the various ways educational leadership can play itself out in relation to Arendt's (1958) three realms, the private, the public and the social. This has to do with the idea of authority in relation to this leadership. At first glance one might say that authority and Arendt's idea of taking action are incompatible. As we have seen, she feels that action is impossible in the social realm, and like the social, historically authority has to do with producing compliance. Russell (1968) describes this traditional notion of authority as follows:

> In the earliest fully historical community, that of ancient Egypt, we find a king whose powers over a large territory were absolute, except for some limitation by the priesthood, and we find a large servile population whom the king could, at his will, employ upon state enterprises such as the Pyramids. In such a community only a minority at the top of the social scale - the king, the aristocracy, and the priests - needed any psychological mechanism towards social cohesion; all the rest merely obeyed. (p. 13)

This view of authority, or at least the idea that it lies with those who have the most power, didn't die with the pharaohs and the Greeks. And while it is uncommon to find current literature on leadership that specifically defines leadership as this kind of authority, one doesn't need to dig too deeply to discover some observations about the hierarchy of formal leadership. Consider the following quote from Maxine Greene (1978):

In a public school, for instance, we scarcely notice that there is a hierarchy of authority; we are so accustomed to it, we forget that it is man-made. Classroom teachers, assigned a relatively low place in the hierarchy, share a way of seeing and of talking about it. They are used to watching schedules, curricula, and testing programs emanate from "the office". They take for granted the existence of a high place, a seat of power. (pp. 44-45)

What Greene does not mention is that this "man-made" hierarchy does not stop with teachers and "the office" but replicates itself in the classroom, where the "seat of power" is the teacher.

When she writes specifically about education, Arendt (1968) has a view of authority that differs from the traditional idea described by Russell (1968) or referenced by Greene (1978):

The authority of the teacher and the qualifications of the teacher are not the same thing. Although the measure of qualification is indispensable for authority, the highest possible qualification can never by itself beget authority. The teacher's qualification consists in knowing the world and being able to instruct others about it, but his authority rests in his responsibility for that world. Vis-à-vis the child it is as though he were a representative of all adult inhabitants, pointing out the details and saying to the child: This is our world. (Arendt, 1968, p.189)

Authority in this sense is essentially constructive (Gordon, 2001) in that it takes responsibility for respecting the natality of children, or their potential to create something new, as we introduce them to the world. It is not the authority that demands compliance, but the authority that accepts responsibility for preparing newcomers to take action for

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the purpose of "renewing a common world" (Arendt, 1968). This point is significant in terms of its implications for educational leadership, and is a key distinction between a "leader" and the "ruler" (Arendt, 1958), who simply enforces the rules or focuses on "the function of giving commands" (p.189). In Arendt's view, one aspect of that responsibility, or authority, is to foster the natality of students and their capacity for action, or initiating something new. The past is not irrelevant here but its relevance is that it helps children have "the basic knowledge needed to change and renew the world" (Gordon, 2001, p. 53). Arendt (1968) does not promote teaching the past for the purpose of knowing it and understanding it in the traditional way. As she states, "we destroy everything if we so try to control the new so that we, the old, can dictate how it will look" (p. 192). The key distinction here is the one between authority that takes responsibility for introducing children to the world they will inevitably change, and an authority that simply reifies the existing world and prepares children to conform within it.

From this perspective, educational leaders, by virtue of their authority as Arendt (1968) describes it, bear prime responsibility for preparing students to renew the world in ways that we, as representatives of what is, cannot really imagine. Authority is not a way to produce compliance, but to open the door to uncharted possibilities. Rather than invoking the reassurance of conformity, authority ushers in what is new, unimagined, and profoundly unpredictable. The authority of educational leadership is about protecting the private lives of children while preparing them to interact in public. This is the way a path will be cleared for the introduction of new ways of looking at things.

Natality and Plurality: The Public/Private Overlap

Earlier observations about Arendt's recognition of public/private interdependence is a good launching point for further exploring the concept of the overlapping public and private as it relates to schools and more specifically to educational leadership within them. While Arendt (1958) clearly distinguishes between the private and the public in *The Human Condition* (p. 50) she acknowledges two things: that they are connected; and that willfully articulating the private draws it into the realm of the public.

It is also important to recognize that the potential for action that Arendt feels is part of the unique qualities of each individual parallels birth, a distinctly private event.

> And again this is possible only because each man is unique, so that with each
> birth something uniquely new comes into the world. With respect to this
> somebody who is unique it can be truly said that nobody was there before. If
> action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, if it is the actualization of the
> human condition of natality, the speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and
> is the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a
> distinct and unique being among others. (p. 178)

When children begin to emerge from the private world of the home and enter school, the anteroom of the public, it is important to acknowledge that the uniqueness of each child (and adult) began and was nurtured in the private realm of the household. As Arendt puts it, the newness, or natality of children at birth renews itself in the speech and actions in "the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals" (p. 178). Students' natality represents their capacity to initiate new things as newcomers to the world. As Levinson (Gordon, 2001, Ed. p. 16.), observes,

"education can facilitate or smother natality". Education can both protect and reveal natality by acting as a preparatory bridge between the private and the public. Schooling can smother it with a "social" emphasis on rules and conformity that makes both natality and plurality disappear under a bureaucratic "rule by nobody" (Arendt, 1958). This "social" overlay of schooling is ever-present, and is a force to contend with when it comes to making leadership decisions that are educational. The public is home to diversity; the social houses conformity. The rules beckon in a comfortable sort of way, yet they are not always the best place to land, despite frequent demands to do exactly that.

As educational leaders we need to respond in a way that respects the natality embodied in students yet helps them to recognize that they are connected with others around them. Leaders are frequently tangled in this tension themselves, trying to reconcile multiple publics, social expectations, educational goals and the private world which shaped them as individuals and follows, like a blurred but visible shadow, as they lead their public lives. While the concepts of public, private and social do not, in themselves, resolve these dilemmas, they can shed light on them from several different angles. They can also lead to attentiveness to the natality, or potential for action that each student brings through the door of the school each day. This extends to an awareness of the potential for all members of the school community to take action or initiate something new in the public spaces that are available to them. Yet they cannot do so if that public space is not consciously created. The "social" readily fills all available space with bureaucratic rules and procedures that silently work against newness and diverse views in the name of organizational efficiency.

Leadership: Small Acts Make Large Ripples

The premise of the story about the lockers in Chapter 4 is that mundane repetitive tasks, or what Arendt would term labour, can become action as they impact others. While I slaved over the locker distribution and maintenance, tending to them became a validation of students as individuals within the larger public of the school. At first glance this idea, that small things can have large public significance, seems at odds with notions of educational leadership that stress academic success, monitoring exam results and creating "professional learning communities" (Blankstein, 2004, Sergiovanni, 1994). But the difference is that instead of defining schools as "learning communities" in some theoretical way, small acts that send the message that we are connected enfold us all in a shared public place. This is a public we define for ourselves as a place to learn, with, from and because of each other. The repetitive labour of locker assignments becomes action that reverberates with others within the web of relationships in the public realm of a school. It sends a message that the private individual matters because the protected private space that they have in school matters. This message, that every individual is valued, and that all individual views have a place in the larger public realm, is key to educating in, and for, a democracy. In a larger sense leadership is fostering natality by recognizing the promise held in each individual. At the same time leaders must cultivate plurality through creating opportunities for those individuals to reveal who they are through interacting with others.

Creating Public and Private Spaces

Given the inevitable tangle of the social, private and public in school systems, it may be helpful to view educational leadership as taking action that will create space for

schools and school experiences to meet educational goals. Leaders need to be alert for opportunities to create public and private spaces in schools rather than let them be subsumed by the "social" aspects of public schooling, even if that space is created by something as ordinary as giving out lockers. The alternative is to use leadership positions to simply reinforce the social conventions of schooling. Leaders then become guardians of the social - enforcers of rules and defenders of structures designed to create order through conformity and compliance. There is no room for action in the sense of initiating something new in this scenario. As an example later in this chapter will illustrate, leadership that follows this path can stumble on its own rigidity, as it leaves no room for the multiple views that make up the "public" in public schooling. As mentioned previously, Arendt (1958) feels that action, or leadership in the sense of initiating something new, is impossible under the heavy social overlay of these circumstances.

I am proposing that making room for the public and private in the social and bureaucratic structures of schools is necessary to "act" as leaders and prepare students for action. Their individualism is protected, yet they are supported in revealing who they are in public. Taking action to create these spaces is what constitutes educational leadership. Further, action, in the sense of words and actions that initiate something new, may occur through small and mundane acts (even some Arendt would describe as labour or "housekeeping") that have far more impact than she, with her wide-angle lens on the world of politics and history, may have explicitly acknowledged.

This is due in part to what I have previously termed the "alchemy of the "web of relationships" that Arendt (1958) feels surrounds and interprets our actions in public. This alchemy of sorts, in which relatively ordinary events have unanticipated and

transformative effects on others, is made possible through this "web of relationships" that connects us. The "boundlessness" that Arendt attributes to our actions in this web can mean that something that has it origins in what she would describe as labour or work can reverberate with others in a way that initiates something new and significant for them. At the same time these chores, such as locker assignments and attendance checks, have the potential to shape the way students view themselves and their significance in the larger public realm of the school. They are small private moments with public implications. It all depends on how they are done, or the words and acts that go with them, and how others interpret these actions. This is the essence of the public/private dynamic. When we expose who we are to others, they take possession of what we say and do simply by how they interpret and talk about it. In this way our individuality becomes public property whether we intend it to or not.

As Arendt (1958) describes it, our speech and actions allow us to "insert" ourselves into the world for the purpose of "beginning something new on our own initiative" (p. 177). She constantly reminds us about the unpredictable nature of these actions since they occur in "The realm of human affairs" which "consists of the web of human relationships which exist whenever men are together" (pp. 183-184). And she cautions that within this web we cannot "overlook the inevitability with which men disclose themselves as subjects, as distinct and unique persons, even when they wholly concentrate on reaching an altogether worldly, material object" (p.183). Perhaps this drawing and pulling on "who" we are is one thing that can make positions of leadership, in which the private self becomes public property, an ongoing journey of self discovery. The irony is that this individual mark of distinction likely does more to define a leader

than grand and sweeping public actions, and yet we are often not conscious that it is profoundly shaping how others view our actions within the "web of human relationships" (Arendt, 1958, p.178).

To build on this idea, opportunities for leadership lie waiting where the private and hidden "who" meets a public world, which draws it out and sets the stage for some sort of action. All of us have likely experienced unnerving collisions between "who" we privately think we are and "what" we are publicly expected to be. These situations are the test, because it is relatively easy to act when the person one is fits comfortably within what one is expected to do. However when these two things don't align we struggle to act, caught between private values and public expectations, confounded by the fact that we often cannot predict all the effects of our actions once we take them. This situation is compounded by the ever-present "social" purposes of schooling such as rules and procedures that demand to be served in spite of the fact that they may not be always be in the interests of educating students.

Arendt is making a distinction between people's roles, or "what" they are, and "who" they are as individuals. In her view, speech and actions inadvertently reveal "who" people are when they interact with others. This idea that "who" we are, is obvious to others while aspects of this remain hidden from ourselves, is yet another way of looking at the public and private as linked, though perhaps not in a conscious way. Inadvertently or not, "who" we are is made public through our words and actions.

Applied to educational leadership, this idea, embedded in Arendt's concepts of public, private and social, forces us to look at what we choose to do as multidimensional in both source and impact. Our private and hidden selves are revealed in public, whether

we intend this or not. Just to confound things, as we have seen, small and unplanned actions and comments send multiple reverberations into the web of relationships surrounding us. While this may make us yearn for some sort of analytical matrix to anticipate the reaction to every action, Arendt's point is that this is futile – the ultimate effects of speech and action are "boundless' and cannot be foreordained or anticipated.

If anyone is still convinced at this point that leadership is simply a matter of "running a tight ship" (Smith and Andrews, 1989) and getting control over what happens, Arendt's ideas will quickly dispose of that notion. Her concepts of public, private and action within an interpretive web of relationships make it clear that any "ship" or organization is running on hidden currents towards unanticipated destinations, and leadership involves taking action under these uncertain conditions. As the following three examples show, the way is strewn with multiple publics, "social" expectations and the need to protect the private, embrace the public yet recognize the boundaries of both.

Navigating By Authority: The Tight Ship Runs Aground

The following example illustrates two things. The first is how the public and private constantly pull and fold back on one another, implanted as they are in the social world of schools. This often leaves leaders using what they learned in the private world of their own families when they encounter the public experience of school leadership. Our private experiences shape our public actions, i.e. how "who" we are as private individuals is revealed in what we say and do with others. The second is that attempts to lead that rely on the "social" aspects of school systems – rules, authority and policies – will often fall victim to their own rigidity. This can result in expanding waves of dissent within and around the tightly connected public realm of a school.

As a school official for several years, one of my responsibilities was to work with specific schools and their principals. Much of this work involved simply keeping in touch with principals, helping them to address their dilemmas, especially ones that had become very public. Occasionally it involved fielding parent complaints, and sometimes it involved fielding many, as parent phone calls around certain situations could reach a steady crescendo that was impossible to ignore.

As a result of a barrage of complaints of this nature, I was in a challenging conversation with Scott, an experienced principal who was having difficulty with his parent community. I had been receiving numerous complaints about his refusal to consider their ideas regarding the school and even had a delegation of parents arrive demanding that I "do something" about Scott's arrogant indifference to their needs and demands. In a snowball effect, they had attributed all his actions to this arrogance, so that now he was at fault for everything from his choice of parking spot to how he said hello (or didn't) to parents.

Among other things, Scott had banned parents from coming inside to pick up their children after school, as it was too disruptive, refused to think about childcare during Parent Advisory Meetings due to "legal concerns", and rarely left his office to interact with anyone. As these things alone did not justify such a parent uproar, I was trying to find out if he had any sense of what might be causing the difficulty, and if he could see any basis for parents' dissatisfaction with the situation.

Not surprisingly, Scott was having none of it in terms of this angle on things and immediately went on the attack. The parents were emotionally unstable, their children were poorly behaved, and to top things off I didn't know anything about his school or

coincidentally, much else. In other words, he was becoming more dug in by the moment, and was not at all inclined to reflect on his own role in the situation. He left angry and defiant, letting me know that his former supervisor would never have been so unsupportive.

Frequently a series of individual parent encounters that go awry because parents feel unacknowledged become a larger narrative of epic proportions – a common reaction when parents, their children and conflicting values are mixed together and discussed in the school parking lot, the mall, or as we have seen, the sidelines of soccer fields. In Arendtian terms, these stories become public in the telling, and therefore anchored to a public reality which can no longer be denied or ignored. What to do about these situations becomes the front end of a classic leadership dilemma. The dilemma is compounded by the fact that the object of the complaints, whether teacher or principal, tends to be as oppositional as the parents who are complaining.

Needing to be right, in a misguided attempt to exert a traditional type of authority these individuals settle on a certain course of action, cite policy as the rationale and, if such a policy is absent, resort to alternatives such as the possibility of vague legal complications if this course of action is not followed.   When questioned about these complaints the individual commonly wraps up the issue in accusations that the complainants are at fault, lack knowledge, or are have some other issue that undermines their credibility. There is rarely any appetite to move off the position that provoked the complaints in the first place, regardless of how warranted the complaint may be. While the circumstances may change, the essential ingredients remain the same.

On the surface the constellation of events I have described seems improbable, but

this happens frequently, and a predictable pattern emerges from these events. The ingredients include strict adherence to rules, no room for discussion, escalating complaints, much subaltern public discussion, doubts cast on the character of the complainant by the accused and no budging on the issue. This pattern is so consistent that I learned to predict the course of events after the first few complaints came in.

I would like to claim at this point that I have an ideal solution for these philosophical stand offs. But my attempts to facilitate discussions, use consensus models to uncover and resolve the issues, have frank talks with the individual involved and other strategies were inevitably an abject failure. As inadequate as it sounds, the only workable solution often involved moving the individual under fire to another school setting. If I could induce the employee to suggest the move, I would consider the outcome a success. While it still troubles me that this was as good as it got, in hindsight Arendt's concepts have helped me understand these situations in a way that has to do with the interaction of private individuals in public spaces. More accurately, it helped me understand the difficulties some leaders have with the unpredictability of public interactions. Opening up a public space for diverse opinions to be expressed is too untamed, and the outcome too uncertain, for some people. They are left more or less speechless by this and quickly grasp at rules and legalities to help them navigate this treacherous and uncertain situation.

Running aground on the social. Over time I have come to understand that the ambiguity of opening themselves up to public discussion drives some individuals to retreat into some deeply ingrained belief in rules, policy and positional authority as a way to sort out messy situations. This is their first and only response, as alternatives have unpredictable and unnerving outcomes. Individuals who are made this way tend to rely

on the formal structures of the social realm, and invoke these to create compliance when too many diverse opinions emerge from a situation. These individuals feel compelled to avoid the unexpected and "boundless" outcomes that characterize actions within the web of relationships at all costs. The public space of dialogue and discourse is inaccessible to them because of "who" they are. While they are comfortable with being rulers, they are not comfortable with leading in the sense of taking action or fostering it in others, as the results are too unpredictable.

This lack of appetite for public discussion can be coupled with positive qualities such as a genuine regard for children and a sophisticated understanding of how they learn. Like all of us, these individuals are a complicated mixture of good intents, outstanding efforts and public missteps. Ironically, leaders with a chronic inability to interact openly with others in the public become the story themselves, and their lack of communication reverberates, becoming a larger story in the telling. The public version of events becomes the story of his or her failure to engage with others. By shutting down the discussion of issues, they make themselves the issue.

"Who" trumps "what". As stated earlier, in responding to events leaders reveal far more about themselves and their individual ideas about what leadership is than they are able to articulate to others, or perhaps understand themselves. Rather than being bent on sabotaging themselves, people with this orientation can be viewed as caught in the crossfire between "who" they are and what they need to be in relation to others as educational leaders. If "who" they are is someone who needs control of how things turn out, they are unable to engage in discussing opposing views with any degree of comfort. The unconscious revelation of their private selves, so at odds with public expectations to

be heard and acknowledged, can make the leadership role a torturous path for them, because they are not able to comfortably hear the views of others. Rather than finding the public and private spaces in schools that serve education, they use the social elements of schooling, such as rules and policies, to enforce compliance and avoid unpredictable outcomes. In so doing they miss the opportunity to create a public place for different views to be heard. Inevitably the space is created in spite of them and the public discourse within it is often used to critique them.

In effect then, as educational leaders we bring our private values to the public space of the school. If in our view that space is filled with our authority to create certainty as a leader, buttressed by policies and legalities, a clash with the larger public is inevitable. An individual can hold a deep-seated belief that the essence of leadership is to uphold these socially created rules; that is "who" they are.   In the face of opposing views, this thinking will be completely at odds with others' expectations that they will be heard and acknowledged as part of the school community. The eventual collision of these opposing values will be loud and rancorous, especially in public schools, which are a distilled version of plurality in the public at large.

This example demonstrates one reason why the notion of leadership is so elusive – regardless of what we think it may be, leadership actually emerges daily from the private things that have made a person who he or she is and the ways that individuality plays itself out in stories created in the plurality of the public realm. And as noted, "it is more than likely that the "who," which appears so clearly and unmistakably to others, remains hidden from the person himself…" (Arendt, 1958, p.178).

The "Tight Ship" illustration is an example of the consequences of leadership that

exclusively defines itself as upholding the social rather than creating space for the private

and public. It is a portrayal of ruling rather than leading in the Arendtian sense of taking

action. The situation begs for an educational response in the sense of engaging in a

public discourse with parents and allowing them to state their views. Instead schooling,

in the sense of rules and conformity, is the response. While this may appear to work

initially, inevitably it creates a protesting counter flow that becomes public. Both the

demand and the potential for action, or speaking and acting in the public realm, is always

with us, even in "social" and bureaucratic institutions such as public schools. The

challenge as leaders is to see and seize the opportunity to act, regardless of how

unpredictable the results may be.

Since I've provided an example of an approach to educational leadership that does

not serve educational purposes, it seems important to illustrate what leadership that is

"educational" can look like. Not surprisingly, it's easier said than done. Often it emerges

from routine situations that only become extraordinary after action has been taken.

Speaking in Public and Pleasing No One

All events that happen at a school, small or large will be subject to the scrutiny of

the multiple publics - students, parents, staff and community- who are watching and

discussing what happened in the full plurality of their varied opinions. Schools are such

small publics that the interpretation of events spreads instantly, like electric currents

coursing through the "web of relationships" that thrives within them. Student behaviour,

especially if it is misbehavior, becomes a public story in and around a school almost the

instant it happens. Teacher behaviour is also not immune to this scrutiny, and can beget

public legends of its own. The examples I am about to describe occur in three public

spheres, the narrative around teachers in the school community, the public realm of the individual classroom, and the combined publics of the classroom, school and community. Educational leaders have to consider all of these publics when they "act" in the Arendtian sense.

The longstanding public discussion of certain teacher behaviours became clear to me when, as a novice vice principal in a secondary school, I was learning how to address parent complaints. I can recall one time that a parent blithely responded to my promise to ask the teacher what happened to her daughter's lost assignments with a remark that went something like this, "I know you have to cover for her, and I know she loses assignments. Everyone knows it. She used to lose mine when I was her student too."

This comment, with its bland assertions that I was obligated to cover for the teacher's tendency to lose assignments, left me floundering for a response, because there was none. This parent knew from experience that nothing had or would be done, and that the assignments would continue to be misplaced. And as it turned out, she was right. The teacher lost assignments until the day she retired, and no one found a way to remedy this. Between her packrat tendencies and her chronic disorganization, the assignments were doomed. The public narrative not only accepted the situation, it assumed that the school condoned it. The lesson for me was that inaction, or failure to address a situation is an act in itself, and becomes fodder for the narrative woven by the "web of relationships" in the public realm.

What follows is a slightly different story, though elements of it are the same. In this case it is a student who has clearly done something wrong to the teacher. Yet the teacher has been in the habit of failing to recognize students as individuals within the

contained but public world inside the classroom for years. Unlike the case of the teacher who loses assignments, there will be an official consequence - for the students. But the consequence needs to have an educational effect if we are to take the idea of educational leadership seriously. While there was no official consequence for the teacher, in this instance the students devised one. The example that follows illustrates the challenge of maintaining an educational focus in the face of the "social" expectation that inappropriate student behavior must be stamped out through harsh punishment. The situation that follows is a fairly common one; its outcome somewhat less so.

Paul, who was to all appearances an outgoing, conscientious and successful student, took a teacher's car keys off his desk. The goal wasn't a simple joy ride; Paul turned the car keys over to two other students and eventually the car ended up being found in a parking lot after being rammed against several objects and completely destroyed. This teacher's fondness for his car was legendary in the school, and the story became public and took on a vivid narrative life almost the instant the keys disappeared. The teacher, naturally enough, was distressed and angry that his beloved car was destroyed. By the evening the story of Mr. McFarlane's missing car had been told and embellished over and over, and various culprits and motives had been suggested, rejected, folded in and accepted, as this is the nature of stories. The most persistent rumour had it that the teacher was the victim of a revenge plot, and as it turned out, he was.

When the actual culprits, including Paul, had been identified, and the sad fate of the car revealed, the next chapter unfolded. The fact that the car was deliberately destroyed added a sinister element of premeditation, and rumours were flying as Paul and

his two accomplices were suspended from school.

There is more to the story than meets the eye. Students will sometimes devise and implement elaborate revenge plots against a teacher or administrator they feel has treated them unfairly. This is usually based on a groundswell of resentment that builds over time, rather than one event. Like the forgetful teacher's assignment situation, students feel that nothing will be done to address the teacher's behaviour. And like the forgetful teacher, the stories of this individual's unfair behaviour are usually legendary, and live and thrive for years in the public domain before anything happens to change the plot line.

Often the teacher who inspires these narratives feels that whatever he or she has done is justifiable in some way. Like the intractable principal from the earlier "Tight Ship" example, questions about this behaviour meet a sturdy defensive front. Teachers who feel they have an authority that involves ensuring that students behave, conform and learn what is taught to them feel that whatever they do to achieve this is justified. They are both surprised and outraged if any of their behaviour is questioned, and refuse to take responsibility for addressing the questions. Yet we have already seen how futile it is to use rigid rules to quash public debate. The revenge plot, usually long in the brewing, is an unofficial student response to a refusal to recognize their individuality.

This is not offered as justification for an act that infringes on the rights of the targeted employee in a way that is indefensible. I have seen employees endure everything from minor theft to severe property or home vandalism at the hands of students. Almost always this is not random mischief, but a targeted act of revenge for perceived public humiliation. Because the outraged teacher tends to be vocal about what happened, these acts become public almost the moment they occur. The school becomes awash with

rumours and elaborate renditions of the story the moment the doors open the next day, if not sooner.

The principal is left to wrestle with the public story, acutely aware by now of the many factors and varied opinions at play. The revenge motive usually spills out with the confession and explains the genesis of the plot. These plots are usually not aimed at employees who lose assignments, but tend to target those who are extremely rigid with students and do not acknowledge their experiences or points of view. This may mean demanding absolute compliance, or one answer, or one way of doing things. It is a teaching style that mimics the "tight ship" example cited earlier, with an added factor. Students who challenge the teacher's views are often forced to make an unwelcome appearance in the small public of the classroom. The teacher calls attention to them in a way that they find humiliating. Usually this has happened repeatedly, and official complaints have either resulted in nothing or made things worse. The teacher feels the behaviour is justified and can even resent the students for complaining.

In this inflamed situation a principal is hard pressed to stay focused on educational outcomes for the students involved. Often the offence involves more than one student, creating a conspiracy effect. The next act in the drama, and the one everyone is waiting for, is the consequences. The staff usually feels vulnerable to property damage themselves and clamours for the students involved to be expelled. Often the wronged teacher will lead the charge here. The other students in the school expect something equally harsh, as they understand that the private boundaries of the teacher have been violated.

Students involved in the revenge plot are aware, at least in hindsight, that what

they have done is out of bounds and unwarranted, and revenge is clearly inadequate as a motive. Often once the plot is in motion, they feel obligated to follow through in the spirit of being loyal to each other. But the primary motivation is usually revenge for ongoing mortification suffered at the hands of a particular teacher or administrator.

The principal then, has to act in the knowledge that this behaviour is indefensible, and multiple publics will offer opinions on the official consequence. Most opinions will lean towards harsh retribution for damaging someone's private property, especially a person in a position of authority. The choice usually boils down to moving the students to another school or suspending them for a period of time, but allowing them to return. Frequently the idea of letting a student "get away" with something like this and return to school without a more painful punishment than suspension will be viewed as a complete breakdown of civil order in the school. In some instances grievances have been launched on this account, as staff felt that since there was no "real" consequence for this ring of conspirators, their property is also at risk. However unproven, this idea that harsh punishment deters crime is very popular in schools, along with the corollary that light punishment encourages it.

These incidents are a good illustration of how retribution, no matter what the cost to the child, will instantly be seen as a desirable consequence and deterrent to others. The adults look to avenge the wrongdoing by exiling the students. This is the conforming social agenda of schools in full flower. There is always an assumption that there is only one thing that needs to be learned in these situations - bad acts have painful consequences. This is coupled with the fact that students are viewed as raw material to be shaped, rather than unique individuals who are learning how to be with other people.

Put another way, schooling, or Arendt's (1958) "social" realm, leaves no room for public humiliation as a rationale for breaking rules.

In spite of this, a principal who is "wide awake" (Greene, 1978) will consider the constellation of issues surrounding a situation like this one before deciding on consequences. Some see this hesitation as weakness, softness or lack of leadership, but thoughtful decisions with educational implications take time. If students are allowed to return to the school, there are those who will feel this is too lenient, and sends the "wrong message" to other wayward students. But I have seen principals let students return in the name of educating these students about their roles and obligations as members of a school community that is interdependent. The consequence makes the point that community relies on consideration and respect for others and their property. To do this in the face of inevitable public demands for harsher consequences is not easy. One could argue here that seeing the people you betrayed and disappointed each day and wearing the notoriety of being a vandal or thief is a harsher punishment than expulsion, since it offers no escape from the public narrative that came out of the event. At the same time it leaves room for some redemption or restitution, depending on what "action" the students choose to take when they return. One could also argue that this is far more educational than simply being banished, as it connects the behaviour to the public meaning made of it. Regardless, it's sure to create complaints about lack of leadership from those expecting harsher punishment.

The confusing relationship between leadership and authority. A larger issue is that the adult victims of the revenge plot scenario are usually not accountable for humiliating students; save for occasional student retribution. I am not judging these

individuals for this, as having private property violated in such a public way has its own humiliation. But clearly, principals have a more challenging situation in these instances beyond just dealing with the students. If the vandalism is the culminating event after a history of student and parent complaints about the way students have been treated by a particular teacher, a second challenge emerges. This dilemma has to do with addressing careless treatment of students by those who are in a profoundly unequal hierarchical relationship with them. I recall a high school principal saying in the wake of one of these events, "Many teachers judge their teenage students the way they would judge adults; they fail to realize that they are still children, and look to us to learn." This echoes a comment by Gordon (2001), "Many parents and teachers assume that the teenager is a kind of adult..." Gordon goes on to say that adolescents often are not given the protected space to become adults, but are expected to display the mature values and judgments of the middle-aged adults who teach them.

Incidents such as revenge plots, which can involve something blatantly criminal and could appear black and white as a result, require an extraordinary amount of insight, courage and analysis to address in a thoughtful way that keeps the focus on educational outcomes. The confounding factor is some adults' failure to understand the educational impact of their actions. It is as if they do not see their role as someone who is introducing children to the world. Either that or they see the world as a place of rules, rewards and punishments, a far cry from a place where people are treated "as a distinct and unique being among equals" (Arendt, 1958, p. 178)

This particular section, "Speaking in Public and Pleasing No One", has shifted the focus from the intersection of the public and private to how educational leaders need to

act in order to protect individuals yet allow them to appear in public. This combination of protecting individuals while letting them to experience the plurality of the public is at the heart of educational leadership. Yet leading in this way will fly in the face of conventional notions of leadership that define it as applying black and white rules to complex situations. Making decisions that focus on educating students, or preparing them to "think what they are doing" Arendt, 1958, p. 5) in relation to others can seem irresolute or confusing to those who view leadership as knowing what we are doing at all times and in all instances.

"This is our world". Through this experience and several others, I have had to come to terms with the fact that--along with the joy and care and human dedication of most teachers--misunderstanding their authority can affect some of them. This is perhaps based on having such limited understanding of authority, or little understanding of himself or herself in relation to it. Arendt (1968) would see it as a distortion of the idea of a teacher's authority, which: "rests in his responsibility for that world. Vis-à-vis the child it is as though he were a representative of all adult inhabitants, pointing out the details and saying to the child: This is our world (p.189). "

As we have seen in the "Tight Ship" and the "Pleasing No One" examples, often those who mistake the authority of leadership for control do so because they are terrified to do otherwise. They may remain fixed on one interpretation because opening up a public space for discussion creates an uncertainty that is not compatible with "who" they are. Compounding this is a fear of, as Arendt (1958) puts it, the "boundlessness" of our actions:

The smallest act in the most limited circumstances bears the seed of the same

boundlessness and unpredictability; one deed, one gesture, one word may suffice

to change every constellation. In acting, in contradistinction to working, it is

indeed true that we can never really know what we are doing. (p. 180)

This comment is as insightful as it is unsettling. Taking action is laden with

boundlessness, and in fact, locating oneself within this unpredictability becomes essential

to the action taken. And the circumstances around leadership dilemmas often leave one

hanging, as it were, between multiple publics of parents, colleagues, children,

institutional expectations and private beliefs. They also leave us searching for firm

footing in the treacherous currents of "who" we are and "what" we are perceived to be

doing as leaders.

Built into leading in a way that is educational is a certain comfort with

uncertainty, the uncertainty which accompanies Peter's (1973) description of being

educated, or "traveling with a different view" rather than with one destination in mind.

What can center educational leaders is remembering that public education defines its

purpose through children, "human beings in the process of becoming but not yet

complete" (Arendt 1968, p.187). And in the end, whatever we do as leaders has to be

viewed through their eyes and potential to "act" as newcomers, regardless of how new

and boundless their actions may ultimately be. For as Arendt (1968) points out, adults

involved in public education have an added layer to everything they do, as they are

charged with preparing students to live as adults with others.

Educational leaders, and by that I mean both teachers and administrators, are

always under scrutiny by students, as they are looking for clues about how the world

works in everything that is said and done by the adults in their lives. So what happens in

terms of consequences for stepping outside the boundaries is doubly significant if the individual is a child. This relentless search for clues about the world holds true regardless of the circumstances. Often the opportunity to act appears unexpectedly and is upon us before we know it. A blameless student says, " It was my fault," because he's afraid of the student who really broke his pencil, or another explains that she did not complain to her teacher about unfair treatment because, "Well, he had my grades" as if nothing more needs to be said. The significance of what is said and done in response is profound. Though the situations are routine, the opportunity to make them significant is unique in that instant.

In these brief moments of reaction to what children say, our speech and actions say to children "This is our world" more profoundly than the most well crafted teaching strategy could ever communicate it, or a set of rules could ever define it. And the world needs to be a place where their experiences count, and they are heard and entitled to participate, regardless of the unpredictability of inviting them to appear and act in public. That instant of connection at the moment "who" they are is acknowledged, has far more importance educationally than any rules or consequences could ever hope to. This leads to the last example, which has to do with recognizing students as legitimate voices in a public discussion around education.

A Voice Rarely Heard

This last illustration has to do with a how a provincial grant shared between several school districts was used to create an ongoing forum for adolescent students to talk at length about how they experience school and how they would like to experience it. Local districts were given the opportunity to work together to share information about

how they encourage more students to complete school. It would have been easy to stage a "show and tell" forum. We could have all brought descriptions of "alternate" programs for "at risk" students we wanted to showcase and talked about them with each other.

However, as we talked about our ideas, three things occurred. First, it became clear that none of us had much appetite for the traditional show and tell approach. Secondly, many of us were interested in involving students in our project in a substantive way.   Third, several of us had been involved in projects that involved students in a token way, and none of us felt it was respectful of the students. In the end we decided to hold a series of three forums over a year to give students a chance to describe and discuss what school is to them, and what they hope it could be. In between sessions teams were to work on projects that stemmed from the conversations at the forum in order to implement some of these ideas back in their schools and districts. To start off the forums, a team of students from a variety of districts presented their thoughts on the ideal school – what it would look like, what it would be like, and how they would prefer to learn. The themes of their presentations were predictable:

- Student/Teacher Relationships as key to learning

- Students having more ownership over their learning

- Flexibility and Choice in learning

- Technology and Learning

- Real World Learning

- More about learning, less about marks.

These are predictable because when students are asked about how they would like school to be, they always come up with similar ideas. They want their teachers to

recognize them as individuals, and they want some say in what they learn. It would also be a bonus if that learning connected with something that they are interested in, or something that exists in the "real" world outside the school. In other words they want to be educated, or to come to understand the world they know they will enter, while being recognized as the unique individuals that they are. Students seem to intuitively understand what Peters (1973) says about education, "So what is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion and taste at worthwhile things that lie to hand" (p. 19, 20). At the same time they realize that they are caught up in a schoolhouse world of "feverish preparation" that defines education as gaining credentials to get to the next step, without ever connecting these steps with the "worthwhile things that lie to hand".

The discussion that followed the presentations reflected these themes, though both adults and students behaved in ways that showed how unusual these conversations are for them. At first the adults seemed uncomfortable with any silence in the group, and filled it with their own opinions. In many groups they did most of the talking, and the students were relegated to listening. Their intentions were good, but their old habits as teachers who do all the talking were hard to break. These conversations were unique for adults and students alike and all realized that they would have to learn how to have them in a way that gave students room to talk.

Audrey, intense, university-bound and articulate, was talking about how she hated the kind of learning she had to do to get good marks, but she did it anyway; she didn't have much choice. She wanted to learn about the "real world", but the marks got in the way. One of the teachers asked her what it would be like if she could resubmit

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assignments and retake tests, once she better understood the concepts that were getting in the way of her fully mastering what she was supposed to be learning. This idea, that in school she might be allowed to learn from her mistakes and try again, seemed to leave her speechless. After a long silence the only thing she could think of to say was, "but the universities need the marks…" and then she trailed off, uncertain of what to say next.

Audrey had so many unspoken assumptions in her statement that examining them could fill several more pages, but her statement shows she knows the difference between schooling and education, and the forum she found herself in was perhaps her first chance to discuss the differences with others. She shared her private experiences and thoughts in a public place, and the dead end she landed in was more eloquent than anything else she could have said about the difference between schooling and education and how the "social" elements of institutions take on a life of their own. This forum was explicitly created to give students a chance to appear with adults and discuss their education with them "as equals" (Arendt, 1958). Some people were perplexed, and could not see the connection between these conversations and improving graduation rates. Far more realized they were entering new territory and experiencing a "public" they had never encountered before.

The forum was created as an opportunity for teams of students to begin working on projects that had the potential to shape their school experiences along educational lines. One school team went back and began to conduct student-led conversations about the themes we had discussed at the forum and how they viewed their school experiences. In effect, they initiated conversations about the purposes of education. Another created a video of students talking about their lives in school, what it is and what they hoped it

could be. They began to show this video to parents, staff and other students to promote even wider conversations.

Will these and similar things transform public schools into places that truly educate students? Perhaps they will not, and certainly they will not do it over night. But over and over, the adults involved in planning these forums have commented on how the conversations back in the school district have changed because students continue to be involved. Something has begun, and it will be up to us to nurture it in the hopes that it will launch something new. As we have seen in previous chapters, students tend to see their role as passive, or at best figuring out how to do what is expected so they can move on to something else. As Cullingford (2002) puts it, "the underlying purpose of school seems to lie in leaving it" (p. 54).

To take some time to question and examine that unstated purpose with students can seem fanciful and removed from the business of schooling to some, but when we follow up with the students involved they know the conversations were significant. As they work on their projects, they have the opportunity to leave something behind, or change how things are done, simply by virtue of taking action.

For us, as adults and aspiring educational leaders, this may be the event that lingers as one where we may have made a difference, long after all the memories of Board meetings, discipline hearings, parent complaints, and reports on school closures have faded. And better yet, perhaps hearing what these students have said will make us pause before we resume our schoolhouse routines as usual and "think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5) before picking up the familiar threads of habit.

Looking At Educational Leadership

Deepening how we understand something is, as Peters (1973) would say, more of a journey than a destination, and along the way we learn to "travel with a different view" (p. 19, 20). I have not outlined any sequenced steps to educational leadership, but perhaps I have offered four ideas to use along the way, courtesy of Hannah Arendt. These are: the schooling/education conflict; the public and the private; and labour, work and action. These ideas are connected in the sense that each one focuses more deeply on educational leadership than the one that precedes it, and yet they are all views of the same thing.

Further, the closer we look at educational leadership from an Arendtian perspective, the more difficult it becomes to predict the effects of our actions. This is due to the multiple interpretations and narratives that arise and multiply once what we do becomes public.

The view of educational leadership I have described allows us insights, but it is up to us to connect these insights for ourselves in order to "think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5) and act as educational leaders. Whether we choose to take this opportunity or not, others will be interpreting and connecting what we do in their individual ways and weaving their own stories around us. And while we cannot control what these stories may be, these lenses may help us to understand them.

The Schooling/Education Conflict

I do not intend to summarize the differences between education and schooling once again, as I have devoted considerable space to that already. Instead I want to look at what the difference between the two means in terms of educational leadership. If we were to conduct a man-on-the-street style survey about schooling and education, it would be

realistic to say that most people would not see much difference between the two. Public

education and public schooling are commonly viewed as the same thing. And while the

difference between schooling and education may be clearer to professional educators, in

schools there is not much more than a casual acknowledgment that they are in conflict.

However, I believe an acute awareness of the conflict between the two is essential if one

is to act and lead in a way that is educational. This includes awareness that the structures,

procedures and sheer bureaucracy of schooling tend to overrun education most of the

time, though sometimes teachers and students chafe at them. These confessions of a

former social studies teacher are an example of this chafing, at least in hindsight:

> Their school social studies should arouse a life-long curiosity about the origins
>
> and meanings of public institutions and the workings of the economy. They
>
> should not only be curious but able to go to the right sources for advice and
>
> information and self confident enough to raise hell when it was time for that.
>
> There was very little progress in those directions as a result of the
>
> textbook/notebook/rote learning/testing routines to which I and my colleagues
>
> were committed. (Hennessy, 2006, p. 18)

While it would be tempting to relegate this situation to Hennessy's past as a

teacher in the 1950's, the students who gave the keynote performance at the recent

student forums I described earlier in this chapter still characterized their current learning

environment as the 3 R's as in "read, remember, regurgitate". While the alliteration the

students used is catchier, it exactly parallels Hennessy's mantra of

"textbook/notebook/rote learning/testing". It would seem that not much has changed.

The challenge for educational leaders is not replacing schooling with education,

as schooling has proven to be very durable. This is one dragon that rarely gets wounded, let alone slayed. Rather, leaders need to recognize the difference between the two and create opportunities for educational experiences to occur within and around the bureaucracy of schooling. This is not a simple matter for those in formal leadership positions, as they are also charged with upholding and maintaining this very bureaucracy. Educational leadership is a matter of looking beyond and through those structures to make protected space for individuals to develop and grow. Creating the opportunity for these individuals to interact with others who have different ways of thinking is the companion piece to this kind of educational leadership.

The Public, Private and Social

Providing these educational opportunities can be a more conscious act when viewed through the lens of Arendt's (1958) concept of the public and private. These two realms are distinct, yet work in tandem to support the idea of education. The private can be seen as the genesis of what makes each of us unique; it is where the distinct individual is forged, protected and nurtured. Students long for their teachers to see them as individuals, and teachers long to be recognized for their unique contributions and experiences. A parent with concerns is longing for their child to be seen as worthy of individual attention. All of these opportunities for recognition are jeopardized in the face of the "social" construct of schooling, with its demands for compliance and conformity. This suppression of the individual is not intentional. It is simply an outcropping of what is necessary to systematize a large organization. This systemization needs to happen in a fashion that is fairly reasonable in terms of operating, and reasonably fair in terms of offering services. The bureaucracy of schooling represents Arendt's (1958) idea of the

"social" an area that is neither public nor private, but funnels individuality into overall conformity that tends to "exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (p, 40).

Each of us must come to terms individually with the private and public sense of who we are. We also need to be acutely aware of the private and public as it relates to others. For public education needs to be about making that transition from the private world we come from to the public world we share with others. As educational leaders we are more responsible for fostering this transition than we sometimes understand. It is easy to see the classroom as the seat of learning in schools, and sometimes it is. But it is the small interactions that go on in the spaces and moments between classes, during classes, and before and after classes that need to be recognized and fostered for their educational potential.

To serve educational purposes a leader needs to be aware of the difference between the "social" as Arendt describes it and the "public" or a place where distinct individuals interact with each other around common interests. This public is a place where distinctions and differences appear and become part of the plurality that Arendt (1958) sees as exclusive to that realm. Rather than a place of conformity, the public is a place for individuals to appear among others and connect around common purposes and interests on a level playing field. Simply put, a classroom run in the traditional sense described earlier by Cullingford (2002) and Hennessy (2006) is far closer to the social realm than most of us care to admit. The halls between these classes, full of talk, interaction and exuberant individual appearances is closer to a "public" in Arendt's sense of it. But it exists on its own, in a haphazard kind of way, with very little recognition or

mediation by the adults who remain peripheral to it.

As educational leaders we are responsible for bridging the private and public for our students. That means respecting their individuality, yet preparing them to expose "who" they are to others by interacting with them and coming in turn to understand their differences. At the same time they need to understand what it is that links them with others, or the commonalities that they share in spite of their uniqueness. This bridging is very distinct form the "funneling" into conformity described earlier as a feature of the social. It is educational because it allows children to expand their individual views as they increase their understanding of others. Through bridging and mediating between the public and private, educational leaders can help students define themselves in relation to others in a way that leaves them open to different views, yet sure of their own uniqueness. This is one way to prepare them for a life of expanding views and understandings that are the earmarks of being educated. Ultimately we are preparing them to work on the lifelong and messy business of defining themselves in relationship to others.

Labour, Work and Action in the "Web of Relationships"

In Arendt's (1958) view the public is not simply a place filled with distinct opinions that exist irrespective of each other, but a place that is alive with stories that give shape and meaning to what occurs there. This dynamic occurs because the public is "overgrown with an altogether different inbetween…the 'web' of human relationships" (p. 183).

> The disclosure of the 'who' through speech and the setting of a new beginning
> through action, always fall into an already existing web where their immediate

consequences can be felt. Together they start a new process which eventually

emerges as the unique life story of the newcomer, affecting uniquely the life

stories of all those with whom he comes into contact. (p. 184)

This idea, that once we appear in public our own story immediately becomes

woven into the life stories of others, has important implications for educational

leadership. It is one thing to say to children that "This is our world" (Arendt, 1968, p.

189), but it is equally important to acknowledge that this world is not static, but teeming

with interconnected stories and actions that constantly shape and reshape the meaning of

what occurs there. To appear in public means to surrender "who" you are to a larger

force of narrative that can change the mundane to something extraordinary or reduce the

unique to something quite ordinary.

This transformational effect of "the 'web' of human relationships" blurs the

distinctions Arendt makes between "labour" "work" and "action" so that small and

everyday activities, "labour", or "work", can be "action" in that they start something new

or create a new understanding for others.   This all depends on whom they affect and the

meaning that is made of them in the stories created within the "web" of relationships.

As a way to look at educational leadership, this notion of a connected and

evolving "web" that absorbs and transforms our actions into stories written by others is

something to reckon with. First, it means that small and unplanned moments can ripple

out and add to a story already begun about "who" we are as leaders. And while this can

work in a positive way, it can also create a story that colours things in a negative way,

compounding faults and attributing unintended motives to the simplest choices. As we

saw with Scott and his leaking "tight ship" even his choice of a parking spot became

controversial because of his disregard for individuals. The public stories quickly become the reality, and transcend individual purposes and intents. But the stories themselves are not static, and unfold in various unexpected ways as they continue to grow different tendrils, depending on "who" is telling them.

To compound this sense that what we do and say in public takes on a life and meaning of its own, Arendt (1958) points out that "…action and reaction in men never move in a closed circle and can never be reliably confined to two partners" (p. 190).   She goes on to say that:

> …action, though it may proceed from nowhere, so to speak, acts into a medium where every process is the cause of new processes…the smallest act in the most limited circumstances bears the seed of the same boundlessness, because one deed, and sometimes one word, suffices to change every constellation. (p. 190)

There are some significant ideas bound up, so to speak, in this idea of boundlessness. The first is the notion that action can be "one deed, and sometimes one word," that changes the "constellation" of ideas and events that surrounds other people. This connects back to the idea that a simple word, glance or gesture around the most ordinary things can be action and have a new and reverberating impact on many people long after the act itself is complete and the "actor" is no longer there. Action is not bound or limited by time, but continues to have an effect on others because they are connected to it through relationship upon relationship.

Action has what Arendt (1958) terms "a second outstanding character: its inherent unpredictability" (p. 191).

This is not simply a question of inability to foretell all the logical consequences of

a particular act…but arises directly out of the story which, as the result of action,

begins and establishes itself as soon as the fleeting moment of the deed is past.

The trouble is that whatever the character and content of the subsequent story

may be, whether it is played in private or in public life, whether it involves many

or few actors, its full meaning can reveal itself only when it has ended. (p. 192)

This brings me back to the description of the political debate that opened Chapter

2. Every candidate wanted to appear certain in all their opinions, for to do otherwise

might confuse people or make the aspiring leader seem weak and ambivalent. Yet if we

are to believe Arendt, each thing we do has multiple and unpredictable effects that we

cannot begin to be understood until long after we have left and others have told and retold

the story from their own perspectives. We do not write or control the story; it follows in

our wake and travels to places that we had not even imagined when we first took action.

As Benhabib (2000) puts it, "…in action there is always a disjunction between intent and

consequence" (p. 113).

Educational Leadership for a Common World

So where does this leave those who would be educational leaders? It seems that

taking action, or leading through starting something, is a tenuous thing, or must be done

in full awareness of what Arendt (1958) terms a certain "frailty" that characterizes human

interactions and their unpredictable outcomes. Arendt eliminates the comfort of a

predictable relationship between our intents and their eventual outcome, and leaves us

wondering how we can make a positive difference for others in terms of being

educational leaders.

According to Arendt the unpredictability of outcomes is the only thing that is

really predictable. This does not mean that we have no reason to take action, or as Arendt (1958) terms it, start "something new on our own initiative" (p. 177). We need to be "wide awake" (Greene, 1978) to the things that make all of us, students, parents, and colleagues, unique. As part of this we need to use "authority", or responsibility (Arendt, 1968) to prepare students to "appear" in public in a world that we share with others.

To do this as educators, we need to mediate, or bridge, between the public and the private for our students, and give them chances to express their individuality and appreciate the individuality of others in the public. At the same time we need to respect and protect the privacy of children, "…who by nature require the security of concealment in order to mature undisturbed" (Arendt, 1968, p. 188).

As Arendt (1968) notes:

> Normally the child is first introduced to the world in school. Now school is by no means the world and must not pretend to be; it is rather the institution that we interpose between the private domain of home and the world in order to make the transition from the family to the world possible at all. Attendance there is required not by the family but by the state, that is by the public world, and so, in relation to the child, school in a sense represents the world, although it is not yet actually the world. (p. 188, 189)

In the context of educational leadership, the overlap, or sliding scale between the public and private is a new place for children, which gives us the responsibility for both protecting their privacy and giving them the chance to practice appearing in public. What we say and do as teachers, principals, or even superintendents, represents the public to our students, as to them it is the closest thing they have to the common world beyond

their homes.

As educational leaders who serve as the bridge and precursor to the world for children, our responsibility, or what Arendt calls our "authority", is clear. Our actions have all the more potential to influence them because they are "new comers" (Arendt, 1968), and as the principal I quoted earlier in this chapter said, "They look to us to learn." Among other things, we cannot use their public appearances to control or humiliate them; we must make it safe for them to appear with others. We cannot act as if the learning that really counts is tied up in classroom textbooks and lessons, and that things learned elsewhere are irrelevant. We cannot continue to pretend that the world consists of one chance to learn something, with one test to determine success or failure, because people fail, practice, try again and eventually succeed throughout their lives. We need to prepare our children to live and act in a public world that is not bounded by our school-house rituals about what it means to learn. Leadership also involves understanding that while we are the bridge between the private and the public, and can prepare our students to take action, the unpredictability of what they do after they cross that bridge is the most wonderful thing about them. While we build the bridge for them with the only materials we know, it is merely a springboard for them as they prepare for their task of "renewing a common world" Arendt, 1968, p 196).

Far from a worrisome sign of what Arendt (1958) terms the "frailty", or unpredictability of human interactions, the natality of youth is what ensures that they will act and react with others to do things in ways we cannot anticipate. Being close to this newness, and having responsibility for "newcomers" who "are not finished but in a state of becoming" (Arendt, 1968, p. 185) is the distinct privilege of those of us who work

with children.

The last words go to Hannah Arendt, who states the case for this privilege more eloquently that I could hope to:

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 1968, p 196)

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