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The Montessori Leader
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Abstract

This study investigates a Montessori perspective on leadership. It emerged from the researcher's experience as a leader, in which Montessori science and philosophy appeared as a helpful guide. The investigation examined and interpreted the voices of contemporary Montessori leaders and how Montessori principles and practices shaped their perspective. The thesis is situated within the current educational context, but draws from Montessori primary and secondary literature, much of which is historic and speaks to larger multi-disciplinary questions.

There is a considerable body of literature within the leadership field. This research supports the view that leadership can be developed and that a myriad of adjectival lenses exist through which leadership has been examined. However, previous theories have not always taken the view that leadership is an innate aspect of the social human being that can be revealed in a developmental environment. Most leadership study findings have been generated from investigating the adult, but Montessori indicated the importance of considering the child.

Montessori was a leader who remains classified as a pedagogue and her legacy is yet to be fully studied by contemporary academics. This investigation begins to use Montessori's principles and practices as a lens through which to explore leadership. The study analyses and discusses the views of contemporary Montessori leaders in educational settings. A preliminary interview was undertaken as a pilot in Australia before conducting fourteen semi-structured interviews in the United States. Participants with AMI Montessori training and at least five years of leadership experience within an AMI-USA recognised school were sought for the interviews. The interviews explored the role of Montessori principles and practices in developing the participants' ideas about and enactment of leadership.

In this study, reflexivity with respect to the insider positioning of the researcher offered an opportunity to reveal and navigate a productive insider-outsider middle ground throughout the analysis and discussion. Gadamer's (2013) *Truth and Method* was used as a philosophical guide for the interpretation of the data

in the investigation. Specifically, Gadamer's notion that language is the medium of hermeneutics and his concepts of 'prejudices' and 'horizons', unveiled linguistic, spatial and temporal aspects of interpretation that shaped the analysis. Participant responses were discussed by expanding on Montessori's notions of preparation of the self and the environment. The study also explored how Montessori leadership was enacted within a paradoxical framework that used knowledge, service and love to guide a developmental process Montessori referred to as 'normalisation'.

Emerging from the analysis is that a Montessori perspective on leadership is distinct and has general applicability. The argument is made that Montessori leadership is connected to the child, who occupies an elevated and central position as a hope and a promise for human beings. This opens a new conversation about leadership that embraces psychological and spiritual aspects in a single coherent philosophy. By providing a Montessori perspective on leadership, exemplified by the Montessori classroom teacher, this study contributes a fresh way of understanding how human beings can transform themselves for a peaceful telos.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature: ……………………

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Understanding begins when something addresses us. This is the first condition of hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2013, p. 310).

1.1 The Beginning

In harmony with Gadamer's words above, leadership addressed the researcher during 2003, upon founding a small semi-rural Montessori school as a graduate teacher. At first, leading a school community seemed strange and uncomfortable; a new role for which there had been no formal preparation. Mistakes were made and learning necessarily came quickly. For both the school and the researcher as leader, the motto "grow and adapt, or die" seemed appropriate. In spite of steady growth, during 2013 the school did die – unable to grow and adapt quickly enough, it became an unintended casualty of the contemporary demands on small independent schools. But by then, an understanding that the principles and practices advocated by physician and pedagogue, Maria Montessori (1870-1952), might offer a unique perspective on leadership had captivated the researcher. This study was born to explore and clarify that perspective.

1.2 Leadership

One encyclopaedic handbook on leadership opens with the simple statements that "leadership makes the difference" and "the evidence is all around us" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 3). Leadership has been considered as a central force in human affairs (Burns, 2005) and its genealogy reveals that the issues that pre-occupy leaders are of a timeless and enduring nature (Gronn, 2010). Kellerman (2004), states that the need for leadership is demonstrable and universally shared. She has taught leaders for over thirty years, but argues that leadership has recently become overvalued, a mantra, pursued for its own sake as a pathway to wealth and power, and a concept about which there may still be many questions:

> Notwithstanding the enormous sums of money and time that have been poured into trying to teach people how to lead…the leadership industry has not in any major meaningful, measurable way improved the human condition (Kellerman, 2012, p. xiv).

It was an interest in the broad notion of improving the human condition that first prompted the researcher's questions – "What is it to be a leader of a community?" and "How is it best to practice leadership within a community?" There is no shortage of resources to consult on general leadership or leadership within education. The extraordinarily large literature has swung between two positions. Early twentieth century studies, such as Stogdill (1948) emerged from the nineteenth century Great Man theory, a conception of the leader as "born", and tried to distil the traits bestowed by nature on the select few. Contemporary studies have brought the leader as "made" to the fore. Writers point to a leader's environment, context and life experiences as having the major influence. Following the re-emergence of interest in leadership traits in the 1980s, longitudinal studies began to emerge seeking links between childhood factors and adult leadership (Daly, Egan & O'Reilly, 2015). Conger and Riggio (2007) explore common ground between polarities in the field, through the notion that leadership and its practice can be developed.

For some, leadership:

> …connotes images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations. The exploits of brave and clever leaders are the essence of many legends and myths. Much of our description of history is the story of military, political, religious, and social leaders who are credited or blamed for important historical events… (Yukl, 2010, p. 19).

Kellerman (2012) claims the perceived significance of the influence of leadership has fostered a recent explosion of interest in leadership theory and a multi-billion-dollar leadership industry. Centres, programs, books, articles, websites, blogs, videos, conferences, consultants, coaches and so on, all claiming to teach people how to lead, have arisen in an enterprise which Kellerman argues is self-satisfied, self-perpetuating and poorly policed. Others claim that while leadership is perceived as an important component of addressing major world problems, there is a deficiency or even a crisis of

leadership within social institutions (Ekman, 2010; Fairholm, 2011; Lillard, 2005). There exists:

> …a body of contemporary writings [that] challenges the grandiose aspects of leadership, as well as the taken-for-granted assumption that leaders should be put on the centre-stage (Karp, 2013, p. 3).

Karp claims that leadership tends to be oversold, and that acts of leadership are more rare, subtle and fragile than the literature and industry typically assume.

Early studies of leadership, such as Stogdill (1948), were dominated by quantitative analysis. However, increasing recognition of the rich contextuality of leadership has brought qualitative approaches to the fore. Much recent work has focussed on a single lens viewpoint evidenced by the multiplication of adjectival descriptors mobilised (Blackmore, 2013). Leadership has been investigated as transformational (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978), charismatic (Conger, 1989), servant (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002), spiritual (Fry, 2003), authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), adaptive (Heifetz, 2009), distributed (Harris, 2009), sustainable (Fullen, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006) …the list goes on and on.

Some researchers have undertaken the challenging task of comparing various leadership theories (Van Dierendonck, 2010; Yukl, 2010). Other researchers have grappled with the dichotomies of leader/follower (Burns, 1978; Kellerman, 2012; van Vugt, 2006) or leader/manager (Gronn, 2003; Kotter, 1990). Different configurations of leadership have been investigated – individual leaders vs. co-leaders vs. leadership teams, etc. (Gronn, 2009; Yukl, 2010) as well as the leader/leaderless contrast (Bass, 1954; van Vugt, 2006). Some have investigated what Lewin (1944) called the triangular relation of autocracy, democracy and laissez-faire leadership styles. Gender and feminist perspectives remain interesting for researchers (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Blackmore, 2013; Rhode, 2003; White, 2010; Yukl, 2010). Cross-cultural perspectives have become prominent, particularly from non-Western models, though these are acknowledged as diverse (Arvey, Dhanaraj, Javidan & Zhang, 2015; De Bary, 2004; Derungs, 2011; Julien, Wright, & Zinni, 2010; Scandura and Dorfman, 2004; Teagarden, 2007; White, 2010). Contextual approaches, such as religious leadership (Callahan, 2013) and indigenous leadership (Hayes

& Clode, 2012) are becoming well-represented in the literature. New strands such as youth leadership (Dempster, Lizzio, Keefe, Skinner & Andrews, 2013; Gould, 2012) and non-human leadership (Gronn, 2010; King, Johnson, & van Vugt, 2009; McComb, Shannon, Durant, Sayialel, Slowtow, Poole, & Moss, 2011) are emerging. Converging ideas in natural and social sciences suggest future research could benefit from multi-disciplinary efforts between psychologists, anthropologists, biologists and zoologists investigating evolutionary aspects and the way individuals achieve coordination and collective action (van Vugt, 2006; King et al., 2009). Others lament the lack of philosophical depth, critical ethos and analysis of major global crises in terms of leadership from academics more concerned with responding to the journal ranking systems that model scholarly leadership (Tourish, 2015). After decades of ferment and confusion, of rushing from one fad to the next with theory development progressing slowly, the results of thousands of studies are:

> …often inconsistent and inconclusive. The confused state of the field can be attributed in large part to the sheer volume of publications, the disparity of approaches, the proliferation of confusing terms, the narrow focus of most research, the preference for simplistic explanations, the high percentage of studies on trivial questions, and the scarcity of studies using strong research methods (Yukl, 2010, p. 476).

Gill (2011) writes that only piecemeal theories remain, addressing only a specific aspect of leadership and are wanting in the quest for a more general theory. Thinking about the limitations of previous research, and the need for an authentic Montessori approach to leadership induced the researcher to revisit Montessori's original ideas. In 1951, just before her death and at the age of eighty-one years, Montessori had noted:

> We find ourselves at a moment in time in which spiritual life is neglected and materialism is extolled as a virtue; in which the physical prowess of human beings has surpassed that of nature and in which we glimpse the horror of universal destruction. Because of this, we proclaim that the development of creative energies, of the higher characteristics of human beings, is one of the most urgent needs of our social life (FC, p. 8).

What clues might she offer to guide the development of leadership? How might her writings be of service to leaders today?

1.3   Four Pillars of Montessori's Legacy

Educators following Montessori's principles and practices, have access to four key scientific ideas that underpin her view of human nature. The first is the notion of universal and lifelong Human Tendencies, which she claimed directed the human being's seemingly unlimited capacity to adapt to the surroundings (Montessori, M. M. n.d.). The Human Tendencies to orientation, exploration, order, communication, self-preservation, work, repetition, creativity, self-control, self-perfection and other actions constitute natural inner powers. Montessori claimed that education must support the Human Tendencies, because to hinder them risked abnormal psychological changes:

> …or rather a deviation of the psychic forces. Instead of taking the path that we call normal, the child's development is deflected in an unfortunate direction (AM, p. 70).

The second key idea underpinning Montessori's perspective is a developmental continuum spanning the stages of life, from birth to adulthood. Montessori conceptualised this overarching vision as The Four Planes of Development and represented it in two completely different images, both prepared toward the end of her life.

The first representation is the triangular Constructive Rhythm of Life (Fig. 1), a view of pulsating waves of rapid transformative progress followed by periods of consolidation. The second is The Bulb (Fig. 2), an arc of the dynamism of development, which emphasises Montessori's view that the personality was formed in the early years. The scientific background and historic relevance of these images has been documented (Feez, 2007; Grazzini, 1994). For Montessori, understanding human development through its unfolding stages was a prerequisite to perceiving the right pedagogical support to offer at each stage:

> …the child's development follows a path of successive stages of independence, and our knowledge of this must guide us in our behaviour towards him (AM, p. 257).
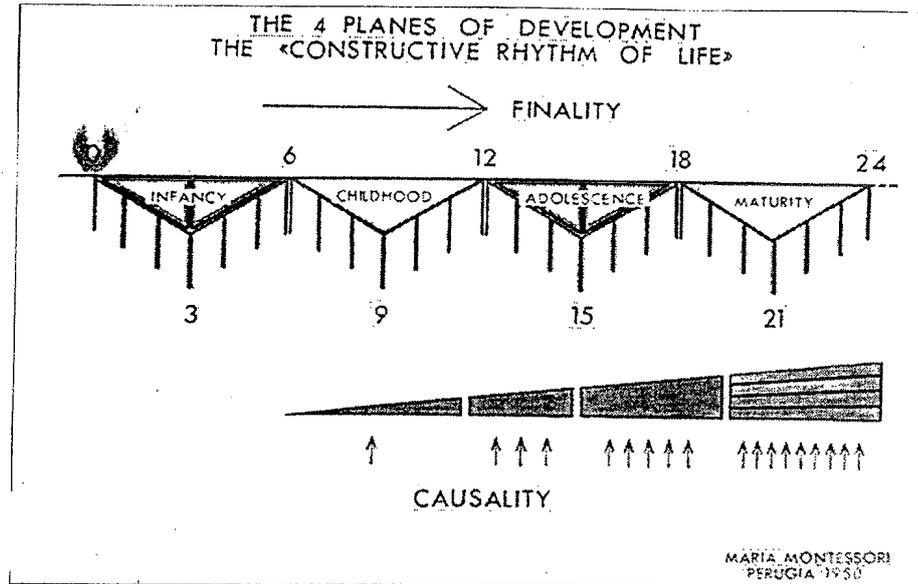
Fig. 1 The Constructive Rhythm of Life
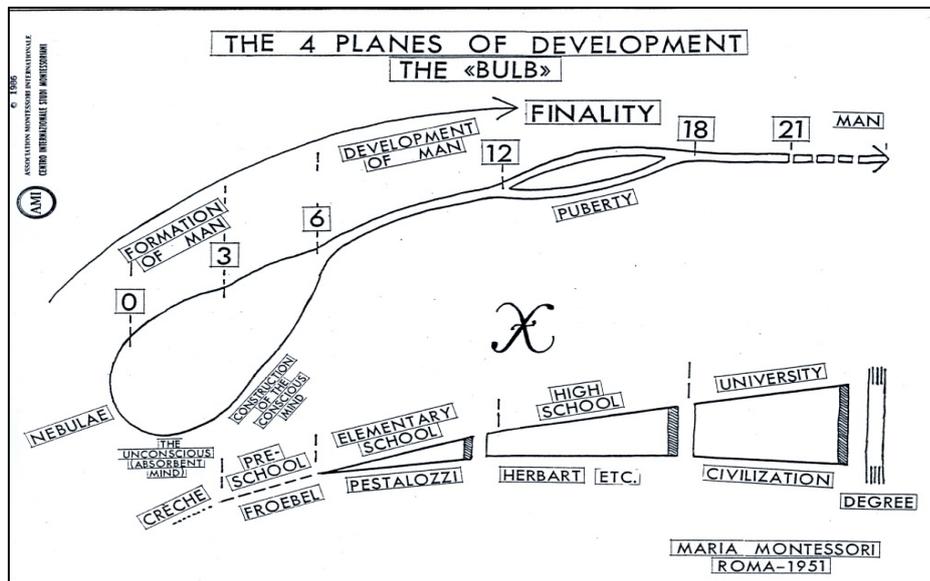
Fig. 2 The Bulb

Two further foundational concepts within Montessori's perspective, the Absorbent Mind and Sensitive Periods, have particular significance for the first six years of life. At this stage, the child's mind is in formation, still a potentiality with sponge-life absorption of impressions from the surrounding environment:

> The child has a mind able to absorb knowledge. He has the power to teach himself. A single observation is enough to prove this. The child grows up speaking his parent's tongue, yet to grown-ups the learning of a language is a very great intellectual achievement (AM, p. 5).

For Montessori, the Absorbent Mind was a holistic mind-body concept that included the emotions. Montessori argued that understanding this naturally Absorbent Mind gave rise to an obligation on adults, to consider how the environment might best be prepared in order to release human potential for optimal development.

The concept of Sensitive Periods, was adopted by Montessori, from Dutch botanist, Hugo de Vries, whose study of the Porthesia caterpillars revealed their temporary sensitivity to light (AM; SC). This sensitivity motivated the young caterpillars to move to the outer green tips of the plant to eat, but was lost in the caterpillar's later physiological stages. Montessori saw evidence of parallels for the human species. Her reading of Jean Marc Gaspard Itard's experience with Victor, a boy raised outside of society, inspired her to argue that one of the human being's Sensitive Periods relates to language. Despite Itard's teaching, the boy never learned to speak more than a few words. She writes:

> None of these sensitivities occupies the whole period of development. Each of them lasts long enough for the construction of a psychic organ. Once that organ is formed, the sensitivity disappears, but while it lasts, there is an outpouring of energy incredible to us, who have outgrown it so completely that we can no longer remember ever having had it (AM, p. 47).

Upon these four key pillars, Montessori developed a psychologically-based pedagogy, initially for very young children at the Casa dei Bambini (translated as "Children's House"), her early childhood environment, from 1907 in Rome (MM), but later extended to meet the needs of older children (AMMI; AMMII). In her later life, she spoke about the requirements of the adolescent and about the university years (FCTA), and began to expand upon her developmental psychology to address broader social issues including peace, democracy and human rights (EP). Montessori did not set out to study or write about leadership and within the leadership field, her legacy is not yet considered to have relevance.

1.4 Montessori's Leadership

Montessori's biographers explain that she already exemplified pioneering leadership prior to her fame as a pedagogue (Babini, 2000; Foschi, 2008; Kramer, 1988; Standing, 1998; Trabalzini, 2011). She was not the first Italian woman to gain a degree in medicine (Povell, 2010) as has been widely reported. Yet her graduation in 1896 opened a career path almost unprecedented for a woman of her time. Montessori initially ventured into psychiatry under the guidance of neuropathologist, Ezio Sciamanna, who had supervised her dissertation. She collaborated with Sante De Sanctis and Giuseppe Sergi, Italian pioneers of Psychology. While Sergi, a progressive with an interest in anthropology, would become an important teacher for Montessori, he nevertheless believed women were evolutionary inferior (Foschi, 2008). Working in a masculine positivist scientific environment as a liberal-thinking feminist, underscores the contradiction that characterises much of Montessori's personal and professional life.

Babini (2000) takes up the story of how Montessori interwove her feminist views with her scientific work. At her first public appearance in Berlin in 1896, at the International Women's Conference, Montessori's delivery of a paper on female emancipation impressed journalists. Behind the scenes she would found women's associations, and publish in the female periodical press. Tornar (2001) finds that Montessori published seventy-two works in the years between her graduation from university in 1896 and the appearance of her seminal work. *The Montessori Method,* in 1912, nearly all appearing in specialist publications of scientific importance.

Of particular significance was Montessori's research on the findings of French physicians and humanitarians, Phillippe Pinel, Jean Marc Gaspard Itard and his student, Edouard Seguin. The discoveries of these pioneers inspired her direction at the Casa dei Bambini. Montessori's decision to look after a group of about fifty young impoverished children, around two and a half to seven years, in the Casa within the San Lorenzo slum district of Rome, earned the disapproval of friends and colleagues. Montessori was accused of lowering her profession by engaging herself as a childcare worker or infant teacher (Kramer, 1988). She writes:

> I had no special system of instruction. I had nothing more than fifty extremely poor, ragged, and obviously timid children, many of whom were weeping. Almost all were the offspring of illiterate parents who had entrusted them to my care (SC, p. 113).

Yet bringing her medical and scientific background to this new role, uncluttered by the dominant educational thinking of her time, Montessori would begin to define her personal approach to pedagogy. In movement and choice of activity, she gave the children freedom. She prepared her staff to hold passivity composed of scientific curiosity and respect for the children's independence and auto-education. Montessori's observations of the spontaneous and self-directed work of the children guided the evolving design of the activities offered and the classroom environment. Toward the end of that first year, surprised and inspired by the children's growing self-discipline and the joy they expressed in their work, Montessori was ready to use improvised materials to teach the children the sounds of the alphabet. She reflects on the rapid progress of the children's literacy skills:

> …at Christmas time, less than a month and a half later, while the children in the first elementary were laboriously working to forget their wearisome pothooks and to prepare for making the curves of O and the other vowels, two of my little ones of four years old, wrote, each one in the name of his companions, a letter of good wishes and thanks to Signor Edouardo Talamo. These were written upon note-paper without blot or erasure and the writing was adjudged equal to that which is obtained in the third elementary grade (MM, p. 270).

News of the transformation of the slum children would bring Montessori worldwide recognition (Standing, 1998; Kramer, 1988). Yet she claimed she did not so much develop a method of education, but rather interpreted the natural laws of human development, a different pathway to other psychologists of her time:

> Psychologists base their theories on animal behaviour and on adult response to psychoanalysis, and move forward toward educational reform joining us at a certain point on the way, as we proceed starting from the child himself! They seek a method of education to suit their theory, while we seek a psychological theory to suit our method (TEHP, p. 16).

Montessori continued to be inspired by the work of other leaders throughout history and across disciplines, readily acknowledging their contributions in her writings and lectures (Trabalzini, 2011). She worked with diverse political

leaders of significance such as Gandhi and Mussolini. At the 1936 Montessori Congress in Oxford, it was announced that Montessori's intention was to elaborate a social plan to be submitted to world governments for an international league of child psychic welfare (Kramer, 1988). She repeated her message tirelessly in the lead up to World War II, culminating in a speech at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1938 in which she made another plea for an education system to accomplish peace through moral reform. Following the war, Montessori kept up her petition, writing to all governments in 1947, as an interpreter for children, appealing for their cooperation (Montessori Australia Foundation, 2016a).

In *The Absorbent Mind*, drawn from a series of lectures given toward the end of her life , Montessori seems confident of what the child has to offer leadership. The first chapter, entitled "The Child's Part in World Reconstruction" introduces her strong viewpoint. In a later chapter, Montessori advises that the child's contribution to society can be summarised in one concept, to which she gives the problematic term, "normalisation". She argues that this developmental process is an observable psychic phenomenon, wherein the child's true personality constructs itself normally and hence optimally. For Montessori, normalisation was "the most important single result of our whole work" (AM, p. 186) as it offered the highest human outcomes, including concentration, self-discipline, sociability and a joyful love of purposeful work. *The Absorbent Mind* ends with a chapter titled "Love and its Source – the Child", underscoring Montessori's ultimate message. She referred to love as "the greatest energy of the universe", even "creation itself" (AM, p. 265). Denoted by concepts of attraction and affinity, this energy:

> …keeps the stars in their courses, causes the conjunction of atoms to form new substances, holds things down on the earth's surface. It is the force which regulates and orders the organic and the inorganic, and which becomes incorporated into the essence of everything and of all things, like a guide to salvation and to the endlessness of evolution. It is generally unconscious, but in life it sometimes assumes consciousness, and, when felt in man's heart, he calls it 'love' (AM, p. 267).

As a leader, Montessori elaborated a vision of the child as the spiritual builder of mankind, who embodied the human capacity for social reform and global peace. She argued that "preventing conflicts is the work of politics; establishing

peace is the work of education" (EP, p. 24). Montessori's contribution to the peace movement was acknowledged in nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize in three consecutive years – 1949, 1950 and 1951, just prior to her death in 1952 (Kramer, 1988).

1.5 Montessori's Legacy

During her life, Montessori had many supporters, from royalty and scientists to politicians, teachers and parents. Nevertheless, Montessori attracted critics. There were writings from Italy early in the twentieth century, which were critical of Montessori's "lack of originality and of a theoretical framework, the naturalism, mechanicism in didactic activities and the individualisation of children hardly involved in group activities" (Trabalzini, 2011, p. 122). Critics also emerged in the United Kingdom (Feez, 2013, p. 59). However, in the United States, a critique first published in 1914 by William Heard Kilpatrick, may have been the most influential:

> …Madam Montessori's doctrine of sense-training is based on an outworn and castoff psychological theory; that the didactic apparatus devised to carry this theory into effect is in so far worthless: that what little value remains to the apparatus could be better got from the sense-experience incidental to properly directed play with wisely chosen, but less expensive and more childlike, playthings (Kilpatrick, 1971, pp. 27-29).

Following Kilpatrick's critique, Montessori's work became increasingly sidelined. Other factors such as her lack of scientific precision; writing style; difficulties with translation; social, political and cultural influences; a protective tradition; and Montessori teachers themselves, are all likely to have contributed to the ebb and flow pattern of marginalisation and resurgence that characterised subsequent decades (Kramer, 1988; Standing, 1966, 1988; Cossentino, 2009; Feez, 2013; Hainstock, 1986; Margetts, 2011; Whitescarver and Cossentino, 2008). Thayer-Bacon (2012) argues that there is a troubling gendered side to Montessori's story that affected her in significant ways and that still lingers and limits her contribution to educational theory. Nevertheless, Montessori's ideas provided an inspiration for other educational pioneers including Piaget and Vygotsky (Feez, 2010; Mooney, 2000), Erikson (Mooney, 2000; Kramer, 1988) and Malaguzzi (Rinaldi, 2006). *The Montessori Method* is now considered a

classic text on international pedagogical thought (Trabalzini, 2011). Laeng (2001) claims Montessori is by far the most eminent figure in the history of Italian education. Her global legacy, particularly in early childhood education, has long been acknowledged outside the Montessori sector:

> Montessori's theories about children have influenced the way all early childhood programs are structured today, not just programs that refer to themselves as "Montessori" programs. Her theories are important to early childhood teachers no matter what programs they work in (Mooney, 2000, p. 24).

Since the 1990s, there has been a rekindling of interest in the Montessori approach, from historians and pedagogues, with an emphasis on objective and rigorous analysis of data over anecdotal accounts (Tornar, 2001; Ceccarelli, Cimino & Foschi, 2010; Trabalzini, 2011, p. xii). This renewal is being supported by projects such as the development of a museum and research centre associated with Montessori's former home in Amsterdam. Painstaking database and bibliographic work, building on Tornar (2001), is already well underway. As more records are excavated, translated and published, and examination of historical archives becomes easier for globally distributed Montessori researchers, it has passed to the new generation of academics and practitioners to develop a fuller and more objective genre of Montessori scholarship.

Montessori is now being reread in light of exchanges between bordering disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry and pedagogy (Ceccarelli et al, 2010). Trabalzini (2011) has traced *The Montessori Method* through its five successive editions. Feez (2007) has documented the semiotic intricacy of Montessori's array of didactic objects, a concrete primary source of her work, often referred to as "the materials". Chattin-McNicholls (1992), Lillard (2005), Kendall (1992) and Lloyd (2008) are researchers who discuss aspects of Montessori's legacy in the context of current child development and education theory. Babini (2000) offers insight on Montessori's work through the feminist lens. Works adopting a more narrative-like style by highly experienced Montessori practitioners such as Goertz (2001), Schmidt and Schmidt (2009) and Helfrich (2011) are guides for teachers and parents in applying Montessori principles in the classroom and home.

Recent studies have also begun to scientifically validate the application of the Montessori method by teachers in classrooms. Rathunde and Czikszentmihalyi (2003) is a comparison study of Montessori and non-Montessori students at middle school level. Lillard and Else-Quest (2006) is a comparison study of academic and social skills in primary school students. Diamond and Lee (2011) and Lillard (2012) have found higher executive function within Montessori children. Superior curricular outcomes for Montessori students have been demonstrated in Dohrmann, Nishida, Gartner, Lipsky & Grimm (2007) and Chisnall and Maher (2007) for Mathematics and Vance (2003) for Literacy.

Montessori remains one of the few pedagogies to have endured the test of time. Over a century after the original Casa dei Bambini, Montessori appears to be one of the most widely implemented educational approaches in the world. It is estimated that there may be over 22,000 Montessori schools in 117 countries (Montessori Australia Foundation, 2016b). Tornar (2001, p. xxxvii) writes that the modern Montessori movement is characterised by a search for novel uses, following various tracks and modes of expansion. Montessori applications now cover the full range of human development from prenatal care through early childhood and school-age education to adult learning. Montessori has begun to find application in aged care settings and even dementia care (Camp, Judge, Bye, Fox, Bowden, Bell, Valencic & Mattern, 1997; Bourgeois, Brush, Elliot & Kelly, 2015). The ideas and principles of Montessori are incorporated into innovative projects globally that span special education, indigenous education, prison programs, refugee camps and other social justice projects (Association Montessori Internationale [AMI], 2016).

Contemporary Montessori leaders maintain the philosophy incorporates a lofty universal and scientifically valid vision that has integrated social connectivity with the details of individual daily living. One leader writes that Montessori's work provides:

> …a set of keys that open the human mind to logic and the mystery of the universe in relation to human development. This is a gigantic vision. The Montessori educational ideal is gigantic because it explores with rigorous consistency the laws of development and laws of life that have application and new meaning in every aspect of human existence and every age (Kahn, 1992, p. 200).

Another argues that the Montessori approach:

> …cannot be reduced to a collection of instructional techniques or curricular objectives or didactic materials. Rather, the practice of Montessori education entails participation in a highly coherent and deeply textured culture. Within that culture—what I understand to be the values, beliefs, and norms shared by Montessorians—members construct the meaning not only of a particular type of teaching and learning but of a particular type of living (Cossentino, 2005, p. 212).

Montessori's grandson, Mario, wrote that she considered her work as an open and ongoing scientific experiment based on the study of the child. To examine Montessori's principles and practices with a view to developing a perspective on leadership would therefore seem, in light of Montessori's expanding legacy, to be spotlighting one of what Mario referred to as "unexplored recesses" (Montessori, M. M. 1968, p. 17).

1.6   Montessori and the Concept of Leadership

In spite of her strong legacy of leadership, there are few statements in Montessori's published works specifically referring to her conception of leadership and its development. Various Montessori groups around the world have developed resources and training opportunities for those interested in professional Montessori leadership (e.g. Montessori Administrators Association, 2017; The Montessori Foundation, 2017; NAMTA, 2017). Many of these opportunities draw from industry best practice across vital leadership areas such as strategic planning, risk management, human resources, marketing and communication. The extent to which these opportunities help the practitioner to make deep connections between Montessori philosophy and pedagogy, and professional leadership falls outside the scope of this study. However, unless deep connections are made, transitioning from Montessori teacher to broader leadership may require a significant leap into what may feel like new territory. Peters (2005), reporting on a conversation with a longstanding head of a Montessori school, found this gap is too challenging for many to bridge:

> …in many cases, the leap isn't made from the classroom level to the school level, the people involved don't know how to bring the Montessori approach to the school level, and there is still a misunderstanding about what the Montessori classroom approach is (Peters, 2005, p. 31).

In this study, a concept of leadership originating from Montessori philosophy, and maintaining a strong day-to-day connection with her principles and practices was sought. The study aimed to mirror Montessori's apparent approach to research, by immersing the work within a grand synthesis developed from a wide background of multi-disciplinary reading beyond the arguable scope of the research topic. Not long after the research was begun in 2011, Lawrence Schaefer of Lake Country Institute in Minneapolis, United States, self-published the first known book on Montessori leadership (Schaefer, 2011b). The book, or rather the booklet, as it contains only fourteen pages, records his reflections on leadership in a Montessori context, developed from over forty years of experience. Amongst the text in the publication, one of Schaefer's sentences stands out, as it captures the essence of this study's main thesis:

> The model for Montessori leadership exists in every good Montessori Children's House (Schaefer, 2011b, p. 4).

The idea that a classroom of very young children freely engaged in developmental activity under the guidance of a Montessori-trained adult, might incorporate a distinct century-old theoretical and practical vision of generalisable leadership, has not been explored in any depth in the academic or professional literature. There appears to have been almost no work beyond the biographical genre, undertaken to address leadership against a backdrop of holistic, integrated and lifelong human development. This investigation seeks to address these gaps.

1.7   Social and Educational Contexts

Education reform is at the top of the agenda of almost every country in the world (Barber and Mourshead, 2007). Researchers readily cite the need for a shift, but lament the pace of social change which is no longer incremental, or predictable, but multi-dimensional (Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010). Collarbone (2011) claims researchers write of the need to be adaptable, but there are challenges turning words into good practice. She believes the public sector particularly suffers from a culture of command and control, excessive bureaucracy, inefficiencies and even paralysis of some services. Jansen,

Cammock and Conner (2013) write that the needs and expectations of the next generation have shifted and there is a different role for schooling and technology in the 21st century. Jones (2012) argues that although on paper, we are by far the best educated cohort in history, people lack courage, judgement, the capacity to analyse or even show simple curiosity about anything other than immediate personal needs.

Collarbone (2011) sees that improved leadership has the potential to address issues in education. She oversaw the development of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011). The Standard describes the crucial role of the principal in the twenty first century as one of the most exciting and significant undertaken by any person in society. The early childhood sector sees leadership as a professional responsibility (Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd, 2012) that is explicitly reinforced in Australia within rapidly evolving national policy reform and the introduction of quality standards (Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, 2016).

The relationship of standards to educational leadership has been strongly critiqued (Gronn, 2003; English, 2008). Loader (1997) emphasises the inner person and the emotional dimensions of leadership, areas that Gronn (2003) argues remain underexplored. Riley (2012) notes the daunting government and social demands on Australian school leaders and his substantial investigation of their wellbeing finds some disturbing data. In a later work, Loader argues:

> The role of principal is more suited to a young person and not one approaching retirement. It needs unlimited energy and elastic resilience. Even when I was young I found the principal's workload overwhelming, the politics depressing, the competition fierce, the environment boggy, the horizons too far away and my personal energy occasionally depleted (Loader, 2007, p. 1).

Riley (2012) acknowledges that despite the greater administrative pressures, many still enjoy educational leadership and the opportunity to influence. The strong link between educational leadership and improvements to school operations and student outcomes is now well established (Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). It is no surprise that the spotlight is

increasingly on the recruitment, preparation, retention and development of school leaders. Formal and mandatory programs for preparation of school leaders and/or standards in which to infuse this preparation are of interest to researchers (Waters & Kingston, 2005; Thrupp, 2010). Loader, McGraw and Mason (2007) link educational leadership to the broader context, stating that education is everyone's business, not the role of a chosen few:

> …and the calling of those who lead in schools is nothing less than that of a prophet in a biblical sense – speaking out for the greater good with the intention of building caring and sustainable societies (Loader, McGraw & Mason, 2007, p. 9).

While this study was initially motivated by questions about school leadership, Montessori's focus on the universal aspects of human development called for an understanding that was not held to place, time or specific sectors. Yet while the broadest scope was taken for the investigation, it necessarily draws from the researcher's many years of experience with school communities, including leadership with, of, from and among, children, parents, grandparents, staff, colleagues, friends and associated supporters. Pedagogically oriented leadership not only motivated the research, but informed the way the study unfolded. An experienced Montessori-trained leader could not claim scholarly distance in this study, but must rely on the benefit of scholarly proximity to further understanding. There were many questions about how to interpret Montessori's translated publications and the words of current Montessori leaders, who were interviewed for this study to bring in contemporary perspectives. For help with interpretation, the work on philosophical hermeneutics undertaken by Hans Georg Gadamer (2013) was consulted.

1.8 This Study

This study addresses the research question:

What perspective on leadership emerges from the principles and practices advocated by Maria Montessori (1870-1952)?

The thrust of the thesis is an examination of Montessori's legacy that aims to distill a leadership perspective aligned with her key ideas. Four guiding questions shape the study:

- Through what range of perspectives and theoretical frameworks do researchers consider leadership?

- What are the key principles and practices advocated by Maria Montessori?

- How do these principles and practices relate to leadership?

- How do these principles and practices offer a preparation for leadership?

The investigation was initially approached by considering how previous research has understood leadership theory and practice. In the next chapter, this body of knowledge is reviewed in terms of how it has investigated the complex conceptual nature of leadership. In Chapter 3, Montessori's published works, including her principles and practices are revisited through the lens of leadership. Relevant interpretations of her work by respected authors are also considered. In Chapter 4, the hermeneutical approach used for the study is outlined. The choice to collect data in the United States is also explained. This is followed by Chapters 5 to 7, wherein the presentation and discussion of the study findings are interwoven from different viewpoints. A summary of the contribution made by this study concludes the thesis in Chapter 8.

Chapter 2

The Leadership Literature

Not only is the literature estranged from its original meaning, it depends on that spirit from the Greeks, Hermes to unlock and communicate (Gadamer, 2013, p. 147).

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the genesis of this study was described and leadership as a research field was established. The leadership, legacy and some of the foundational ideas of Italian physician and pedagogue, Maria Montessori, were also introduced. Some discussion was included on social and educational contexts to set the scene for a literature review. The next two chapters identify and review the main body of literature that relates to the research question:

> What perspective on leadership emerges from the principles and practices advocated by Maria Montessori (1870-1952)?

This chapter focusses on how previous research has understood leadership in theory and practice. Some of the major leadership theories and researchers are highlighted. The Montessori literature with relevance to leadership is reviewed in Chapter 3.

2.2 The Definition of Leadership

Defining leadership is a challenge. Kellerman (2012) claims that an average of three books on leadership were published each year in the early 1980s, rising to twenty-three by the end of the decade. Today, she claims publications number in the many millions, with a trading of rigour for narrow professionalism. From this body of work, she believes there are now around fifteen hundred definitions of leadership. Eacott (2013b) agrees that there is a voluminous and exponentially increasing set of literatures that have canonised the label "leadership". He claims the term offered the chance to get beyond a definition merely tied to organisational roles, but that this has failed.

Adair (1989) traces the etymology of leadership to the Anglo-Saxon root "laed", a path or road, and "laeden", a verb meaning to travel or go. A leader was thus someone showing the way. Gill (2011) supports a return to this original meaning, although he adds that it presupposes knowing, or at least believing in the way. Adair argues that the original metaphor, which has horizontal and directional, but not hierarchical, undertones is not unique to English, but can be found in other languages, both historical and contemporary. Oxford Dictionaries (Oxford University Press, 2010) define leadership as "the action of leading a group of people or an organisation, or the ability to do this." To lead is defined as to "cause to go with one…while moving forward", to "be a route or means of access to a particular place, or in a particular direction", and to "be in charge or command of". Political scientist, James MacGregor Burns, who wrote a seminal text in the leadership field, brings values into the concept:

> I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations - the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations-of both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978, p.19).

Values are considered necessary to leadership, but problematic. Heifetz (1994) argues we may be on safer ground if we discarded the loaded term "leadership" altogether and just described the dynamics of prominence, power, influence and historical causation. Northouse (2013) breaks leadership apart, finding four components are central – leadership is a process; leadership involves influence; leadership occurs in groups and leadership involves common goals. He distinguishes between assigned leadership, which is associated with occupying a position in an organisation, and emergent leadership, which is acquired through others supporting and accepting the individual's behaviour. Gill (2011) agrees that leadership has commonly been perceived as being largely about influence. Yukl (2010) notes that other definitions have been constructed in terms of traits, behaviours, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of an administrative position. He identifies a remaining controversy about whether leadership is a specialised role or a process of shared influence. Eacott (2013b) questions the seemingly unlimited elasticity of the concept of leadership. He argues that leadership is an epistemic label not yet recognised as such by the hegemony of the discourse, and applied post-event through the a priori

assumption of its very existence. Waniganayake et al (2012) state that the search for a widely accepted definition has little or no value and there is no definitive way of describing or explaining leadership. They argue that standardised descriptions may even limit leadership creativity and innovation.

2.3   The History of Leadership

Conceptual analysis of leadership can be furthered, by moving from etymology and definitions, to historical analysis. The universality of leadership over time and culture is generally accepted by researchers. Bass (2008) writes that leadership is the world's oldest vocation. It has been built into the human psyche because of the long period of nurturing required by children from parents. Parental leadership gives way to influence from other socially significant people as we grow. However, all societies have created myths to provide plausible explanations for leadership, and:

> …no societies/cultures are known that do not have leadership in some aspects of their social life, although many may lack a single overall leader to make and enforce decisions (Bass, 2008, p. 3).

It is not difficult to find portraits or biographies of leaders throughout history. English (2008) reports these works are considered vital sources of information on leadership, and their value has been positively reappraised recently as they contribute to leadership context and meaning. Researchers have also become more interested in the large-scale historical trajectory of leadership and works such as Bass (2008) and Gronn (2010) allow us to piece together a leadership timeline through the centuries.

Gronn (2010) finds evidence that the earliest human societies may have been acephalous hunter-gatherers, who evolved into groups with rudimentary or informal leadership. Early chiefdoms and embryonic states appeared about 3000-6000 years ago, with emerging models of centralised leadership solidifying to state-level polities only in the last 100-500 years. Around the sixth to the fourth centuries BC, more sophisticated and philosophical thinking about leadership emerged in the east and the west. In China, Lao Tzu and Confucius founded Taoism and Confucianism respectively, and in India, Gautama Buddha founded Buddhism.

Around the same time, Chinese leader Sun Tzu wrote *The Art of War*, which still finds modern applications in business and legal tactics.

Cohen (2010) quotes management guru, Peter F. Drucker, who claimed that the *Kyropaidaia*, written by Xenophon, a general in the ancient Greek army, is the first and best systematic book on leadership. Drucker had a special interest in military leadership, much of which he adapted for contemporary times. He argued that the army trains and develops more leaders than do all other institutions together. Gronn (2010) also refers to the ancient Greeks. Socrates led a new philosophical method of questioning. His student, Plato outlined an ideal city-state in *The Republic*, that he argued was best led by philosopher kings.

After the Middle Ages, wherein much philosophical thought was connected to the rise of Christianity, new directions were set for leadership. In 1513, Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* was first published, an exposition on statecraft that is still published for its timeless insights into the nature of power and human motivation (Machiavelli, 2004). From this point, ideas about the leader as a Great Man began to emerge. These formed the basis of the beginning of scientific and theoretical studies on leadership which began in the early twentieth century, and from which research has spread out in many directions. Edwards' (2015) longitudinal study confirms that an individualistic focus of leadership emerged around this time that overrode sociologically orientated perspectives of indigenous, anthropological or historic significance.

Gronn (2010) sees analysis of the historical trajectory as significant because of strong continuities between past and present leadership practices. He claims that the coordination of resources and actions to make decisions and resolve problems is much the same now as it was for the hunter-gatherer. The key difference is the complexity of modern environments, the scale of operations, the range of resources and the magnitude of the consequences when things go wrong. Markham (2012) on the other hand, argues that similarities between the ancient world and modernity are superficial and that beneath the surface, the social dynamics, the leadership roles, and the cultural values were dramatically different. His review compares long-term leadership roles in the ancient family ("Pater familias" and "Pater patriae") with short-term leadership of modern corporations ("Entrepreneur of the Year"). Markham says that the ancient Greeks and Romans lived in a highly

stratified society in which rulers such as Gaius Julius Caesar could combine multiple leadership positions within religion, government and business in a way that would be incomprehensible today.

2.4   Leadership Theories

Numerous journals and some weighty handbooks try to embrace the diversity of directions in which the contemporary leadership field now spreads. Bass's work (2008) at over 1500 pages, is one of the most substantial contemporary resources addressing theory, research and applications of leadership in a single volume. Its coverage includes attributes, styles, theories, models, experiments and preparations of leadership. Couto (2010) offers one hundred and twenty chapters on leadership purpose, virtue, tasks, tools, processes, contexts, cultures and complexities within political and civic realms. Leithwood and Hallinger (2002) is the second edition of a substantial handbook for the education sector, and which includes diverse contributions from well-regarded scholars.

Bass and Bass (2008) argue that early scientific research on leadership concentrated on finding the characteristics, or traits, that distinguished leaders from non-leaders. The idea that a leader might be "born" spawned a series of studies that investigated factors such as age, height, weight, health, appearance, originality, adaptability, dominance, ambition, self-confidence and socio-economic status. Stogdill's (1948) review of the field showed some traits to be more closely associated with leadership than others, but rejected the premise that a person must possess particular traits to become a successful leader. Stogdill found the relevance of traits proved situation dependent and leadership was conceived in terms of the interaction of variables that are in constant flux and change. Writing amid World War II, Lewin (1944) noticed a multiplied interest in leadership due to the global impression made by Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and Hitler. He argued the public became sensitised to differences in the form of leadership and the paradoxes of democratic leadership, which seemed to become less well understood.

The trait theory fell out of favour in the 1960s and 1970s, only to become active again around the start of the twenty-first century (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Northouse (2013) claims that a century of research on the trait approach has given

us an extended list of traits that individuals might cultivate if they want to be perceived as leaders. He sees intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability as central. Green and Roberts (2012) also argue that trait theory has maintained its relevance and that even factors such as age and height can provide insight into contemporary leadership. Kotter (1990) in reflecting back on his 1970s study of successful executives, not only seems to foresee that traits will remain important, but arguably predicts the emergence of a developmental perspective on leadership:

> This study is interesting because an analysis of the leadership processes described…and of the people involved in these processes…reveals something similar. A list of fifteen to twenty attributes seem to be shared by the Adamson's and Gerstner's and Nicolosi's of the world, and four of these characteristics are probably fixed or largely set early in life (Kotter, 1990, p. 105).

However, even where trait theory seems to hold up, contemporary writers argue that some strengths, in excess, can become weaknesses (Gill, 2011), even turning toxic (Goldman, 2009; Lipman-Blumen, 2005). Haigh (2003) and Kellerman (2004) compel researchers to better understand cases of leadership where things go wrong.

Trait studies, about what leaders were like, gave way to studies with a behavioural orientation examining what leaders do (Gill, 2011). Northouse (2013) refers to these as different leadership approaches, rather than theories. He claims that some researchers developed the skills approach, shifting from personality characteristics, viewed as innate and largely fixed, to an emphasis on abilities that can be learned and developed. Other researchers have investigated leadership style - how leaders do what they do. At first these studies proceeded under a universal banner that sought to understand what was perceived as natural laws of group dynamics:

> …all leadership problems should be considered as part of one topic and the actual and desired differences in leadership in different organizations should be viewed as a function of variations in group life. Only on such a broad basis can we hope to understand the functioning of any specific phenomenon (Lewin, 1945, p. 131).

Yet as Northouse (2013) explains, leadership context has become important, based on the premise that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. He explains this belief gave rise to contingency theory, a leader-match theory which

suggests that a leader's effectiveness depends on how well the leader's style fits the context.

Kellerman (2012) claims there are now around forty different theories of leadership and that no single theory prevails. There is a gap between the often-simplistic popular approaches to leadership and the more abstract theoretical approaches (Northouse, 2013). Interest in the ongoing development of leaders has spawned an industry of leadership development tools, techniques and the use of executive coaching as a major approach to business leadership. Kets de Vries, Korotov and Florent-Treacy (2007) draw parallels between individual and organisational psychology at multiple systemic layers and describe many contemporary leadership coaching tools and techniques. Fairholm (2011) states we are in a fourth generation of leadership theories that emerged at the beginning of the twenty-first century and that deals with what leaders think about, value and do and begins the maturation of a real leadership theory.

Transformational Leadership

A strong movement away from an emphasis on the traits of the leader came in the second half of the twentieth century following Burns (1978). Burns cemented the field's progress beyond the individual traits and psychology of the leader. He was able to appreciate the relational aspects of leadership, distinguishing between transactional and transforming leadership. Burns viewed transactional leadership as exchanging one thing for another, such as jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign donations, and felt this described the majority of leader-follower relations. Transforming leadership, which he perceived as more complex, works with the needs and motives of followers and potential followers. Burns claimed that transforming leadership resulted in a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents.

Burns' work gave birth to decades of heavy interest in what came to be called transformational leadership. Whether its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and on the positive development of followers is more appealing compared to the colder social exchange process of transactional leader, or not, as some have speculated,

Bass and Riggio (2006) claim transformational leadership rapidly became the approach of choice for researchers and practitioners. Bass was an early proponent of the transformational idea, taking it to the business world and becoming a prolific publisher (Burns & Sorenson, 2006). He described transformational leadership as superior leadership performance that occurs when leaders:

> …broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (Bass, 1990, p. 21).

Transformational leadership became associated with employee satisfaction, commitment to the organisation, trust in management, higher levels of staff and financial performance, and organisational citizenship behaviors. Sergiovanni (1992) brought these ideas into the educational domain, claiming there were five leadership forces: technical, human, education, symbolic and cultural. Blackmore (2013) believes that Sergiovanni sought to bring values back to a field he felt was morally bereft, and that his focus was on relationships of trust as the primary drivers of moral leadership. Caldwell and Harris (2008) have written about the self-transforming school in which achievement is reached by leadership that aligns the complexities of intellectual, social, spiritual and financial capital.

However in spite of the success of transformational leadership as a model, many researchers today question the approach. Gronn (1985) exposed flaws in the model, debating the emphasis placed upon the notion of transformation. Heifetz (2009) argues the term "transformational" fuels grandiosity. He claims that the structural context in which modern democratic leadership takes place does not naturally make for positive, comprehensive, principled, i.e. transforming leadership, but rather, an accommodating, brokering, incremental, i.e. transactional leadership. Couto (2010) agrees that we need to bring leadership down from its lofty heights, and help people face the tough realities of daily life.

Burns and Sorenson (2006) describe what was initially called "the Hitler problem", a recurring debate on how to define a transformational leader. This thorny question of whether transformational leadership included virtue was complicated by Burns' (2003) position that the term "leadership" should be reserved for the good. He argued that other terms, such as "despot" or "tyrant",

were better suited to the immoral leader. Yet the elements of leadership cannot be readily polarised and Conger (1989) advocates weighing the negatives against the positives, arguing that moral risks can be minimised through training.

Following Burns' landmark work, leadership research spread out in many new directions. Burns himself remained active in the field and early this century, noted it was no longer characterised by coherence, but by fragmentation and a lack of unifying theory (Burns, 2002). In 2004, he co-wrote the forward to a major encyclopaedic work on leadership, to which over 300 writers from 17 countries contributed (Burns, Goethals & Sorensen, 2004). A year later, he noted two striking developments which had occurred in the field – the internationalisation of the study of leadership, and the pivotal role of leadership research as an interdisciplinary endeavour that invigorates other disciplines (Burns, 2005). A review by Bates and Eacott (2008) of the resources used to teach educational leadership showed that understanding, managing and leading change is still a dominant theme in the literature. A project on successful school principals showed the work of the school leader is underpinned by core values and beliefs which feed into a shared vision leading to school maintenance, change or transformation (Day & Gurr, 2014).

The rising acknowledgement of the perils of principalship when dealing with opposition or resistance to major change (Starr, 2014) suggests there is still more work to do on transformational approaches. Duignan and Cannon's (2011) suggestions for redesigning the principalship model suggest that a transformation may be required in our conception of leadership as well as in the work of the leader. Other theories have emerged along the way.

Charismatic Leadership

As researchers became interested in the emotional and symbolic aspects of leadership in the 1980s, studies of charismatic leadership based on the work of sociologist Max Weber, gained momentum (Yukl, 2010). Weber had argued that a charismatic leader emerges during a crisis with a radical and attractive vision or solution for followers that upon success, elevates perceptions of the leader to

extraordinary. Conger (1989) developed a major modern treatment of charismatic leadership and became one of its key researchers. Conger argues that investigation of the charismatic element emerged from several forces at work in the western corporate world, including the pressure on large corporations to innovate to maintain competitiveness in the 1980s, and the appearance of turnaround or entrepreneurial leaders with charm, heroism and skilled self-marketing.

Theoretical work has tended to focus principally upon the behavioral dimensions of charismatic leaders, with the existing theories identifying follower effects. For example, it has been hypothesised that charismatic leadership produces higher performance levels among followers as well as more motivated and satisfied followers (Bass, 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Followers can be distinguished by their greater reverence, trust, and satisfaction with their leader and by a heightened sense of collective identity, perceived group task performance, and feelings of empowerment.

Conger (1989) also highlighted the dark side of being a charismatic leader, saying the very behaviour that distinguishes charismatics can bring disastrous outcomes. Possible liabilities of charismatic leadership include problems with the leader's vision, manipulation through communication skills and dysfunctional management practices. For this reason, some researchers, such as Kotter (1990), now question charismatic theory and its importance to effective leadership in complex organisations. There has been a contemporary move to post-heroic ideas such as Mandela's (1995) shepherding, a form of leading from behind that is based on trust and actively offers others a platform to lead. Quiet leadership (Badaracco, 2003; Cain, 2012), is founded on modesty, restraint and even introversion. Badaracco (2003) discovered that hero leadership says little about everyday life and ordinary people, who are dealing with the real leadership challenges of messy, complicated and ambiguous daily problems. He emphasises the long series of small efforts that he says sometimes turns out to be the quickest way of making the world a better place. Fletcher (2004) includes Bandaracco's work within a new set of post-heroic leadership models that depend less on the heroic actions of a few individuals at the top and more on distributed collaborative leadership practice.

In spite of moves away from the charismatic elements of leadership, some researchers have observed its persistence. Payne (2005) writes that a heroic leader

is important for start-ups, suggesting that the approach to leadership is linked with time and stage of development. Fairholm (2011) writes that leaders remain inspiring because they are inspired, caught up in a higher and attractive purpose. Kellerman (2012) refers to the gods and goddesses as hero-leaders of the past, which were part of our collective psyche, and which served a psychological purpose. Kellerman believes modern leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Steve Jobs, demonstrate the archetypal hero-leader who battles demons and emerges triumphant.

Adaptive Leadership

Heifetz (1994; 2009) developed a theory of Adaptive Leadership, which draws from evolution theory and as such is a metaphor for the outcome of the thriving of an organism in a changing and challenging world. Heifetz underlines the difference between leadership and authority, arguing that equating the two promotes an over-emphasis on power over others and a failure to see the obstacles to leadership that come with authority.

Couto (2010), a colleague of Heifetz, says that adaptive leadership gives more importance to power with and for others, and within ourselves. The theory has a very positive view of crises, which comes from personal and group psychology. Heifetz argues that problems are lodged within the people themselves. He illustrates this with the example of heart patients who are asked by doctors to adapt their lives to avoid further complications, but achieve a low compliance rate. Adaptive change cannot occur through command or by technical know-how. Solutions have to be lived in the behaviours of the people themselves, so that intimate work is necessary to help people develop capacity and insight.

Adaptive leadership has also been seen in terms of living systems:

> This underlying dialectic between conflict and integration finds expression at all levels of dynamic systems, from microbiology to astronomy, from the cells to the planets…There are, of course, no recipes, easy formulas, or templates for how to come to resolution, how to devise adaptations. Facilitating, catalysing and enabling system adaptation is work for a range of change management professionals (O'Doherty and Kennedy, 2013, p. 208).

Heifetz (2009) maintains his argument for a conception of leadership less grandiose than transformational, and prefers both a philosophical and practical orientation that addresses the dailyness of leadership.

Servant Leadership

The publication of Greenleaf and Spears (2002) marked the beginning of a significant move away from the hero/charismatic emphasis toward servant leadership. Inspired by reading Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*, Greenleaf's work emerged not from scholarship, but developed through his practical experience in business management and involvement with universities and colleges during a period of crisis. The Servant-Leader is servant first, leader second:

> It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead…The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed? (Greenleaf and Spears, 2002, p. 27)

Servant leadership could thus, be seen as a paradox, with the leader humbly serving the led, and not expecting to be served by them (Graham, 1991). Inspiration spreads via contagion rather than charisma, and there is a strong emphasis on values and morality, with the leader going beyond self-interest. Larry Spears, who edited Greenleaf's original collection of essays, has spoken about the natural feeling expressed by Greenleaf in his definitive statement on servant leadership, quoted above (Dittmar, 2007). Spears reports, that Greenleaf believed the desire to serve was innate. He reports that Greenleaf had observed this natural feeling in leaders over forty years and argued that organisations and society would benefit tremendously, if natural servants began to get more involved in leadership.

A comprehensive review and synthesis of servant leadership has been undertaken by Van Dierendonck (2010). He points out that this theory is still a new component of the wider leadership field. Although the term "servant leadership" was coined by Greenleaf in 1970, empirical studies on this approach did not begin until the late 1990s. There is still no consensus on a definition or theoretical framework for the servant leader. This has brought confusion and lack of precision, but left the

movement fluid, and much writing has been on how it should be, rather than what is. Compared to transformational leadership, servant leadership has an added moral dimension, as the primary allegiance is not to the organisation, but to the followers. This provides it with credible safeguards against potential excesses from charismatic effects (Graham, 1991).

Van Dierendonck (2010) also writes about the leader-follower relationship and says that in servant leadership it is reciprocal and that there is a mutual upward spiral. Servant leadership may start with a need to serve that leads to a motivation to lead, or a transformational leader may transform to become service-oriented. Individual characteristics such as self-determination, moral reasoning and cognitive complexity play a role in influencing a person's development toward servant leadership. Challenges include that servant leadership may be too idealistic; the term "servant" has negative connotations; and there is a risk of manipulation by followers. Giving direction is therefore a key behaviour of servant leadership. Servant leadership may come close to what Plato suggested in The Republic as the ultimate form of leadership: leadership that focuses on the good of the whole and those in it (Williamson, 2008).

Other researchers have compared transformational and servant leadership. Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004) found that servant leadership leads to a spiritual generative culture, while transformation leadership leads to an empowered dynamic culture. They claim that high change environments require the empowered dynamic culture of transformational leadership, while more static environments are better served by the servant leadership culture. Van Dierendonck (2010) concludes that the majority of theoretical work on servant leadership has neglected viewpoints from related fields and that there is much to gain from broadening the perspective.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership draws from positive psychology and incorporates increased self-awareness, and internalised transparency and moral perspectives (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). In this model, the leader's work is centred around the true whole self and the taking of responsibility for the self and life choices. However authentic

leadership goes beyond the self-referential and also focuses on the relationships, characterised by trust and integrity, between leaders and followers. It is seen by its advocates as a root construct which transcends other theories. Yukl (2010) claims that authentic leadership has received lots of attention in recent years and, like other perspectives, it has been subject to a variety of definitions. But all theorists have emphasised the importance of consistency in words, actions and values. A challenge to authentic leadership can occur when leaders of minority groups appear to be too assimilated into the majority, or appear to advertise a stereotype attributed to the minority group (Gardner, Avolio & Walumbwa, 2005). Van Dierendonck's (2010) review identifies authentic leadership as ideally incorporated within servant leadership. Ladkin and Spiller's (2013) summary of the authentic model takes a different position. These authors argue that leadership is relational, not something that can be distilled to a single leader. Instead they understand leading to involve taking up a leader role partly required by a socio-historic moment and not something that a person "is". Ciulla (2013) offers an example to make the point. She cites Mandela who presents as an immediate qualifier for authentic leadership, but her research subsequently finds he is a master of impression management, using costumes for effect and a mask to hide his emotions.

Spiritual Leadership

The search for spirit and soul, depth and meaning, is fueling a strong and growing twenty-first-century leadership movement:

> The twenty-first-century milieu puts many obstacles in the way of this kind of journey to our spiritual center. Our pragmatic orientation places a premium on technical logic. Our tendency to specialize and compartmentalize leads us to dichotomize work and play, male and female, career and family, thinking and feeling, reason and spirit. We relegate spirituality to churches, temples, and mosques - for those who still attend them. We shun it at work. To change this way of thinking is far from easy, but more and more people are recognizing the costs of this separation (Bolman & Deal, 2001, .p. 43).

It has been claimed that leading on the basis of spirit is the only leadership model that can succeed in today's world (Fairholm, 2011). Gill (2011) sees spiritual aspects of leadership as disparate but part of an integrated set of strands which form the multiple intelligences of leadership. Spiritual leadership describes how leaders can enhance the intrinsic motivation of followers by

creating conditions that increase their sense of spiritual meaning in the work (Yukl, 2010). Formal leaders may be particularly influential in setting the structure for spiritual meaning, as they frame the mission, goals, identity and purpose of their organisations. Yet spirituality in the workplace is still in the early stages of theoretical development, perhaps because of pervasive norms relating to the separation of work and spiritual beliefs, and conceptual ambiguity remains (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Spiritual leadership is inclusive of major theories of leadership such as transformational, charismatic, servant, and authentic (Fry, 2003) and its intellectual foundations are traced in Fairholm (2011). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2010) write of a burgeoning scientific interest into the role spirituality plays in workforce performance as the search for spiritual meaning extends from the personal to the professional arena. Haynes argues spiritual development is part of a balanced developmental perspective, though body and mind have historically been favoured areas of empirical research.

Rosso et al (2010) review the diverse literature on meaningfulness of work, which has so far focussed on two key issues: the source of meaning, and how (psychologically or socially) the work becomes meaningful. They find that one's beliefs about the role of work in life, such as its centrality in relation to other life domains, form a channel through which meaning can be shaped. This is exemplified in groups such as the Amish, for whom there is no distinction between the sacred, and everyday events (Loader, 1997).

A calling orientation to leadership assumes the work is a fulfilling end in itself, and advancement or financial reward is not primary. Rosso et al (2010) find that while some of the research on calling orientations has a religious focus, much of the modern research is secular, treating calling as an expression of one's deepest self. This sense of transcendence, of having a calling through one's work is central to spiritual leadership and differentiates it from ethical leadership. Van Dierendonck (2010) sees a problem with spiritual leadership as defined by Fry (2003) in that associated leadership behaviour is not clear, and finds that servant leadership has more sophistication in its explicated leader-follower relationship. Fairholm (2011) addresses the behavioural aspects, saying that values trigger our behaviour and that some values are so crucial that we will not act counter to

them no matter the consequences. These, he claims are spiritual values, which define our character, philosophy, plans and the manner of our leadership. Fairholm claims spiritual leadership is rapidly becoming the preferred model for this century as it mirrors quantum science, is supported by current societal movements, is responsive to stakeholders' real needs and includes holistic concern for workers. The substantial literature linking spirituality to physical and mental health is noted in Hill and Pargament (2003).

Nevertheless, confusion remains about the abstract and elusive nature of spirituality and its association with religion. Dantley (2005) writes of faith-based leadership, a controversial idea that he believes can be examined without relying on traditional notions of conservative, essentialist theology. He believes faith is the suspension of our confidence in linear, empirical, quantifiable data to confirm the actuality of things. Aligning faith and leadership liberates the leader to journey to the vistas of the "not yet" rather than being confined to the "as is". Zohar and Marshall (2004) refer to the discovery of neural tissue that enables human beings to have a sense of the sacred and a longing for the deeper/higher things in life. This tissue is active when we have spiritual experiences that bring a profound sense of love or beauty, a deep sense of peace, or a sense of the unity of existence. They connect spirituality to complex adaptive systems and to sustainability. Van Dierendonck (2010) states that spiritual leadership overlaps with servant leadership, but the latter has avoided much confusion by being secular. Spirituality has begun to be linked to indigenous leadership (Julien *et al*, 2010), but more studies would seem to be required to develop this thread. Covey's (2005) text on organisational leadership investigated why so many people are unsatisfied in their work and why organisations fail to reach greatness:

> It stems from an incomplete paradigm of who we are – our fundamental view of human nature…If you study all philosophy and religion, both Western and Eastern, from the beginning of recorded history, you'll basically find the same four dimensions: the physical/economic, the mental, the social/emotional and the spiritual (Covey 2005, p. 21).

Ethical and Moral Leadership

Avolio & Gardner (2005) write that the holy grail of leadership is establishing and developing the moral centre in leaders. Northouse (2013) describes ethical theory as having its roots in the Ancient Greek philosophical notion of "ethos", translated in terms of customs, conduct and character. Moral and ethical approaches therefore link with teleological ideas about consequences, deontological ideas relating to duty, and virtue-based theories, but Northouse claims these approaches are in the early stages of development.

Starratt (2004) claims leadership is ethical as it involves the cultivation of virtues and the true test of leadership is the degree to which it becomes moral. Sarros, Cooper and Santora (2005) write that character lies at the heart of leadership. Who you are impacts how you lead, and character includes choosing to do the right thing when faced with alternative choices. Northouse argues that ethical egoism is a self-interest stance closely related to transactional leadership, where utilitarianism works to create the greatest good for the greatest number. Heifetz (1994) believes there is no ethically neutral ground for leadership theories, because they always involve values and implicit assumptions about proper forms of influence. Yukl, (2010) says we can distinguish between the ethical practices of an individual leader and the ethics of specific types of leadership behaviour, but the evaluation of both types is difficult. He points out that evaluation is easier when the leader, follower and organisation interests are congruent, and when actions are low-risk and low-cost, a situation not currently achieved in Australian education, according to Starr (2012).

Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005) define ethical leadership with the emphasis more on directive or normative behaviour. They see this as a contrast to servant leadership that has a stronger focus on the development of the followers. Their understanding is that servant leadership is focused not so much on how things should be done, but on how people want to do things themselves and whether they are able to do so. Three key characteristics of servant leadership (authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction) are, in the views of these authors, relatively unimportant in ethical leadership. Nevertheless, Northouse (2013) believes the strongest example of altruistic ethic can be found in the work of Mother Theresa, who devoted her life to helping the poor.

Bates and Eacott (2008) write that ethics is now receiving more attention in educational leadership. Duignan (2006) writes specifically about the ethical tensions, explaining the ethical and social responsibility of school leaders to create better environments because schools may be contributing to the development of problem behaviours in students. In a later work, Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) argue strongly for a holistic paradigm of schooling. They claim this is the direction of OECD and UNESCO, but also refer to the Melbourne Declaration (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008) on educational goals for young Australians, which provides a framework that includes a student's moral development.

Because of its emphasis on personal values, moral leadership is closely tied to ethical leadership. Moral leadership is seen to be neither preaching nor uttering pieties, but emerging from and returning to the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations, and values of the followers (Bottery, 2004; Burns, 1978; Sergiovanni. 1992). Hodgkinson (1991) argues philosophically that there is no bottom line in education, and educational leadership is the moral art. He claims values constitute the essential problem of leadership and the educational institution is special because it both forms and is formed by values. Sergiovanni (1992) brings heart to leadership, finding that when people are motivated by emotion and social bonds, and guided by a professional ideal, work shifts from "what is rewarded gets done" to "what is good gets done". Nevertheless, Pfeffer (2015) claims a focus on economic outcomes still wins and despite our trumpeting of the need for morals and ethics, the leaders we put on pedestals aren't always "good".

Sustainable Leadership

Sustainability is a developing leadership theme within education and wider communities. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) argue for sustainable leadership, offering a framework of seven principles: depth, length, breadth, justice, diversity, resourcefulness, and conservation. They claim leadership sustainability and succession are key forces influencing long-term change and continuity within education. Leadership succession planning models have long featured in the literature (Santora & Sarros, 1995). Yet Hargreaves and Fink claim sustainable

leaders sustain themselves as they pursue the cause, attending to their own renewal and not over-sacrificing themselves to serve their community.

Fullen (2005) argues that sustainability refers to the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement with deep values of human purposes. He proposes eight elements of sustainability and argues for leaders who are systems thinkers in action and who work beyond the boundaries of their own school, connecting with and participating in the system. Hardman (2012) presents regeneration as an alternative concept, saying that many now regard sustainability as insufficient to describe what needs to be done at global level for present and future generations. Nevertheless, the United Nations (2016) has issued an Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 4 relates to education and asks nations to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The United Nations document acknowledges the challenges and commitment required to achieve these goals and is a global call to action for the coming fifteen years.

Distributed Leadership

Gill (2011) summarises leadership that is shared, distributed, distributive, dispersed, collective or institutional. He argues that distributed leadership is the hierarchical or vertical dispersal or authority and responsibility, whilst shared leadership is the horizontal version of this. Harris (2009) disagrees, saying that distributed leadership is not the opposite of top-down hierarchical leadership, but involves vertical and lateral components. She describes distributed leadership as born of the structural limitations of a single leader, and involves sharing or extending leadership practice. Harris claims it is the idea of the moment in school leadership, though it has provoked attention, debate and controversy. Influenced by network theory, distributed leadership is about relationships within an organisation, including reciprocal interdependencies. Notwithstanding the important contribution of studies on distributed leadership, Gronn (2009) makes the point that:

> …solo leaders continue to figure prominently in accounts that purport to be distributed and that distributed leadership apologists have not adequately clarified the role and contribution of individuals as sources of organisational influence within a distributed framework (Gronn, 2009, p. 283).

Gronn argues that the various configurations of individual and collective leadership understandings are examples of a new category that more accurately reflects practice – hybrid leadership. Blackmore (2013) claims distributed leadership is the response to the failure of transformational leadership. While all leadership may to some extent be distributed, Leithwood and Day (2007) showed that different patterns of distributed leadership are critical to organisational change. Harris (2009) argues that the team and its collaboration form an important aspect of distributed leadership. She introduces the idea of a web stretching across people and situations. Evidence in some of her studies indicates distributed leadership offers the chance for improved congruence, communication, allocation of resources and other opportunities that have shown positive trends toward improving educational outcomes.

Silcox, Boyd and MacNeill (2011) claim distributed leadership within a toxic culture will not succeed because the appointed leader needs to be in control. Yet Bates and Eacott (2008) argue that collaborative leadership is receiving more attention in education. In a later paper, Eacott is wary of the "anybody, anywhere, anytime" ideas about leadership, and thinks of leadership as a disruptive practice. He claims:

> …leadership is rare…It is a label of distinction, not inclusion. It is neither about everybody nor can it be solely reduced to "change" …leadership is…disruptive. It is a "break" in the status quo, where existing structures are modified and new ones generated…not playing the game better, but challenging the very nature of the game and the formula for success (Eacott, 2013a, p. 176).

An extension of the collaborative approach is system leadership, in which leaders within one setting work directly for the success of another setting, as well as their own (Hopkins, Nusche & Pont, 2008; Higham, Hopkins & Matthews, 2009). This idea emerged from the isolation of leadership and other factors such as the need to form strategic partnerships to share expertise and gain economies of scale in the new operating climate.

Mulford (2008) summarises the conclusion of the literature that successful school leaders do not just distribute leaders by putting more influence in the hands of people with expertise, but adopt an explicit active approach to their responsibility to develop leadership capacity within their staff. Yet he

acknowledges that time and professional isolation remain major barriers to collaborative endeavours.

Co-Leadership and Leaderless Groups

Interest in models of co-leadership has arisen alongside an emerging belief that a single leader may not have all the skills necessary to lead. However, Duignan and Cannon (2011) find the sharing of leader roles to have strengths and weakness. They note for example one of the key issues with job sharing is finding a compatible co-leader. Gronn (2010) refers to two types of co-leadership models, one where influence is shared between two or more people (atomistic), and another where a number of people work so closely together that they operate as a collective unit (holistic). Gronn asks if the atomistic version is not simply delegation repackaged. He claims the second, holistic version of the model is the more powerful because it highlights people's interdependence and trust, and argues these sorts of arrangements may arise spontaneously. Federated models address some leadership issues within education (Mulford, 2008; Higham et al, 2009). Richards (2005) investigated leadership at a Steiner School in which there was no principal or formal leadership structure. An unofficial structure based on merit and experience and involving multiple groups operating democratically proved both beneficial and problematic.

Pioneering work on leaderless groups was undertaken by the Leaderless Group Discussion methodology (Bass, 1954). Research revealed that even when a group set out to be leaderless, a leader-follower structure emerged spontaneously. While the tendency to initiate structure in an initially unstructured setting was deemed to be only one type of successful leadership behaviour, it has led to a belief that leadership is a universal human behaviour. King et al (2009) draw on key insights from evolutionary theory and animal activities of swarming, schooling, flocking and hiving, to establish our genetic predisposition for leadership. They report there is ongoing debate about whether human groups are essentially democratic and egalitarian (as seemed common in hunter-gatherer societies) or despotic and hierarchical (as evidenced by African primates with whom we share a common ancestor, and more recent human history).

Art of Hosting (2013) is a contemporary approach to leadership that harnesses the self-organising capacity of groups, and is being used to tackle complex social issues within education, society and health. The approach scales up from the personal to the systematic using personal practice, dialogue, facilitation and the co-creation of innovation, approximating leaderless activity. By using social technologies such as Circle, Open Space and World Café that have no appointed leader, the power of group intelligence is harnessed through conversation, while building community. Montesano Montessori (2016) has analysed social movements that have an organisational structure, finding evidence of power being absent or decentralised within leadership and where engagement promotes power emergence from the masses. Within the education profession, Sergiovanni (2007) claims that the more leadership is emphasised, the less professionalism flourishes, and inversely, the more professionalism is thriving, the less need there is for leadership.

2.5   Leadership, Management and Governance

In addition to the proliferation of adjectival approaches to leadership theory, a key theme in the literature is the attempt to clarify the differences between leadership and management (Bennis, 2003; Day and Antonakis, 2012; Fairholm, 2011; Gill, 2011; Gronn, 2003; Rodd, 2013; Kotter, 1990; Yukl, 2010). Kotter (1990) believes leadership is an ageless topic, but management is largely a product of modern times. Gronn (2003) acknowledges that leaders may be managers and managers may be leaders, but that they have different foundations. He believes the basis of leadership to be cognitive, and the basis of management to be legal and contractual. For him, management is:

> …work activity encompassed by the duties and responsibilities of organization managers as determined by the terms and conditions of their employment contracts. Leadership on the other hand, while it may be part of what managers do, is by no means the whole of it. Nor do managers have a monopoly on leadership, which I take to be a lay label of convenience encompassing emergent actions (verbal, physical, reputed or imagined) that influence the deeds and thoughts of colleagues, for leadership is open to any organisation member (Gronn, 2003, p. 6).

Yukl (2010) is less clear about defining managing and leading as distinct roles, relationships or processes, arguing that such definitions may encourage simplistic theories and obscure more than they reveal. He says there remains sharp

disagreement amongst researchers about the degree of overlap. English and Furman (2007) write that the old leadership narrative is rooted in scientific management and administration science grounded in notions of efficiency. The new narrative is grounded in contextual richness and has been identified with moral goods. Day and Antonakis (2012) claim that leadership is purpose-driven action that brings about change based on values, ideals, vision, symbols and emotional exchanges, whereas management is objectives driven, resulting in stability grounded in rationality, bureaucratic means, and the fulfilment of contractual obligations. Bennis (2003) lists the differences as he sees them in tabular form. Fairholm (2011) supports this clarity, outlining how leadership theory has moved through generations, but that management has not substantially moved forward since the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor a hundred years ago. "Taylorism" promoted the efficiency of work, increasing productivity and streamlining industrial processes, reaching a peak in the 1920s and 1930s. Fairholm states the rise of management, with its ease and simplicity is a rise in the commitment to a stifling caution, conformance to a common standard replacing individuality and innovation, and a predominance of management to the virtual exclusion of leadership. Jones (2012) claims we live in the age of the cult of management, and education is often treated as a management subset. Within education, the terms leadership, management and administration are interrelated intellectual lineages with historical contexts and theoretical paradigms. Eacott (2013a; 2014) believes that leadership emerged as the label of choice, over management and administration, to get beyond organisational roles and bureaucracy. However, he argues that this has failed and that leadership is a product of, and an extension of managerialism, a school reform ideology, which one author argues has already failed (Mulford, 2008).

An acceleration of interest in governance has occurred since the 1990s, prompted by financial crises and corporate failures (Shattock, 2012). In parallel, governance has emerged as a leadership concept with significant relevance for education. Institutions such as universities and schools are being positioned as corporations whose boards must get on the front foot to build their capacity to address the challenges in today's economic circumstances (Melville-Ross, 2010). Yet governance is an elusive objective that appears as difficult to define as leadership and the field is yet to be cemented on governance approaches and issues.

2.6   Leadership and Followership

The distinction between leadership and followership has also been addressed in the literature. The interdependence of leaders and followers is old knowledge:

> The survival of democracy demands that leadership is investigated realistically, that its dynamics is understood scientifically, and that this understanding is grasped by many. Democratic leadership is a role that can be played adequately only if the followers play their part (Lewin, 1944, p. 393).

Another early researcher suggested that the true antithesis of leadership is not followership, but indifference, the incapacity or unwillingness to either lead or follow (Stogdill 1948). Yet many early studies did investigate follower attitudes and behaviour as indicators of leader influence and effectiveness (Yukl, 2010). Burns' definition of leadership, quoted in Chapter 1, assumes both the existence of followers, and their inseparable relationship with leaders. When this definition was published in 1978, Burns lamented the bifurcation of the literature on leadership and followership, and contemplated further questions:

> If leaders require followers, who leads whom from where to where, and why? How do leaders lead followers without being wholly led *by* followers? (Burns, 1978, p.2)

Burns (2003) continued his investigation of leader and follower, asking how we distinguish them conceptually if they are so intertwined. He finds resolution in the distinction between persons of unrealised wants, unexpressed attitudes and underlying predispositions on the one hand, and persons with strong motivations to initiate an action relevant to those with such wants on the other. The key distinctive role at the outset is that leaders take the initiative, address insights to potential followers, seize their attention and spark further interaction. The first act is decisive because it breaks up a static situation and establishes a creative relationship. Much recent research links creativity with aspects of leadership such as wisdom and intelligence (Sternberg, 2006) or innovation, entrepreneurship, engagement, freedom, values and culture (Khalili, 2016; Moos, 2015), which have implications for followers.

Harter, Ziolkowski and Wyatt (2006) argue that even in ordinary language, leader and follower are not understood as identical and the conceptual difference persists

regardless of whether leader and follower are conscious of these roles in their relationship, or whether the roles are exchanged over time. They are suspicious that the distinction may be obscured due to notions of inequality, which is potentially unjust. As inequality in the leader-follower relationship is inevitable, useful, and perhaps even necessary, Harter *et al* suggest a model of mutual inequality. Nevertheless, in recognition of leadership and followership as more than opposing poles, the two literatures have now been brought together, and are seen by researchers as interdependent ideas that remain independent. Chaleff (2009, 2010) puts it simply that we sometimes lead, sometimes follow and that both need to be done well. He writes on the parity of followers, the conduit of information and ideas across hierarchical levels and describes a model of courageous followership with dimensions of assuming responsibility, serving, challenging, participating in transformation and taking moral action.

Kellerman (2012) has a lot to say about followership and sees devolution of power from leader to follower as a key characteristic of the historic leadership trajectory. While she avoids defining leadership, she defines followership:

> …simply by rank. That is, followers are subordinates who have less power, authority and influence than do their superiors, and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line (Kellerman, 2012, p. xx).

Kellerman believes interest in followership is increasing. She claims followers were granted a right to life in the Enlightenment, and that revolutions forever sealed the relationship between leaders and followers. Kellerman observes that over the last forty years, the influence of leadership and hierarchy has decreased amid cultural and technological changes and offers a triangular model of leadership, wherein leader, follower and context have equal footing. Sergiovanni (2007) says that although hierarchical leadership cannot be abandoned entirely, competence and virtue should dominate bureaucratic, psychological and technical-rational sources of authority. Authority and influence are also aspects often worked through in discussions of power and leadership. Karp (2013) identifies leadership as a social process in which someone takes and earns the time-limited right to lead, granted by those who choose to follow. He argues that instability creates the need and context for leadership and that willpower is an important but overlooked vehicle of leader and follower relational agency. An emerging field related to

leadership and followership is that of membership and affiliation, as defined in Jacobs (2016).

2.7   Gender and Feminist perspectives

Recent special issues of leadership journals demonstrate that the relationship of gender to leadership remains very interesting for researchers, including how gender shapes leadership discourse and how leaders are constructed, included, marginalised or denied through gendered norms (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Leitch & Stead, 2016). Many researchers have written about women and leadership (Adair 1989; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Baxter, 2010; Blackmore, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2014; Rhode, 2003; Stead & Elliott, 2009; Yukl, 2010). There is an increasing number of publications specialising in female leadership (Baxter, 2010), but a paucity of critical work on women's experiences of leadership remains (Stead & Elliott, 2009). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), two main gender questions concern leadership researchers. The first relates to whether men and women lead differently. The second addresses whether men and women as a group are more effective in leadership, and the circumstances of this greater effectiveness.

Rhode (2003) adds that opportunities open to women in leadership are constrained by gender stereotypes, inadequate access to mentors and informal networks of support and that inflexible workplace structures and the glass ceiling issue remains an area of emphasis in research. Rhode claims that throughout much of recorded history, women have suffered exclusion from formal leadership and those who obtained leadership roles mostly acquired their exercised influence through their relationships with men. Bass and Riggio argue that the requirements of the leadership role as it has been perceived may have shaped the behaviour and leadership styles of women leaders in the past. However, the rising, but still unequal, proportion of women leaders and the greater acceptance of women as leaders remains a point of interest for researchers. Baxter (2010) explores the reasons for the remaining underrepresentation of women in leadership and seeks to identify strategies for change. Some researchers find that gender inequality remains a persistent issue

even in contexts such as elite universities, the very sites at which one might expect it to disappear first (El-Khawas & Roach, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2014).

There is an assumption that masculine traits such as individualism, control, assertiveness and skills of advocacy and domination are associated with traditional heroic leadership models, and that post-heroic leadership traits are feminine (Fletcher, 2004). Bass and Riggio (2006) find there is growing evidence that women are more disposed to the behaviours of transformational leadership, but lack of materialising of the female advantage is a result of complex factors (Fletcher, 2004).

Grzelakowski (2005) argues women are hormonally predisposed to caring and compassion, thus bringing a different style to leadership than men by nature. This author does not claim that men cannot lead this way or that their leadership is inferior, but acknowledges biological factors are at play. For women who have had children, experiential factors may also be added to the mix. As the proportion of women in leadership grows, work-life practices are coming under the microscope (Kalysh, Kulik & Perera, 2016). Blackmore (2013) claims researchers have overlooked the impact of motherhood on the leadership style of women. She claims that ironically, where feminists have long argued that emotionality and rationality are inextricably interacting qualities of being human, this emotional turn has now become legitimate due to neuroscience. Eugenie Samier, for example, has brought trust, aesthetics and other emotional dimensions firmly into the leadership field (Samier, 2010; Samier, Bates & Stanley, 2006; Samier & Schmidt, 2009). Adler (2015) has linked art, beauty and leadership. Regan and Brooks (1995) identify relational leadership as a feminist approach where the experience and perspectives of others are understood through dialogue. Uusiautti and Määttä (2014) and Parry and Kempster (2014) have linked leadership and love, though from quite different perspectives. A recent gender trend gaining momentum through policy is the encouragement of women in corporate governance (Adams, 2016).

2.8 Cross-cultural Perspectives

Cross-cultural or trans-cultural leadership has been suggested as the new approach to preparing and guiding people through organisational change and development at a time of global diversification and greater mobility (Derungs, 2011). Teagarden (2007) says this emerged in the 1990s, evolving from a regional specialist focus that complemented the international perspective, to a more complex global or pan-regional focus, which takes much longer to develop. Not merely managing diversity, nor a reduction to situational leadership, the cross-cultural leader brings about a new set of values, or culture, which emerges from the resource of diversity. Hence Derungs (2011) sees that cross-cultural leadership is a new paradigm leadership of transformation. Northouse (2013) believes that the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) studies have been an important large-scale project with many findings on the relationship between culture and leadership. Using data from 17,000 managers in over 950 organisations across 62 different societies, the GLOBE researchers identified nine cultural dimensions of leadership: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation and humane orientation. Northouse summarises that different leadership behaviours were used to assess how various cultural clusters viewed leadership, and this analysis enabled leadership profiles to be identified for each cluster.

An increasing number of western researchers are drawing from eastern philosophies to describe alternative leadership viewpoints (Perry, 2011; Graves, 2012). Renewed interest in eastern models of leadership has been addressed by the GLOBE studies, and other investigations which explore notions of nobility, civility, spirituality and morality in Chinese, Confucian, Buddhist, and Japanese traditions (De Bary, 2004; Arvey et al, 2015). Research on leadership approaches from Africa (Bolden & Kirk, 2009) and the Middle East (Graves, 2012) is appearing in the literature. Julien et al (2010) report that there is both an interest in and a need for further work on indigenous leadership. Their study of North American Aboriginal leaders indicated a spiritual, holistic and egalitarian view of leadership with a higher level of indirect communication compared to non-Aboriginal leaders. White's (2010) study confirmed that there was still

much to be learned from the old ways and the wisdom of elders, and that colonisation has disrupted the traditional forms of leadership in indigenous communities. In this context, Arvey et al (2015) emphasise the need to better understand the foundational philosophies of Western-based models and theories of leadership.

2.9   Other emerging themes in the literature

Much of the most recent research mirrors the maturity and expansion of the field beyond adjectival theories. Multi-disciplinary approaches are gaining favour and traditionally separate professions now recognise they have much to learn from each other with respect to leadership. The results of a major government-supported survey of Australian workplace leadership have recently been released (Gahan, Adamovic, Bevitt, Harley, Healy, Olsen & Theilacker, 2016). This Study of Australian Leadership, the first major review in over a decade, is firmly framed in economic terms and seeks to understand leadership through lenses of national and international competitiveness, growth and jobs, key performance indicators, uncertainty and ambiguity, disruption and change. In spite of the narrow framing of the study it notes that most leadership research has neglected the critical role of frontline leaders, in favour of the influence of senior leaders in an organisation.

Case, Evans, Fabinyi, Cohen, Hicks, Prideaux & Mills, 2015) argue that while political, economic and corporate discourses of leadership have been widely and critically interrogated, narratives on environmental leadership remain relatively neglected in the academic literature. While much of the literature highlights leadership as change, or showing the way, Barra (2014) reminds us that some things need protecting and this can be just as important. Studies of leadership in crisis (Tourish, 2015) or post-conflict situations (Lacy, 2013) are becoming more common. Discussion on stages of leadership development has been emerging for some time (Clarke, Wildy & Pepper, 2007). Of particular interest for this study is the emergence of research making more substantial links between childhood development and the realisation of leadership potential. Daly et al (2015) is one large-scale longitudinal study that shows early life general

cognitive ability may play a formative role in shaping leadership role occupancy.

2.10 Postmodernism and Professional Standards for Leadership

Grant (2011) writes that our postmodern times have ousted notions of universalism and the positivist idea of the world as knowable. He argues that seemingly mysterious theories of catastrophe, chaos and complexity have become valued and the lack of rigour in some parts of the field relates to the cultural struggles of an "anything goes" pluralism and a delirious celebration of difference. The rise of leadership publications characterised by adjectival, pluralised and narrow popular approaches has echoed this postmodern epoch:

> …master narratives and traditions of knowledge grounded in first principles are spurned; philosophical principles of canonicity and the notion of the sacred have become suspect; epistemic certainty and the fixed boundaries of academic knowledge have been challenged by a "war on totality" and a disavowal of all-encompassing, single world views; the rigid distinctions between high and low culture have been rejected by the insistence that the products of the so-called mass culture, popular, and folk art forms are proper objects of study; the Enlightenment correspondence between history and progress and the modernist faith in rationality, science and freedom have incurred a deep-rooted scepticism; the fixed and unified identity of the humanist subject has been replaced by a call for a narrative space that is pluralised and fluid; and finally, though far from complete, history is spurned as a unilinear process that moves the West progressively toward a final realisation of freedom (Giroux 1995, p. ix).

Despite pluralism and the rejection of single world-views, leaders are part of an increasingly regulated landscape that has implications for the positions they adopt and the decisions they make. The education sector is subject to wider social trends, and professional standards for leaders have brought a social technology to the leadership architecture, creating a new relationship between standards and standardisers (Gronn, 2003). Mulford (2008) writes that what matters, is the degree to which specification of standards becomes so interventionist that a culture of control rather than autonomy develops. Some leadership viewpoints are formally valorised and others silenced, and while standards are designed to be context free, they in fact bear an intimate relationship with context. As governors of human conduct, standards:

> …embody detailed expectations of preferred (as opposed to best) practice, yet they differ from traditional scientific management understandings of efforts norms for…they are grounded in a discourse of desirability…they are vehicles for the steerers of systems to micro-manage the day-to-day work of institutional personnel to ensure adherence (Gronn, 2003, p.8).

Gronn refers to the presumptions inherent in standards that the prescribers are superior in know-how, and that uniformity is preferable to variety. He perceives three types of leaders – naturally fitted (e.g. via heredity, family status, or aristocratic outlook), formally fitted (learned leadership), and suitably fitted (designer leaders customised to the standard), and argues that there is increasing reliance on the designer leader.

In Australia, where the researcher is based, AITSL (2011) claims about fifty leadership standards documents have been developed. The AITSL Standard is a content, rather than a performance or developmental standard, that outlines three things leaders need - Vision and Values; Knowledge and Understanding; and Personal Qualities and Social and Interpersonal Skills. These are enacted through five key professional practices: Leading teaching and learning; Developing self and others; Leading improvement, innovation and change; Leading the management of the school, and Engaging and working with the community. Yet some experienced leaders say the very standards themselves interfere with the work of the community:

> By allowing a newly created, politically driven central organisation to define standards, we lessen the power of local communities, be they families, schools or even states to decide important things such as values, priorities, aspirations and derivative standards. More important than a centrally determined set of standards is the development and support of communal and professional responsibility (Loader, 2010, p. 67).

Standards may be considered a product of postmodernism, but are also, according to O'Brien (2015), governmental endeavours to optimise performance and adhere to norms of accountability, forming part of the politicised professionalism that has come to characterise educational leadership. The standards offer little to clarify unanswered philosophical questions such as: What connection is there between leadership and education? Does leadership bring about education, or does education bring about leadership, or both? Is leadership necessary for education?

2.11 Systems Thinking in Philosophy and Science

Despite the rising levels of interest in the morality, ethics and values of leadership, and a tradition of philosophical thinking about leadership that stretches back to Plato, leadership philosophy is still emerging from a small, almost marginalised section of the literature. Degenaar (1981) looks philosophically at leadership's raison d'être that he links to the social nature of man. He argues that centres of authority are necessary to maintain order in a complex society and says the conditions should be created for citizens to become leaders of themselves, their emotions, will and ultimately their reason. Like other researchers investigating the underlying values and ethics within leadership, Degenaar draws on ancient Greek philosophy to address moral dimensions.

Carlopio (1994) highlights the dilemma that simple theories do not reflect reality, and theories with high levels of complexity cannot be fruitfully applied. He adds that most of our theories are grounded in scientific reductionism and offers holism, based on systems thinking, and New Science as an alternative philosophy of leadership for the future. Wheatley (2006), originally a biologist, developed the holistic science of leadership and her work is specifically valued within education (Mulford, 2008). She argues that conventional leadership is an illusion, and that in natural systems, where there is no boss, change isn't top down or strategic. Wheatley draws from Gaia Theory viewing human organisations as living systems. She believes the relationships between elements of the system are important and redefines leadership as amorphous. Order in social systems is not born of complex controls, but by the presence of a few guiding formulas or principles repeating back on themselves through the exercise of individual freedom. Change is not random or bizarre, but reflects a system maintaining and producing itself.

Riehl (2007) argues that models of system chaos or complexity are messy images that should continue to attract research attention. Other systems theorists have been influential in describing a vantage point from which can be seen the whole, including its web of relationships. These thinkers have not always focussed on the details of leadership, but see characteristics and events in the larger social context of a pattern that unfolds over time. Anthropologist and cyberneticist, Bateson (1979) emphasised relationships and joined the dots to connects them. Oshry (2007) talks about seeing systems and the spatial and temporal blindness that we have to some parts of the system. Laszlo (2014) talks about a universal

consciousness and interconnectedness that unites all cosmic elements. Neurobiologists Maturana and Virela (2001) coined the term "autopoiesis" to refer to the unity and self-maintaining chemistry of living systems. Villasenor-Galarza (2013) writes about an ecopsychology that is a multi-levelled connection between humans and their earth. He writes of spiritual wisdom and the "cosmic human" perspective.

Early leadership studies did not see the practical importance of leadership and its close relationship to philosophy and politics prevented investigation of leadership with scientific methods (Lewin 1944). However, the field has matured considerably since the start of the twenty-first century, when:

> …leadership research was still dominated by positivist, quantitative, functionalist and US-centred approaches that tended to privilege and elevate the heroic leader, whilst followers and contexts were largely taken-for-granted and/or ignored. Ten years later, research on leadership has changed considerably, with many new perspectives and ideas flourishing…[and]…exciting expansion of innovative leadership theories, research methodologies and agendas, processes and practices (Collinson and Grint, 2013, p. 447).

New scientific approaches being used to study leadership include evolutionary perspectives (van Vugt, 2006; King et al, 2009). Shushok and Moore (2010) encourage leaders to retrieve the great works of philosophy, politics and literature as a counter to the short-term lifespan inherent in much leadership publishing. Within education, Hodgkinson (1983, 1991) nominated philosophy as the countervailing force in modern technologically-oriented organisations committed to meta-values of efficiency and effectiveness that leach away meaning. For Hodgkinson, leadership is philosophy in action. An informal scan of Monash University's library search engines, shows that current high profile international leadership journals include few articles with the word "philosophy" or "philosophical" in the abstract compared to articles with the word "business" or "management". Roberts (2009) confirms there is a contemporary view that philosophy runs counter to the quick fix zeitgeist, which is dominated by technocratic and managerialist solutions to challenging and complex problems.

Traditionally, educational theory and practice has been underpinned by a strong relationship with philosophy of education, but the evidence surrounding their ongoing partnership is contradictory. Carr (2004) argues that philosophy no longer

has much relevance to education. He claims that philosophy of education has become practically ineffective, and that education is in some respects now insulated from philosophy. Carr's view is that decisions within education are based on political expediency, vested interests and established power rather than intellectual rigour. Carpenter and Hughes (2011) studied public speeches in the United States over a seven-year period and found that economic efficiency gained overwhelmingly more attention in defining education than any other purpose. Clark (2011) argues the prospects of philosophy of education as an academic discipline are grim. By contrast, Oppy and Trakakis (2010) claim that in Australia and New Zealand, philosophy is experiencing something of a golden age. Laverty (2010) supports this by saying that recent developments in technology, globalisation and environmental instability have created an urgent need for innovative ethical and political thought which has led to a renaissance in moral and political philosophy, fuelling interest in the philosophy of education.

Roberts' (2013) position paper reflects on the contradiction of evidence. In some senses, he agrees it is a moment of crisis for the field, with few academic positions available, little philosophical content in teacher education programmes and the whole enterprise of educational theorising under attack from many who favour more narrowly instrumentalist approaches. By contrast Roberts sees research activities in the field flourishing with philosophy of education journals expanding and a healthy demand for postgraduate work on philosophical theses.

2.12 Educational Leadership

Two decades ago, Sergiovanni (1996) debunked the popular myth that leadership approaches from the corporate culture can be successfully imported into schools. He argued that education needed to develop its own leadership theories in line with the view of leadership as pedagogy. More recently, there is demand for school leaders to be educators, moral stewards, and community builders, who adapt to social, technological and economic changes (Webber and Sherman, 2008). The digital revolution and the focus on 21st-century learning have leadership and pedagogical implications, but certain characteristics of exemplary leadership have been found to remain constant (Benade, Gardner, Teschers & Gibbons, 2014). Educational leadership is seen as a meaning-driven, socially situated, interpretive

practice and as a field with its own inter-subjectivities and biases (Riehl, 2007). Mulford's (2008) broad sweep of the challenges facing educational leadership summarises the recent debate as dominated by transformational, distributed, sustainable and instructional models. Hallinger (2003) states that instructional leadership models emerged in the early 1980s from research on effective schools and became a model of choice. He conceives instructional leadership as defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school-learning climate. However, critics argued this model focussed on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority, and other approaches, including transformational and distributed leadership became widespread. By contrast with transformation leadership, Mulford says instructional leadership is a first order aspect of the work that focuses on the frontline teaching and learning.

In studies pertaining specifically to the field of educational leadership, much of the research seems to have emerged from the assumption that leadership and educational outcomes are linked. Some studies have already demonstrated this using qualitative and quantitative data (Hallinger & Heck 1996; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). Studies before the 1980s seem to focus on a conception of the educational leader as an instructional leader but by the end of the 1980s, studies drawing on transformational leadership within the education sector were appearing and distributed and sustainable leadership models maintains their currency for schools. Current thinking is that there remain many further areas in which more research on some aspects of leadership is needed (Duignan, 2015).

In spite of all the research on educational leadership, the vast majority is school-based or relates to higher education and there remains an urgent need to address leadership and its development within the early childhood sector (Fenech, 2013; Waniganiyake *et al,* 2012). A review conducted by Muijs, Aubrey, Harris and Briggs (2004) confirms the paucity of research and researchers in early childhood leadership, and suggests much of the literature is anecdotal, superficial or narrow. McDowell Clark and Murray (2012) claim this may be a reflection of professionals' perception of themselves as educators and child developers, a role they believe is at odds with leadership. The early childhood literature has distinct characteristics, such as the extent to which women hold

leadership roles, the small proportion of leaders holding higher qualifications and the greater significance of working with parents (Muijs et al, 2004) and does not connect with that from the school sector where parallels might be found.

Rodd (2013), writes that while early childhood is high on the political agenda, the new generation of leaders needs to be passionate and committed, politically astute and active, emotionally intelligent, ethically mature, professionally integrated as leader-educators, and authentic, transparent and congruent. She confirms that flawless leaders are myths and believes there is no established profile of an ideal leader. Harris (2009) believes that outstanding leaders do not go with the herd, but take a different path, not letting others define their world or restrict their imagination.

In view of this study investigating a Montessori perspective on leadership, works were sought that offered a link between leadership and the child. Few contemporary researchers appear to connect childhood to adulthood with a substantial unity of conception. Kennedy (2006) is an exception. His idea of "adultism", is an attitude toward childhood and children, which is a tacit ideology, even a form of racism, whereby children are seen as cultural others in societies where the terms of the good life are set by adults. Kennedy explains the relationship between child and adult and why our ideas about childhood have a wider social significance:

> The concepts "child" and "adult" are a mutually necessary contrastive pair. As there is no notion of "old" without a notion of "young," "child" is unthinkable apart from "adult."…Thus, any philosophical inquiry into childhood is also necessarily an inquiry into adulthood. The concrete implications of this reflexive aspect of the inquiry into childhood are particularly significant, for it suggests that the adult who understands children and the conditions of childhood better understands him or herself better. Improved self-understanding leads to the possibility of a positive evolution of the adult-child relation in society; and it follows from the polar structure of the relation, that adults who learn to identify and serve the needs of children with more sensitivity and precision, learn to do so for each other as well (Kennedy, 2006, p. 16).

An examination of the relationship between the child, childhood and adult leadership offer new prospects for research. Studies in youth leadership are slowly emerging. Murphy and Reichard (2011) place the focus on early development, with contributors investigating the seeds of leadership in

childhood. Early experiences create the foundation for future leadership development and childhood is presented as a transient time when skills are easily and rapidly learned. Aspects such as genetics, parenting styles and early learning experiences are investigated for their potential connection to later leadership. However, the literature seems yet to ask developmental questions such as "What aspects of leadership are relevant to children at different stages of their development?" or "How does the child create a self that is prepared for future leadership work?"

Some leadership studies have drawn from the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose text, *Truth and Method,* has been used as a philosophical guide in this study. Shields and Edwards (2005), for example, use Gadamer and other thinkers' work to examine dialogue as it pertains to school leaders. This literature review focused on exploring the key existing leadership perspectives. There has been a proliferation of leadership definitions and approaches to leadership practice, which may be seen as inevitable and of rich hermeneutic interest. However, for now, the literature remains focused on leadership and leadership development by adults, for adults and in adult contexts.

In the next chapter, Montessori literature is reviewed to form an outline of Montessori's perspective on human development and those principles and practices with relevance to leadership.

Chapter 3

Maria Montessori and the Legacy of her Leadership

It is the course of events that brings out new aspects of meaning in historical material. By being re-actualised in understanding, texts are drawn into a genuine course of events in exactly the same way as are events themselves (Gadamer, 2013, p. 381).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the primary and secondary Montessori literature that relates to leadership. By contrast with the large body of literature on leadership reviewed in the previous chapter, there appear to be no substantial academic studies that address a Montessori perspective on leadership. Schaefer (2011b) has written a reflective booklet on Montessori leadership. Others have addressed aspects of leadership within Montessori school administration or governance (Dubble 1998; Kahn, Dubble & Pendleton 1999; Massey, 2007; McKenzie, 1994, 2005; McTamaney, 2006; Minardi, 2012; Payne, 2004, 2005) or leadership within the Montessori movement (Feez, 2013; Povell, 2010). However, no publications were found that made substantial links between leadership as a field or concept and Montessori's original principles and practices. This study will therefore make inferences from Montessori's primary literature and consult the commentary of other Montessori writers.

Montessori herself referred to broad social phenomena and some of her experienced followers have published interpretations of these (Grazzini, 1997; Krumins Grazzini, 2005, 2008). Yet she distinctly perceived social phenomena through the lens of human development. Where conventional leadership writers seek to distinguish management and leadership, or governance and management, Montessori is interested in human universality. If leadership is part of what it is to be a social human being, then a Montessori perspective on leadership is likely to draw from the common psychological and developmental ground between these apparently contrasting terms. Yet, to research a Montessori perspective also means to adopt a dynamic and multifocal lens moving between big picture ideas and the detail.

Montessori's publications reflect her time and she frequently uses "Man" and "he" when referring to human beings. In this thesis, her words are presented without comment on this aspect. Montessori's references to leaders and leading appear fragmentary, subtle or indirect. She did not set out to write specifically about leadership and the term "leadership" was not as commonly used in her day. Montessori is hence not recognised as a leadership theorist, but remains classified as a pedagogue, much of whose innovation has been naturalised into contemporary practice without reference to its origins (Mooney, 2000; Feez, 2010). Montessori's publications on human existence, development, pedagogy, work and social life must therefore be interpreted for leadership. These publications are sprinkled with credits and inspiration from other respected leaders across many fields. Montessori's own leadership can be traced through various biographical works (Babini, 2000; Foschi, 2008; Kramer, 1988; Standing, 1998; Trabalzini, 2011). Kramer reports that Montessori attracted followers easily. She describes the reaction of journalists reporting on her speech at an international women's congress in 1896, only a month after her graduation from medical school:

> …her elegant and genial appearance, her lady-like bearing, her charm and beauty…It astounds one to read on her card *Medico-Chirurgo!* This physician-surgeon graces the speaker's podium as if it were a box at the theatre, and all the large questions…are discussed in a Roman accent that sounds like Music. Suddenly one wishes there were a hundred thousand such physician-surgeons (Kramer 1988, p. 55).

Montessori was initially annoyed by the focus on her charm above the content of her speech. However, she soon developed a working style that made the most of her charisma to champion the cause of children, and it became an ongoing feature of her leadership:

> …the effect she always had on peers and pupils, strangers who became her devoted followers, listeners who came to hear her and with striking frequency spoke of being "converted", "enlightened" of having their way of seeing things – sometimes their entire lives – changed by her presence. It was not just her message…She had the kind of personality that invites identification (Kramer 1988, p. 114).

One of her Montessori's early students wrote:

> Montessori is in America now. Three years ago no one over here even knew of her existence. Today they use her name as a leader (Naumberg 1912, p. 796).

Montessori's grandson writes that she maintained her vitality and personal magnetism up to her death (Montessori, M. M. 1992), but Standing (1998) claims that in private she was more diffident. Her own words reflect this:

> Further I protest against myself being hailed as the great educator of this century, because what I have done is merely to study the child, to take and express what he has given me, and that is called the Montessori method. At the most I have been the child's interpreter (ENW, p 4).

Many of Montessori's ideas appear aligned with existing leadership theory and practice, yet by placing the child at the centre of all human endeavour, she also challenges our existing perspectives. Her body of work addresses broad social themes of peace, democracy, justice and both the universalities and contextualities of human ontology. Her view of education was not episodic, but broad and lifelong; not merely a transmission of culture, but a help to life in all its expressions. Montessori's legacy was informed by a rich intellectual heritage – Italian mentors in her early work in science, medicine and anthropology; French doctors, Itard and Seguin, who initially inspired her pedagogical direction; philosophical study in humanism, Ancient Greek philosophy and German classicism; and her internment in India, where she was exposed to eastern traditions. Claude A. Claremont, the translator of one of Montessori's most mature works, *The Absorbent Mind*, first published in 1949, makes the extraordinary claim that he can name no other book of greater moment to man's future welfare. This chapter seeks to begin an interpretation of Montessori's legacy for leadership by reviewing the Montessori literature through a leadership lens.

3.2   Montessori's Literature

Tornar's (2001) significant bibliography describes the potentially bewildering editions, reprints, revisions and translations of Montessori texts over the years. Early primary sources range from Montessori's graduate writing in medicine, through to *The Montessori Method*, published in 1912, which has been called the birth certificate of Montessori pedagogy (Trabalzini, 2011). Kramer (1988) explains that post-1920 publications are more likely to be compilations constructed

from Montessori's lecture notes made by others. Her most mature lectures are the fruits of a lifetime's study of the human being and his activity and are characteristically broader. In these publications, Montessori considers education over widening stages of life, references developing sciences such as psychology, embryology, and ecology; locates the achievement of global peace firmly with the field of education; describes contemporary social problems and offers her view on the young child's contribution to world reconstruction.

Montessori wrote and mostly lectured in Italian, rarely using notes. Published lectures have necessarily relied on notes and translations made by students and colleagues, rather than professional editors and translators. Issues with the evolution, inconsistency and interpretation surrounding the English translations of her work have been documented (Kramer 1988; Honegger Fresco 1993; Feez, 2007). Feez (2007) describes the translation of "direttoressa", Montessori's early term for her teachers, to "directress", still in common use today, but also noted her later term "maestra" which is rarely used and the term "guide" commonly used today in the United States.

Montessori also developed her own distinctive meanings for existing terminology and her writings may present as odd, romantic or whimsical. For example, she referred to the child's developmental activity as "work" (AM), a constructive and honorific expression that did not deny play. Other examples of the idiosyncratic nature of Montessori language include the problematic term "normalisation" and its counter, "deviations". Schaefer Zener (2006) argues that normalisation describes the process of normally proceeding development and is characterised by concentration, self-discipline, sociability and a love of work. Lloyd (2008) finds there is no other term for normalisation and while contemporary terms such as self-regulation appeared similar, they were inadequate to describe all of what Montessori wanted to convey. Zener (2006) writes that deviations can be considered from the viewpoint of being a developmental detour, but also have alignment with the notion of a developmental defence.

An understanding of such Montessori terminology is central to fully appreciate the substance of her legacy. Montessori did not construct a conceptual bibliography or definitive glossary of her key principles, yet they can be

understood within their conceptual framework through training and practice. Haines' (2001) states that Montessori language acts as a password, enabling the sender and receiver to immediately decode the transmitted message. While Montessori jargon may have made it more difficult for practitioners to de-marginalise, it offers a high level of pedagogical precision and mutual support to Montessori professionals. The status of the language Montessori used in her writings is now entrenched within Montessori culture. Foundational concepts of "human tendencies", "sensitive periods", "absorbent mind" and "four planes of development" unite and synchronise Montessori professionals across the continents.

Aside from the difficulties associated with translation and terminology, Montessori's writing was not of today's academic style. Researchers reviewing her works must be prepared to move within a montage of literary tones ranging from the scientific to the conversational, and from the quaint, imaginative, metaphoric, and even poetic, to the firm and dogmatic. Her ideas evolved over time, and continue to be refined by Montessori trainers today in light of new knowledge. Montessori student teachers ideally work under the close supervision of qualified trainers to acquire a deep and thorough understanding of the evolved pedagogy. However, for the university researcher without access to a Montessori trainer or scholar to support the unravelling of the many paradoxes inherent within Montessori texts, philosophy and practice, misconceptions and marginalisation can be an inevitable outcome:

> Without a clear understanding of Montessori's theoretical perspective, research scholars are not able to isolate distinguishing characteristics…nor can they adequately compare this approach with other forms of education (Lloyd, 2008, p. 2).

Frierson (2014, 2015) has analysed aspects of Montessori's epistemology and psychology from a philosophical perspective. However, there are few substantive works that compare Montessori's approach to that of other major educational figures. Feez (2007) believes the full scope of Montessori's legacy is not reflected in the literature emerging from her work, perhaps because this literature emerged alongside a protective tradition surrounding the transmission of Montessori practice. This protective tradition is worthy of further study. Protective views rest upon internalism, a form of epistemology that restricts the

range of actors and ways, in which knowledge might be achieved. Protectionism can appear short-sighted, or as an unwillingness to face challenges, yet can also reflect the highest ideals of maternalism and clarity about what is required to ensure the long term survival of a young work still in its early stages of development. Montessori's interest in socialising the maternal function was present from the early stages of her career (Moretti, 2011, 2014).

Throughout her life, Montessori always perceived herself as a scientist with an interest in addressing social problems. When describing her early educational research with very young children, the seeds of a greater work are already visible as she quotes one of her mentors, Italian psychologist, Giuseppe Sergi:

> Sergi says truly: "Today an urgent need imposes itself upon society: the reconstruction of methods in education and instruction, and he who fights for this cause, fights for human regeneration." (MM, p. 27)

Although Montessori drew from her formal study in philosophy, as a scientist, she distinguished her work from that of canonical philosophers such as Rousseau and Dewey (FM). Nevertheless, Thayer-Bacon (2012) argues connections can be made between her work and that of other significant philosophers. Frierson (2015) believes that as an Italian woman trying to develop a philosophy from and for children, Montessori has been relegated to scholarly invisibility amongst philosophers and, like Thayer-Bacon, makes the case for her to be given more attention. Evidence of Montessori's perspective on the aims of education, the nature of teaching, learning and knowledge, and related concepts such as freedom and responsibility are sprinkled throughout her publications. However, the heart of her research was primarily empirical:

> I must repeat that it is not that I first posed these principles and then shaped my educational method around them. On the contrary, only the immediate observation of children whose freedom was respected revealed some of the laws of the inner being that I understand to be of universal value (CF, p. 40).

This study seeks a perspective on leadership that emerges from Montessori's principles and practices. A principle has been defined as a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or for a chain of reasoning; a practice is the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Lloyd (2008) claims that Montessori's theoretical perspective is not readily available in published literature. Feez (2007) confirms that Montessori does not outline her key principles with clarity, and that trawling through the mix of anecdotes, philosophy, opinion and loosely described theoretical positions in her books must be done. Cossentino (2009) writes that Montessori paradoxes - independent but scripted, revolutionary but old, have been confounding, leaving Montessori education almost entirely unstudied by scholars and policy makers.

Containing and elucidating the Montessori principles and practices has however been attempted by many Montessori professionals over the decades. Not long after Montessori's Casa work had gained momentum, a professor of education at the University of Dublin, published a book for parents and teachers that addressed key concepts such as liberty, interest and spontaneity (Culverwell, 1914). Much later, Montessori's son, Mario, offered an "Explanation of certain leading concepts" (Montessori, M. M., 1978). Haines' (2001) glossary is a more recent explanation of Montessori terms that relates to theory and practice for children of 3-6 years. Lillard's (2005) contemporary summary includes the following eight principles: movement, order, interest, avoiding extrinsic rewards, learning with and from peers, learning in context, teacher ways and child ways, and order in the environment and mind. In addition, Lillard outlines some practices that reflect differences in the setup, schedule and curriculum of a Montessori classroom compared with a traditional classroom, such as the need for a mixed age range to reflect wider society. Pedersen and Pedersen (2008) outline seven developmental principles and a series of educational practices that underpin Montessori pedagogy. Schmidt and Schmidt (2009) list eighteen Montessori principles and nineteen teaching techniques that she says are used to implement the principles. Other writers have discussed key concepts using contemporary or simplified terminology (Feez, 2010; Helfrich, 2011; O'Donnell, 2013). Feez (2007) emphasises that Montessori did outline a complex and sophisticated theory of practice in each of her principles, and they should not be taken as simplistic.

So convinced was Montessori that the children in their spontaneous manifestations were revealing unknown psychological laws, one of the first

principles she elaborated was liberty. She argued from the beginning that the free child "is our only guide to what education should be" (EP, p 119):

> That concept of liberty which must inspire pedagogy is, instead, universal. The biological sciences of the nineteenth century have shown it to us when they have offered us the means for studying life (MM, p. 12).

Through freedom, Montessori argued the human being could be understood and therefore helped in his development. Montessori's legacy can be seen as education illuminated by a study of human life founded on biological principles.

3.3   A Biological Base

Culverwell's (1914) early analysis emphasised the biological basis of Montessori ideas, which he argued was the only basis suited to education in a democratic state. E. M. Standing, one of Montessori's biographers, later wrote:

> …so often, we find an underlying affinity between Montessori's system and biology. Indeed it is true to say that her whole system – In theory and practice – has a biological foundation (Standing, 1998, p. 118).

Standing claims that her research methodology was in essence the same as that of biologists observing the spontaneous activity of free organisms. Like the biologist, she was interested in both the organism and its integration within a living system:

> In giving an account of the Montessori system it is difficult to know where to begin, because it is hard to single out one principle as more important than the others. In an organism all organs are essential, for each plays a necessary part in the whole. And so it is in the Montessori system, and for much the same reason; because it is a *living* system. It displays that multiplicity in unity which is characteristic of all organisms (Standing, 1998, p. 105).

Montessori perceived children as the constructors of adults, powered by inborn vital energies writing, "The origins of the *development,* both in the species and in the individual, *lie within"* (MM, p. 105). She argued that there were universal human tendencies such as to orient, to order, to explore, to communicate, to create, to abstract, and so on, and that these operated throughout each human being's lifespan. Yet she claimed there were other constructive powers, such as the child's Absorbent Mind, and Sensitive Periods, that were time-limited within a continuum of developmental stages.

From her multi-disciplinary studies, Montessori formed a holistic, integrated and interactive conception of the human being and his development upon which she developed her pedagogy. She drew attention to what she referred to as "nature's constructive method", which can be considered at any scale, "for atom as for planet" (TEHP, p. 76):

1. The freedom and independence of organs in their several developments.
2. Development through specialisation of cells.
3. The unification of organs by the circulatory system of the blood.
4. Directive communication established by the nervous system.

The alignment of human existence, development and activity with biological principles offer the first clues toward a Montessori perspective on leadership. Montessori's conception of inherent natural patterns as scalable from micro to macro levels mirrors her development as a scientist from her early work in medicine to broad social issues. In her more mature lectures, she gives explicit consideration to the ecological relationship between the organism and the system. For her, the human organism was no mere collection of organs, but a vibrant, integrated and coherent community which adapts itself to the work, and which is governed by a specially prepared leader:

> The nervous cells specialise in refinement, and one cannot conceive of one of them taking upon itself to turn starch into sugar, or fight a microbe. They imprison themselves in a closed box, the cranium, and it is not by any general election that they get their place in the governing body. The embryo can teach us the absurdity of our social mechanism, where one group claims to dominate another merely by authority, without agreement. Nature is the teacher of life – let us follow her ways! (TEHP, p. 77)

Over a series of chapters in the text from which this quote comes, Montessori describes some early civilisations, her view of their developmental progress and their impacts on each other:

> The brief review that we have made of the history of human civilisation has been meant to show the same basic design at work, for humanity too is an organic unity that is yet being born. Like organs, the different centres of civilisation have been nursed to strength in isolation, then brought into contact. There they merged into larger organisations, or parted with what they had of value for the enrichment of despoilers before they were destroyed if they were too unadaptable to survive (TEHP, p. 77).

Here Montessori appears to anticipate globalisation as an inevitable stage in the life of humanity, which she now considers "a single organism, one nation" (EP, p. 24):

> Even in the life of humanity, a circulatory system has developed. Things produced by different peoples and countries go into circulation and everyone takes from it what is needful for his life…In recent years, we can even see the growth of arrangements doing the work of hormones.

> These are the efforts of large states to plan the environment, to control commerce, stimulate, encourage, and direct the undertakings of all nations, simply with a view to achieving greater harmony and well-being of all. One may say that the defects that have shown themselves clearly enough in these attempts merely prove that the embryonic development of the social circulatory system, though it has made a beginning, is still far from perfect (AM, p. 40).

Montessori also has much to say on the rapid pace of change in social life, including the impact on employment and its relationship to education:

> In this fierce battle of civil life a man must have a strong character and quick wits as well as courage; he must be strengthened in his principles by moral training and he must also have practical ability in order to face the difficulties of life. *Adaptability* – this is the most essential quality; for the progress of the world is continually opening new careers, and at the same time closing or revolutionising the traditional types of employment (FCTA, p. 61).

Yet Montessori continually repeats her call for human systems to be inspired by and take direction from nature's patterns:

> As for the specialised cells of the nervous system, anything corresponding to these is still woefully lacking in human society. From the chaotic state of today's world, we might well infer that what is needed to carry out their function has not yet been evolved. For lack of it, we have nothing that acts simultaneously on the whole social body, and guides it to harmony. Democracy, which is our civilisation's highest form of government, permits everyone to vote, and so to choose the head of Affairs. For this to happen in embryology would be absurd beyond belief, for if each has to be specialised, then the cell able to direct all the others must be even more specialised (AM, p. 40-1).

Earlier in this same series of lectures, Montessori had exclaimed:

> What an inexhaustible topic for meditation! The greatest of men, no matter in what field – whether it be an Alexander or a Napoleon, a Dante or a Shakespeare, or a Gandhi – no less than the humblest of their fellow beings, was each built up from one alone of these ultraminute cell bodies! (AM, p. 33).

She appears fascinated by the tiny origins of leadership, pointing toward the inner energy and power within the germ cell to develop, multiply and expand itself to physically and psychically create according to its own construction plan, each unique human being. However, she also acknowledges that each human takes from his environment to prepare himself for work to which he is suited:

> To rule is the most difficult task of all and requires a higher specialisation than any. So there is here no question of election, but of being trained and suited to the work. Whoever directs others must have transformed himself. No one can ever be a leader or a guide who has not been prepared for that work. This principle, which links specialisation with function may well engage our active attention – all the more so as it seems to be nature's way (AM, p 41).

We can infer from Montessori's ideas about human nature that she believed the potential for leadership work lay within each person, but flourished within a developmental environment that offered freedom to prepare the self. In spite of her positivist beginnings, Montessori's perspective on society offers a compass for the diverse contexts and realities of life. This draws us into the natural laws of human psychology as a legitimate biological problem that has implications for leadership.

3.4   The Need for Preparation

The notion of "training" is an interesting counterpoint to the more general term "education", or the term "cultivation", which also appear regularly in Montessori translations. Leaders of today's conventional classrooms are prepared through what is known as "teacher education", yet Montessori professionals maintain the term "teacher training". Montessori stated that education must be an aid to life, "not something which the teacher does, but…a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being" (AM, p. 3). There are many models of Montessori training throughout the world. The established AMI model incorporates an intense face-to-face re-orientation toward this natural process that provokes a journey of self-discovery. AMI trainers themselves are rigorously and thoroughly prepared in an apprenticeship over many years so that in turn they may offer their students experiential wisdom and guidance that speaks to the human spirit. Whatever the training

model, courses are ideally based on Montessori principles. Massey (2007) writes that taking training means being inspired and drawn in to a way of life, drawn in by the beauty of heart work and drawn in to a stream of intellectual currents and new traditions. She finds this is achieved via a specialised techne unmatched in traditional teacher customs.

Montessori's conception of education was of more than a preparation for adult activity in childhood. To aid life, she argued education would be most effective if it followed nature's constructive method by beginning with the broader goal of the free and independent development of the human personality. Montessori believed the child was not in existence merely to grow up. Rather, he had a duty to construct his unique personality and activity that engaged his whole personality was "great work" (AM). To support this construction, Montessori claimed that a seamless, coordinated system of education across all periods of life was essential:

> Universities have their own scheme of studies; they find however that the pupils of secondary schools are not sufficiently prepared to follow it. Secondary schools find themselves in the same situation in regard to the pupils coming from elementary schools, and so they all feel the burden of an unprepared individuality (FCTA, p.85).

Montessori is drawing attention to the integrated systemic nature of lifelong education. She continues her consideration of the need for universities to interest themselves in the earlier stages of education, much like the cloth manufacturer must interest himself in the planting of the flax. In other lectures, Montessori emphasises that freedom in the child's environment is connected with the importance of principles such as opportunity, interest and repetition. For the normalisation progress to trigger, she claims that "the essential thing is for the task to arouse such an interest that it engages the child's whole personality" (AM, p. 188). Montessori felt this interest corresponded to a natural law and so its first delicate manifestation must be protected from any interference. She advises that as soon as concentration has begun, the teacher should act as if the child does not exist, adding:

> The teacher's skill in not interfering comes with practice, like everything else, but it never comes very easily. It means rising to spiritual heights. True spirituality realises that even to help can be a source of pride (AM, p. 256).

The repetitive and cyclical aspects of Montessori education are important in fostering individuality and later specialisation:

> Everything needs a long preparation and much practice…We may change the exercise but we must continue to study or we lose what we have gained (CSW, p. 26).

Montessori describes the varied movements of an artist, dancer, acrobat, musician or craftsman, which do not come from mere ripening, but are a matter of active experience within an environment. Montessori believed that every person is the author of his own skills and that people's different destinations can never be predicted (AM). Montessori's ideas can be extrapolated to consider what she might have thought about a preparation for leadership. Montessori would appear to be advocating an education based on natural universal characteristics and tendencies, with freedom and repetition, and which offered the opportunity for individual pathways, and an honouring of normalisation as optimal development. Toward the end of her life, Montessori claimed that normalisation was the most important single result of her whole work. She considered it a universal and observable phenomenon that can be seen as the child's contribution to society (AM).

This contribution led Montessori to believe that the child is the source of human regeneration and called upon world leaders to follow the child when considering human problems. In an address to the World Fellowships of Faith in London in 1939, she said the child is:

> …so sensitive to the need for justice that we must call him, as Emerson also did, "the Messiah who forever returns to dwell among fallen men, to lead them to the Kingdom of Heaven" (EP, p. 119).

She finishes this address with a clear image of the child as the leader of men:

> We see the figure of the child who stands before us with his arms held open, beckoning humanity to follow (EP, p. 119).

This image challenges traditional hierarchical notions of leadership, but immediately connects Montessori's ideas to models with inherent humility, such as servant leadership and some post-heroic models.

3.5   The Prepared Environment

Montessori argued that the primary factor in the constructive and creative development of the unique human individual was the power of natural, universal inner forces. Yet, she saw an important influence from the environment:

> *Environment* is undoubtedly a *secondary* factor in the phenomena of life; it can modify in that it can help or hinder, but it can never *create* (MM, p. 105).

Trained to understand the child's natural constructive powers, the Montessori teacher must initially focus on being the custodian of the environment, attending to this above the children's restlessness. The environment functions to attract the child and provide opportunities for work, which is the means to normalisation. Montessori argued that in order to be most helpful, it was not enough to provide random objects in the child's environment, but rather a world of progressive interest must be organised, i.e. the environment must be prepared (AM, p. 188). Beginning with the womb, which Montessori saw as the child's first prepared environment, an increasingly wider horizon, in the family home and then beyond, can be offered to the child as he develops. Montessori brought her medical knowledge and postdoctoral studies in anthropology, psychology and philosophy together to consider an optimum environment for each stage of development. The reciprocal relationship of the human being to his environment is a central Montessori tenet - man transforms his environment and is transformed by it. Nevertheless, the child's unique form of psychology gives him a different relationship to his environment from the adult:

> Adults admire their environment; they can remember it and think about it; but the child absorbs it. The things he sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul. He incarnates in himself all in the world about him that his eyes see and his ears hear. In us the same things produce no change, but the child is transformed by them. This vital kind of memory, which does not consciously remember… absorbs images into the individual's very life…(AM, p. 56)

Thus, Montessori observed that the human baby was born with creative powers for self-construction that included an adaptive capacity to individual cultures. This drew her to focus on the environment as the child's true teacher and her studies of the children's interactions with each other and with their environment took on an ecological significance.

Montessori environments for children are readily recognisable for their materials for development. Montessori wrote and lectured at length about many of her materials and the possibilities contained within them. Her prime consideration was to use them to develop the child's energies. She writes "our didactic material renders auto-education possible…" (MM, p. 174.), even "provokes auto-education" (MM, p. 169). Her selection of objects emerged from observations of the children's interests over a long period. She found children were enticed by real, purposeful materials with beauty, simplicity and order, and that it was best if these were durable, child-size and accessible at low height. The materials offer unlimited possibilities for exploration, but are limited in number:

> There is only one specimen of each object, and if a piece is in use when another child wants it, the latter…will wait for it to be released. Important social qualities derive from this. The child comes to see that he must respect the work of others, not because someone has said he must, but because this is a reality that he meets in his daily experience (AM, p. 223).

The prepared environment offers all the essentials for optimal development but nothing superfluous (Haines, 2001). Key materials limited in scope support developing independence by isolating the difficulty, simultaneously guiding, stimulating and liberating the child. Material design includes the principle of "control of error", which Montessori saw as an important means of raising awareness of mistakes and encouraging their correction (AM). The principle of giving "just enough" help is also paramount. An error:

> …may be committed by an excessive quantity of educative material: this may dissipate the attention, render the exercises with the objects mechanical, and cause the child to pass by his psychological moment of ascent without perceiving it and seizing it. Moreover, such objects are then futile, and by their futility, "the child may lose his soul" (AMMI, p. 61).

The child who is burdened by an excess of objects suffers a physical and spiritual decline, demonstrating a diminution of absorbed attention, instability and fatigue, and "an obvious extinction of internal activity" (AMMI, p. 62). Montessori drew parallels between this child, who she saw imprisoned in a viscous circle and the over-indulgent adult, surrounded by excessive objects and a chaotic life. She felt such an adult was weakened and undisciplined, writing:

> …if someone does not help him by wresting from him the futile objects, and pointing out his heaven to him, he will hardly have the energy to save himself (AMMI, p. 62).

Adults who have saved themselves, may be considered spiritual leaders:

> A few men have "rescued" themselves from the shipwreck of humanity and lived simple, active lives – the lives, in fact, of children. These men, who have won their own salvation, whom we call saints, have given the world proof of a love capable of benefiting all mankind (EP, p. 58).

Montessori viewed her materials as a spiritual staircase that brought forth the child's patience and perseverance, vivacity and joy "characteristic of the spirit when the internal energies have found their keyboard" (Montessori AMMI, p. 64). The fixing of the child's attention on a material fortified and grew the child's spirit, manifesting itself in equilibrium, serenity and self-control, producing "the wonderful discipline characteristic of the behaviour of our children" (AMMI, p. 65).

For Montessori, "materials" was a conceptualised idea, not limited to a concrete form. As the child grows, the materials change. Older children gradually move away from manipulatives to work in the abstract and adolescents continue their auto-education through their affinity with elders in the environment, who may operate as didactic materials (Kahn, 2005). Montessori does not appear to have specifically elaborated in her lectures or writing what materials might provoke self-education of the mature adult. However, she modelled observation, as well as reading and contemplation of well-credentialed work from a wide range of scientific and philosophical disciplines, as part of her own preparation for leadership.

The materials for development call the child's attention to educational possibilities. Montessori describes how she was first struck by observing a three-year-old girl concentrating on repeating activity with a material she called a cylinder block (AMMI, p.53). This sensorial material encourages the removing and replacing of graded cylindrical insets into their respective holes within a wooden block. It is a materialised abstraction of dimension, but which is symbolically suggestive of broad-scale human dimensions. In terms of leadership, each cylinder could be interpreted as a representation of a discrete cultural idea that has its place within a continuum of possibilities inside the

limits of an overall social and philosophical framework. Placing the extreme positions out on the table, mixing them with intermediary positions and then re-pairing each position with its place in the framework may not only be the work of a three-year-old, but of global leadership charged with international peace negotiation, cultural assimilation, and racial and religious tolerance. Yet, designed for young children's exploration, the inherent symbolism of this and other Montessori materials for leadership remains unexplored.

3.6 The Prepared Adult

Within Montessori's developmental framework, the prepared environment includes a prepared adult whose role is fundamentally and necessarily different from that of a traditional teaching practitioner. Arguing that "development cannot be taught" (AM, p. 183), Montessori personally trained her teachers from the beginning, to adopt the attitude of the scientist, one guided to:

> …search out the deep truth of life, to lift a veil from its fascinating secrets, and who, in this pursuit, has felt arising within him a love for the mysteries of nature, so passionate as to annihilate the thought of himself. The scientist is not the clever manipulator of instruments, he is the worshipper of nature and he bears the external symbols of his passion as does the follower of some religious order (MM, p. 8).

Montessori quickly confirms this is a spiritual preparation that in essence solidifies the bond between teacher and nature:

> It is my belief that the thing which we should cultivate in our teachers is more the *spirit* than the mechanical skill of the scientist…we wish to *direct* the teacher, trying to awaken in him, in connection with his own particular field, the school, that scientific *spirit* which opens the door for him to broader and bigger possibilities. In other words, we wish to awaken in the mind and heart of the educator an *interest in natural phenomena* to such an extent that, loving nature, he shall understand the anxious and expectant attitude of one who has prepared an experiment and who awaits a revelation from it (MM, p. 9).

Nevertheless, the Montessori teacher is an active classroom leader, who is not restricted to observation, but whose work preparing and maintaining the environment is suggestive of the stewardship of a self-organising and self-actualising ecosystem. In Montessori's later work, she argued that life is an energy that maintains and sustains itself (EP). Contemporary researchers have

referred to her application of reasoning by Italian mathematician, Luigi Fantappiè, to link entropic and syntropic phenomena to the philosophical concepts of causality and finality (Chattin-McNicholls, 1992; Feez, 2007). The Montessori teacher is conceived as a systems thinker. While Montessori did not use the term "ecosystem" she referred to concepts such as communities, organisms, relationships, linkages, cycles, energy, internal and external factors, function, adaptation, regeneration, potential, equilibrium, harmony, recovery from disturbances and natural laws and processes, which constitute the structure of ecosystems. The key work of the classroom leader in Montessori's vision is to work through the environment:

> The fundamental goal of human existence is neither the survival of the individual nor that of the species. The individual adult's efforts to ensure his own survival and that of the species is only a means and a part of the task he must complete to fulfill his mission, to achieve his essential goal, to justify his reason for being – the creation of the environment (EP, p. 95).

In the Montessori school, inputs to the classroom are carefully considered, the relationship between elements in the environment is studied, limits are set, self-balancing processes are nurtured, and outputs are analysed to determine the need for ongoing guidance. The Montessori classroom is inherently sustainable and obstacles to individual independence and to the interdependent harmony of the overall system are removed. However, Montessori was clear that the teacher's personal preparation must be a self-transformation. Otherwise she herself could be an obstacle:

> …every useless help given to the child becomes an obstacle to his development. This is not merely philosophy but a fact to which we attach fundamental importance (CDC, p. 15).

Montessori therefore recommended each teacher make a deep moral preparation beneath her pedagogical veneer:

> She must acquire a moral alertness which has not hitherto been demanded by any other system, and this is revealed in her tranquillity, patience, charity and humility. Not words but virtues are her main qualifications (DC, p.151).

In essence, the Montessori teacher is an assistant, who serves the human spirit:

> We teachers can only help the work going on, as servants wait upon a master. We then become witness to the development of the human soul; the emergence of the New Man, who will no longer be the victim of events, but thanks to his clarity of vision, will become able to direct and to mould the future of mankind (AM, p. 8).

In this quote, Montessori appears to speak about the teacher's role in preparing future leaders. Cossentino (2009) explains that trainee teachers are involved in mastering a large and complex repertoire that is both demanding and a transformation of outlook and orientation toward self, children, family, domestic life, human development, society and nature. The painstaking approach to AMI-affiliated teacher training reflects the high degree of internal unity and rigorous consistency within the Montessori approach and is overseen by a tightly-managed global system of quality control:

> The standards for Montessori practice were originally delineated by the AMI in 1929. They represent an integrated body of materials, methodology, psychology and philosophy that provides Montessori teachers with a common reference point (Kahn 1992, p. 195).

Montessori pedagogy forms a highly integrated whole, hence senior trainers regularly review and refine practices to ensure that the methodology maintains its authenticity through social changes. Although the focus was on training teachers, not all those adults prepared by Montessori were destined for an educational career. Over her lifetime, she spoke to all adults with the same conviction and the relevance of the Montessori approach for any human endeavour is just beginning to be recognised:

> The child is our teacher. Adults must above all be educated to acknowledge this fact so that they may change their behaviour toward the generations that come after them (EP, p.37).

Here Montessori is reinforcing the significance of humility and service as key pedagogical principles. These comprise spiritual aspects of self-preparation that strengthen the relationship between the individual and the social group.

3.7   The Multi-Capacity Community

It has been claimed that Montessori's fame as an educationalist obscures her contribution as a social philosopher (Kahn, 2005). Montessori grappled with the larger questions of human existence. She wrote many times about liberty,

responsibility, morality, spirituality, consciousness, the family, work and society, though she never claimed her work was exhaustive. In Montessori classrooms, children of mixed age work together so that socialisation unfolds naturally in response to shared interests, rather than an imposed age-delineated structure. The needs of the group frame the self-mastery of the individual:

> The liberty of the child should have as its limit the collective interest…
> (MM, p. 87).

Decisions on where to place limits bring significant moral elements to the work and the cultural desiderata are expected to be modelled by the Montessori educator with grace and courtesy. Montessori argued that moral principles could not be given by teaching but by prolonged social experience. With very young children, Montessori observed a natural social cohesion formed without guidance from the teacher. For children of six or more years, her observations indicated that a more external kind of organisation begins to meet:

> …his need to associate himself with others, not merely for the sake of company, but in some sort of organised activity. He likes to mix with others in a group wherein each has a different status. A leader is chosen, and is obeyed, and a strong group is formed. This is a natural tendency, through which mankind becomes organised. If during this period of social interest and mental acuteness all possibilities of culture are offered to the child, to widen his outlook and ideas of the world, this organisation will be formed and will develop; the amount of light a child has acquired in the moral field, and the lofty ideals he has formed will be used for purposes of social organisation at a later stage (TEHP, p. 4).

Montessori mentions loyalty to leadership at this later stage:

> Civilisation is to be judged not only by its outer appearance, but also by its moral standards. Nomads did not evolve outwardly so much as the settlers, and were usually despised as barbarians, but they developed certain qualities which were far in advance of those who scorned them. Their mode of life required of them great discipline, order and bravery, endurance of cold, heat, lack of food and water, and a special tribe loyalty and devotion to a leader (TEHP, p. 49).

Writing in the post-WWII climate, Montessori was highly sensitive to such devotion and considered obedience in its relationship to self-control and the will:

> Obedience is no mechanical thing, but a natural force of social cohesion, intimately related to the will, even its sublimation. At first sight this

statement may astonish, but it is true. Obedience of the right kind is a sublimation of the individual's will, a quality in the human soul without which society could not exist. But an obedience without true self-control, an obedience which is not the consequence of an awakened and exercised will, brings whole nations to disaster (TEHP, p. 84).

Montessori claimed that all through life humans prepare for their future indirectly. She notes that all great achievers have experienced a previous period of intense effort towards a goal, not necessarily on the same lines as the final work. This effort has provided the necessary preparation of the spirit and has been an indirect preparation:

> …so indirect preparation was adopted as an integral part of the Montessori Method. We had seen that nature prepares indirectly in the embryo; she issues no orders until the organs have been prepared for obedience. Character, can be built only in the same way. Nothing is gained by mere imitation or forced obedience; there must be inner preparation by which obedience becomes possible, and such preparation is indirect (ENW, p. 56).

Montessori's study of young children's development of character confirmed her belief that the child was the transforming element of society:

> So we get an insight into the natural course of social embryology. It is usual to regard society as based on government and laws; the children reveal that there must first be individuals of developed will, and then a call which brings them together preceding organisation. First strength of will is needed, then cohesion by sentiment, and last cohesion by will (ENW, p. 66).

For the older child with a more abstract, reasoning mind, leadership becomes conscious:

> Little children go along harmoniously by themselves, but junior-age children need a leader to rule and command. They need another kind of organisation, one that would have been useless for the little children who were at a different stage of development. We can compare the two forms to a piece of weaving. When a piece of cloth is to be woven, the warp is prepared first. All the threads lie close together, but parallel to each other. This is like the society by cohesion. They are all fixed at one point, but they do not intermingle. The second stage is when the shuttle attaches all the threads together. This is like the work of the leader who connects all the people together. Yet it is necessary to have the warp, the society by cohesion, as a basis – or we could not weave a strong piece of cloth (1946, p. 138).

Montessori found interest in these ideas as a potential embryology of society, ever drawing attention to the social needs of the human being at each stage of life. Montessori saw education as the pathway to social reform with the individual forming the building blocks of the community. Here she gives clues on the value of social experience as a prerequisite for leadership:

> The social experience begun earlier must be continued, because the person who has never worked, who has never tried to make his own living, who has never mingled with people of different age and of different social classes, will with difficulty become worthy of becoming the leader of anything (FCTA, p. 91).

In this passage, Montessori is also hinting at a relationship between leadership and independence. For her, independence was "the basis of normal development" (AM, p. 117). Montessori saw independence as a prerequisite to freedom, and hence a fundamental outcome of education. The goal of independence shapes the adult's service to the child, so that serving is never an obstacle, but rather a lofty activity that enables self-mastery and supports human dignity:

> In reality, *he who is served is limited* in his independence. This concept will be the foundation of the dignity of the man of the future; "I do not wish to be served, *because* I am not an impotent" (MM, p. 97).

The notion of freedom and independence of each human being in his individual development as the precursor to interdependence, links back to nature's plan as Montessori perceived it:

> The man who, through his own efforts, is able to perform all the actions necessary for his comfort and development in life, conquers himself, and in doing so, multiplies his abilities and perfects himself as an individual. We must make of the future generation, powerful men, and by that we mean men who are independent and free (MM, p. 101).

> There is only one problem, and it is human development in its totality; once this is achieved in any unit – child or nation – everything else follows spontaneously and harmoniously (TEHP, p. 9).

Montessori's conception of time is complex and deserving of its own study. She perceives much that is sequential from the four planes of development, to curricular sequences. However, many Montessori routines are cyclical giving her philosophy a distinct life rhythm. In order to engage children with the environment, the teacher as leader sparks a cycle of invitation to collaborate,

presentation of something new, and an invitation to repeat the work. While presentations are given, other children work independently on their own work cycle following a repetitive sequence of gathering materials, concentrating on the work and then packing away. The teacher monitors the energy of the system, the curve of concentration and engagement as it flows through the work period. Difficulties encountered by the children are observed, isolated and analysed, before next steps are planned to address them. The honouring of time and the importance of "when" operates minute by minute, at the level of the entire lifespan, and at the level of human history.

3.8 Leadership for Social Reform and a Peaceful Creative Telos

Montessori was not the first scientist to turn to philosophical analysis to help unlock the riddles of her field, and her culturally coherent, if paradoxical, meta-narrative invokes a peaceful and creative telos of the progress of humanity:

> All humanity that works for the common good, even though it may be unaware of it, is creating the new world that must be the world of peace. The great efforts of men who have laboured, made discoveries, studied and suffered – all the work of mankind will be seen to have had one common purpose in the world that will be the word of peace (EP, p. 115).

The teleological aspect of Montessori's philosophy is revealed in her story of "The Nation of the Great River", documented in Grazzini (1997) and Krumins Grazzini (2005). The story describes the human bloodstream and its unceasing transport and communication to maintain harmony and equilibrium within the human body. The impressionistic fable is a metaphor for human unity in which Montessori again describes the undemocratic functioning of the human organism. As Grazzini points out, this is neither an apology for, nor a defence of political dictatorship and reminds us that:

> …her life was a witness to the many reasons, both ideological and personal, that placed her in opposition to any form of government that restricted freedom (Grazzini, 1997, p. 56).

Montessori's words are:

> We can imagine an adult society organised as a constructive society on the same lines as the children's, that is on the lines of this natural society of cohesion. Attachment to other people is the first stage which brings all

men to work for a common ideal. It would be good for men if society could be constructed like this, but we cannot command this. It must come from nature. If nature is the basis the construction will be superior, but without this basis there can only be an artificial construction which breaks down easily (CSW, p. 24).

In the fable, Montessori appears to be showing that human society is readying itself for unity. The fable underscores Montessori's distinct biological conception of creativity as a natural life energy that pervades all of nature, at every scale:

> …just as, in the individual human being, organs are built around separate centres of interest, to be later connected by the blood-circulatory system and the nerves into an integrated human organism…[we] see that so far humanity has been in an embryonic stage, and that it is just now emerging into true birth, able to consciously realise its true unity and function (TEHP, p. 2).

In the chapter entitled "Man – Whither Bound", Montessori has returned to children and education as pointers toward the pathway to peace, and the obligations of moral leadership she sees for teachers:

> World-shaking forces are now making the realisation of human unity an urgent necessity. The time is past when some racial groups or nations can be civilised, leaving others servile or barbaric. Persistence in these outworn ideas can lead only to further wars and self-destruction, and how can a general change of thought be effected but by the teacher, not as tyrant or missionary, but as essential leader of the rising generation? (TEHP, p. 77).

Montessori's conceptual architecture forms a mirror to her interpretation of the universal order of life, involving repeating patterns and processes. She argued that all human progress stands upon a natural "inner force" (MM, p. 24) and therefore external rewards and punishments were not only unnecessary, but a hindrance. Her principle of intrinsic motivation solidifies human dignity:

> The man who loses sight of the really big aim of his work is like a child who has been placed in a class below his real standing: like a slave, he is cheated of something which is his right. His dignity as a man is reduced to the limits of the dignity of a machine which must be oiled if it is to be kept going, because it does not have within itself the impulse of life (MM, p. 22).

This view did not negate the need for inspiring or charismatic leaders who could enjoy the satisfaction that seeds they have planted have hit fertile soil:

> There does exist, however, an external prize for man; when, for example, the orator sees the faces of his listeners change with the emotions he has awakened, he experiences something so great that it can only be likened to the intense joy with which one discovers that he is loved. Our joy is to touch, and conquer souls, and this is the one prize which can bring us a true compensation (MM, p. 25).

Montessori claimed the human spirit tended toward elevation and that "man does not work on a level, but going upwards" (CSW, p. 33). She saw spirituality as a universal sentiment needed by the human being who was by nature, a transformer of the environment:

> The child is the transformer of humanity because he takes everything from his environment. The child therefore brings a great hope and a new vision (AM, p. 62).

Montessori's ecological view of the human being as intimately connected to his environment, supports the development of an integrated approach to the care of human life:

> …the care of the human personality is broken up. On one side is the home which belongs to society, and is neglected or ignored by it; on the other is the school, also shut off from society, and finally the university. There is no unity of conception…only fragments which ignore one another…Hence there exists no true system of help for the development of life…this is the next step which civilisation must urgently take (AM, p 11).

Montessori was so convinced of the urgency of addressing the consequences of adult failures that she argued private effort was insufficient and a part must be played by politics and law (PR). In 1937 in front of hundreds of people in the Great Hall of Parliament in Copenhagen, Montessori founded, with her son, a political movement, which she called the Social Party of the Child. The Party, with a social and scientific vision, aimed to research and defend the power of childhood by making a sharp call to the public conscience. It quickly proclaimed the first public recognition of the Rights of the Child, which had been adopted by the League of Nations in the Geneva Declaration in 1924, and addressed critics who believed there was danger mixing politics and children:

> The danger that some see in…inviting the ugly note of strife to mar the sweetness and purity of childhood, are unfounded. It will be a case of the child rendering politics less vicious and more gentle rather than that of politics brutalising the child (PR, p. 15).

In 1941, while in India, Montessori wrote that the Party's intentions formed around a central point of action, the founding of an international Ministry of The Child that would go beyond the narrower concept and practice of Ministries of Education:

> …this must not be yet another social or charitable institution, or educational society. A State organisation is required, whose head, the Minister, embodies a State authority – an administrator of laws with legal power and influence to dispose of the wealth of the nation (PR, p. 14).

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which refers in article 25 to childhood as "entitled to special care and assistance". On the third anniversary of this occasion, Montessori was invited by UNESCO to send a message that would underscore the importance of the event:

> …if the child, whatever his origin, is educated during the first stage of his development, he will show characteristics far superior to those commonly attributed to him.
>
> We find ourselves at a moment in time in which spiritual life is neglected and materialism is extolled as a virtue; in which the physical prowess of human beings has surpassed that of nature and in which we glimpse the horror of universal destruction. Because of this, we proclaim that the development of creative energies, of the higher characteristics of human being, is one of the most urgent needs of our social life (FC, p. 8).

Perhaps a summary of Montessori's legacy can be granted to one of her biographers:

> People have often asked me, "What is the main principle of the Montessori system?" and I have often tried to find one. At first I used to think that it could conveniently be summed up as "a method of education through the senses and sense training." Then it seemed to me that "education by self-activity" described it better. Later, the phrase "education by means of liberty in a prepared environment" seemed more comprehensive. But during her later years Dr. Montessori emphasised another principle, which is, perhaps, the most fundamental of all, and one which might be looked upon as the very root and basis of her method, viz., the nature of the difference between the child and the adult (Standing, 1966, p. 7-8).

Decades after Montessori's call to action, the evolution of integrated systems to support human development across its various stages, progresses slowly. The potential of the child as a leader who can guide this work, seems misunderstood or missing in our actions, reinforcing the child's status as what Montessori referred to as a "forgotten citizen" (EP, 38).

3.9   Secondary Literature

While no research studies were found substantially addressing a Montessori perspective on leadership, the secondary literature contains some perspectives worthy of consideration. Reference was made to biographical works that highlighted aspects of Montessori's own leadership earlier in this chapter. Povell (2010) investigates Montessori's leadership in relation to the expansion of the Montessori movement in the United States. She finds Montessori demonstrated the power of a collaborative and inclusive leadership approach that drew on feminist leadership styles. Kendall (1991) addresses educational administration in a Montessori context, seeing the leader as servant and using the key concepts of prepared environment, adult as link and freedom based on choice. This author, later writing as Dubble (1998) presents an article on school administration using the idea of the school as a living organism, a thesis also incorporated within Kahn et al (1999), which elaborates a view of the school as an organism subject to a developmental continuum. Dubble begins by confirming that Montessori did not provide an administrative model, and school leaders have found direction from useful strategies and techniques from the business community, the public and independent schools, and non-profit organisations. Yet she questions the wholesale application of many of these approaches, saying the fit of most has not seemed entirely successful, a claim supported in Massey (2007). Rather Dubble states the principles of human development advocated by Montessori are a distinct reference to guide administrative work, thereby realigning the administrator role to a larger vision:

> In that same vein, we need to re-envision the Montessori school, not as an educational institution or organisation to be built and managed, but rather as an organism, something living and evolving; something to be developed and respected. Our administrative role, then, is directed by the same radical vision which Dr. Montessori saw as the goal of education. Our schools must seek the release of human potential in all aspects their work…If our schools are to reflect this same dedication to human growth, then this philosophy must not only guide our classrooms, but must also shape and guide our organisational strategies, our procedures and our communications (Dubble 1998, p. 37).

Montessori argued that the school must mean something else than a place of instruction (ENW). Dubble makes community the normal way of thinking about

school and envisages the alignment of everyone from the children to the governors. In Kendall (1991) she had argued that although organisations need management, the more important function of the administrator is to provide leadership – a willingness to deal with change, understood as a result of complex interrelationships rather than the rational choice of an appointed decision maker. Dubble (1998) writes that organisational thinking is better reframed as organic thinking, which emphasises human self-construction through the process of interaction. This cannot be completely controlled or predicted, but such a shift in thinking allows school to be considered part of the same dynamic continuum of growth which characterises human life:

> A deepening understanding of this interactive process this basic principle of human development must be our ultimate guide in evolving a living, responsive administrative theory and practice (Dubble 1998, p. 37).

Mirroring Montessori principles, Dubble advises that if we think of schools as living entities involved in self-construction:

> They are not primarily molded or shaped by the administrator, but rather evolve their unique personalities through interaction with the various elements of the school environment. In this view of a developing school, the emphasis is upon the activity of the school community rather than upon administrative directives (Dubble 1998, p. 38).

Dubble applies Montessori principles and practices to the concept of a prepared environment for a whole school community. She recalls Montessori's vision of linking the child to the environment to bring about independent development, giving the child time, freedom and autonomy of activity, inspiring learning through mistakes and encouraging self-evaluation within socially agreed-upon limits of responsible action. Dubble asks why it is so difficult to translate these interactive principles into our work with adults. She believes this may be because in our administrative roles, we revert from developmental organic thinking to the organisational:

> Organizational thinking too often seeks to manage for efficiency and to structure relationships hierarchically. The emphasis is on building and then maintaining through policies and procedures. However as we begin to see our schools as self-constructing entities and our administrative role as part of a living experience, the dominant way in which we plan and determine procedures in a Montessori school becomes a developmental process which incorporates those same elements that are critical to child's self-construction (Dubble 1998, p. 38).

Dubble confirms these elements are the prepared environment, the link between the individual and the environment, and freedom tied to responsibility. She does not deny the need for hierarchy, but writes that leadership in the Montessori environment is primarily through service:

> Montessori has given us the essential principles, the questions to ask in any given situation, "How can I serve the development of human potential? How can I respect and aid the life of this school, leaving it free, however, to construct itself?" (Dubble, 1998, p. 39)

Dubble (1998) and Kahn et al (1999) believe that such an approach moves the outcomes beyond problem solving, to long-term growth. The Montessori management vision becomes a pedagogical tool and evolving challenges are addressed through a cycle of evaluative enquiry beginning with observation, followed by reflection, questioning and action. In this way, Montessori's ecology can be seen as a set of organising principles and not a mere biologisation of social phenomena. What we have come to call Montessori education is a complexity of philosophy, psychology and education, though the core is a vision of the child within society.

Other Montessori researchers have touched on leadership. Pedersen and Pedersen (2008) write of leadership as an ingredient for life success and briefly describe how leadership is fostered in the Montessori classroom. Schaefer (2011) argues that the model of Montessori leadership, is brought to a lived reality in the Montessori early childhood community:

> Each child, but especially the older children, is a self-directed powerhouse. They are the leaders of themselves…all little teachers, who are needed by the other children, who answer questions, give suggestions, help correct mistakes, share their work and explain it, give small lessons, and protect the rules of engagement in *their* classroom (Schaefer, 2011, p. 5).

Schaefer's booklet is reflective, drawn from decades of training and experience as a founding head of school and is a rare publication addressing Montessori leadership. Schaefer sees each child as a centre of action and energy, flowing over, into and around the other centres. He claims this creates a great circle that extends beyond the classroom, but which contains the circle of life itself made small within the learning community:

> The Montessori classroom is a multi-dimensional partnership between the guiding adult and the child, and between and among the children – the

older with the younger, and the younger with the older. There is also an unwritten partnership between the teacher, the child, and children with the parents, and between the parents with each other. The centre and focus of this partnership is an implied covenant (Schaefer, 2011, p. 5).

A teacher's authority to lead the classroom emerges from her training and teaching credentials, and is acknowledged within her formal appointment to the school. Yet Montessori wrote:

It is responsibility that a leader should feel, not the authority of his position (ENW, p. 65).

Schaefer sees Montessori leadership as distributed. He contradicts views of Montessori as a solitary inspired genius working in isolation from others and confirms that throughout her training and career, she forged close relationships and collaboration with her teachers, colleagues and community leaders. Schaefer argues that in Montessori approaches, everyone has a leadership role which accords with their desire and capacity to lead, and that everyone has the responsibility to support transformation and creativity. He claims that Montessori leadership is often quiet and unobtrusive and that leadership must be viewed as manifest in small and large acts. He writes:

…leadership in a Montessori context is essentially different from leadership in business, or leadership in government, or leadership in the military or in sales or marketing or in the arts or even leadership in other more traditional schools. The argument also is that this dramatic and essential difference rises above and goes beyond all other forms of school leadership (Schaefer, 2011, p. 2).

Schaefer seems to claim that the rationale for Montessori leadership as a distinct model comes from a shared living and learning philosophy and common pedagogical practices, suggestive of organisational similarities. He outlines the radical differences in the design of Montessori classrooms compared to those of convention:

…horizontal non-hierarchical, serving and servant leadership. Leadership in the middle where the action is; where the independent creative activity begins and spills out from (Schaefer, 2011, p. 4).

This echoes Kendall's (1991) view that the Montessori approach to educational administration presents an alternative to the characteristic bureaucratic, top-down and managerial approach. Schaefer believes schools must have proper but

modest institutional structures, not dominated by mechanistic views of efficiency:

> Humans only run humanly, or maybe the better word is humanely. Humans make very poor machines. When they are given the independence and means, humans can often run very well. It is, of course, a central insight of Maria Montessori that children run exceptionally well, even optimally, as learners when they are given independence, in an environment prepared to meet their needs, and guided by sensitive, prepared and positive adults (Schaefer, 2011, p. 3).

Yet he spotlights a Montessori paradox, explaining that the quiet, unobtrusive leader must also be inspirational:

> Montessori leadership needs to inspire people toward a vision, a vision of a new world where children learn guided by an inner wonder, and given independence in an environment prepared to meet their vital needs, so they can develop their vast, unchartered human potential (Schaefer, 2011, p. 2).

Motivating the classroom and wider communities to join those in formal leadership positions toward the Montessori vision, strengthens the self-balancing aspects of Montessori's ecological approach:

> The educator must be as one inspired by a deep *worship of life*, and must, through this reverence, *respect,* while he observes with human interest, the *development* of the child life. Now, child life is not an abstraction; *it is the life of individual children*. There exists only one real biological manifestation: the *living individual*; and toward single individuals, one by one observed, education must direct itself. By education must be understood the active help given to the normal expansion of the life of the child (MM, p. 104).

Of particular interest to the researcher is the expansion of the life of second and subsequent generations of Montessori families. This phenomenon sees someone who had attended a Montessori program as a child, undertake formal Montessori as an adult and begin a new generation of Montessori commitment. No publications were found addressing this phenomenon, but it would seem to offer interesting research possibilities for Montessori leadership from the perspective of preparation of the self.

Although Montessori programs are biologically-based, a philosophical orientation was necessary to begin the higher-level conversations about humanity and its cosmic task (Kahn, 2005). Montessori covered a terrain of values, morality and ethics that has yet to be substantially illuminated for the

contemporary researcher, but organised in alignment with her view of nature's ecology. She likens living species to servants in a large house, or employees in a business, each having its own duties to serve the harmony of nature (AM). Montessori claimed this does not debunk evolutionary theory but develops it from its linear form (where descent is explained by adaption, heredity and involves progressive steps toward an indefinite perfection) into a multi-dimensional form including many functional relationships linking the activities of different forms of life, not simply as mutual help, but as linked to a universal end concerning the whole world as a unity. Montessori's granddaughter explains:

> Education as an aid to life does not mean to human life alone. That would indeed by a poor and self-defeating aim. Education as an aid to life embraces life in all its glorious variations and the delicate, intricate relationships of all things living and non-living in our universe (Montessori, R., 2016, p. 6)

Montessori felt this was evidence of an additional force beyond mere survival, a force bringing all living things to work together as part of a child-centred global order, wherein all receive the elements necessary for their existence, but work for a harmonious common end:

> The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind. If we therefore mind this embryo as our most precious treasure, we will be working for the greatness of humanity (EP, p. 31).

Herein lies a great Montessori paradox. This is, that a mature strong, peaceful and cohesive human community within an ecologically sustainable environment emerges from a base of individual development, beginning in the earliest years.

3.10 Linking Montessori's Legacy to the Leadership Literature

Montessori's vision appears to have some affinity with leadership models such as servant leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, spiritual leadership and charismatic leadership and includes aspects of leaderless, cross-cultural and feminist perspectives. Montessori can also be connected with theorists such as Heifetz (1994), Maturana and Virela (2001) and Wheatley (2006) who draw from biological and ecological principles that embody paradoxes, holism and self-organising natural systems. The centrality of

the child, powered by inner constructive forces and helped or hindered by a prepared environment provides Montessori's perspectives on leadership with distinction. She argues for the release of human potential via the free independent development of each individual, an indirect and apparently unique preparation for leadership. Montessori felt that embryology and studies of children must inform a science of the human spirit, to which all must subscribe (ENW). The child is not central to existing leadership theories. Rather existing theories suggest a set of overlapping but frequently unconnected pointers that are largely directed towards adults as a group disconnected from childhoods and children. Montessori's lifelong unity of conception is missing from the leadership literature. Her emphatic voice is absent from mainstream academic discourse and the work of contemporary Montessori leaders remains ignored or marginalised.

Montessori's vision was to consider the child-adult continuum in its totality and in its relationship to the world. Her leadership model is incongruent with models that disregard the life of the leader outside of appointed work. The childhood or domestic responsibilities of the leader appears only of interest for leaders with fame or notoriety and there appears no conception, with the exception of royalty, that leadership can be approached from the earliest stages of life. Montessori did not argue that leadership can be taught directly. Rather she believed that there were inherent human characteristics that can be encouraged or discouraged, even annihilated by elements in the environment. She advocated a prepared environment to serve the human potential at each stage of life. Her vision is of global problems being addressed by serving children:

> If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men (AM, p. 3-4).

Perhaps the greatest paradox comes from the Greek etymology of pedagogue – a leader of children - which Montessori emphasised must be balanced by a deep understand of children as the leaders of adults:

> Now it is for society as a whole to take over conscientiously the responsibility of education, while education in its turn will liberally compensate society by the benefits resulting from its progress. Education so conceived, no longer matters only to children and their parents, but also to the state and to international relationships (AM, p 13).

Infancy is a period of true importance, because, when we want to infuse new ideas, modify or better the habits and customs of a people to breathe new vigour into its national traits, we must use the child as our vehicle; for little can be accomplished with adults (AM, p 60).

A review of the Montessori literature found that Montessori was a leader of significance who was well-informed, and who valued the work of many eminent leaders from her own and other disciplines. While Montessori wrote little directly about leadership, her subtle and indirect references are indicative of a strong position. Her ideas about human nature, social reform and peace were identified as having relevance for contemporary leadership. Few publications were found in the secondary literature that addressed a Montessori perspective on leadership, and no publications that addressed the subject with a substantial research effort. Montessori's pedagogical approach must be interpreted for leadership, but can be seen as offering potentially fruitful directions for researchers and practitioners.

In the next chapter, the methodological approach guiding the study of a Montessori perspective on leadership with contemporary leaders is presented.

Chapter 4
Methodology

Paradox – the permanent significance of something can first be known objectively only when it belongs to a closed context – in other words, when it is dead enough to have only historical interest. Only then does it seem possible to exclude the subjective involvement of the observer. This is in fact a paradox… (Gadamer, 2013, p. 309)

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to address the research question "What perspective on leadership emerges from the principles and practices advocated by Maria Montessori (1870-1952)?" The major theoretical approaches to leadership were reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 reviewed the Montessori primary and secondary literature through the lens of leadership. Montessori's principles and practices were interpreted as offering a distinct perspective founded on the notion of the child as the constructor of the adult.

However, this study also sought to interpret the perspectives of contemporary Montessori professionals, by drawing on their experience working with the principles and practices in a leadership context. In this chapter, the methodological approach for this investigation - philosophical hermeneutics as developed by Gadamer (2013) – is outlined. Firstly, the rationale for choosing Gadamer's hermeneutics and for using semi-structured interviews to generate contemporary data is explained. Secondly, the key stages in the interview data collection and analysis processes are described – the method of selecting participants, the way the interviews unfolded, the organisation of interview data and the steps taken to analyse the data. This chapter also addresses ethical issues and validity.

4.2 Interpretation and Understanding

How we do research is very much shaped by our conceptions of research. Klenke (2008) considers contemporary qualitative inquiry to be about philosophical ideas rather than method. The philosophical idea at the heart of

this thesis is interpretation. Over sixty years have passed since Montessori's death and there is now a new story on Montessori's legacy. Her principles are being interpreted as applicable and useful for an ever-broadening range of fields. This study interprets Montessori's principles for a coherent perspective on leadership. The key research processes within the study were interpretation of Montessori's publications and interpretation of current Montessori leaders' voices.

Initially this study began with a phenomenological intent and a desire to study leadership as a phenomenon, as it appeared to the consciousness. The idea was to investigate the lived experience of contemporary Montessori leaders. However early in the investigation, the researcher's interest in deeply linking interview data back to philosophical questions within Montessori's original texts, took the emphasis away from phenomenology toward interpretation. Grounded theory was also investigated as a potential methodology, but as Montessori did not consider herself a theoretician and the intention of the research was not to construct theory, this approach was discarded,

Gadamer's (2013) *Truth and Method* confirms that the classical discipline concerned with the art of interpretation is hermeneutics. He develops hermeneutics philosophically using the key question of understanding:

> Interpretation is necessary when the meaning of a text cannot be immediately understood (Gadamer, 2013, p. 345).

> It is the task of hermeneutics to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning (Gadamer 2013, p. 303).

Gadamer's work in *Truth and Method* was consulted as a philosophical guide on interpretation during this study. Gadamer opens his *magnum opus* by arguing that human science is concerned with:

> …establishing similarities, regularities, and conformities to law…The involvement of free decisions – if they exist – does not interfere with the regular process, but itself belongs to the universality and regularity which are attained through induction (Gadamer, 2013, 3).

Theoretically, Gadamer's view is that human understanding is always about history and language. He is unconcerned with a methodology for correct interpretation, focussing on describing understanding. Gadamer indicates that understanding is the basic condition for human experience and enquiry. He argues that all understanding takes place within language and that interpretation is the human being's mode of being in the world.

This study proceeds on the basis that Montessori's legacy can be understood as offering a contribution to the contemporary field of leadership through interpretation. The theme of interpretation sits comfortably within Montessori philosophy and the approach she envisioned to her work has been described as hermeneutic-empirical (Röhrs, 1994). Montessori prepared her teachers for interpreting their observations of phenomena with long, patient exercises:

> They must be like him who, having learned to spell, finds himself, one day, able to read behind the written symbols the *thought* of Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Dante (MM, p. 10).

While in training, teachers work on technique. In practice, their interpretation and response to serving the individual child has all the freedom and limits of improvisation. Massey (2007) argues that Gadamer (2013), reflecting on the interpretive, rather than canonical work of artists, touches on this interpretive work teachers do re-enacting Montessori traditions passed on in training:

> …we do not allow the interpretation of a piece of music or a drama the freedom to take the fixed "text" as a basis for arbitrary, ad-lib effects, and yet we would regard the canonization of a particular interpretation … as a failure to appreciate the real task of interpretation. A "correctness" striven for in this way would not do justice to the true binding nature of the work, which imposes itself on every interpreter immediately, in its own way, and does not allow him to make things easy for himself by simply imitating a model (Gadamer, 2013, p. 123).

Rather, Gadamer writes that traditions always incorporate an element of freedom and history:

> Even the most genuine and pure tradition does not persist because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation, and it is active in all historical change. But preservation is an act of reason, though an inconspicuous

one…preservation is as much a freely chosen action as are revolution and renewal (Gadamer, 2013, p. 293).

Gadamer also reminds us of the relationship between hermeneutics and the humanistic cultivation of the self, a process of becoming with spiritual connections, which may require the sacrifice of the particular for the sake of the universal:

> If the heart of the hermeneutical problem is that one and the same tradition must time and again be understood in a different way, the problem, logically speaking, concerns the relationship between the universal and the particular. Understanding then, is a special case of applying something universal to a particular situation (Gadamer, 2013, p. 322).

Gadamer argues interpretation is not an occasional, art or technique, but a unified process of understanding, interpretation and application, correctly modelled in legal and theological hermeneutics. He argues that a preoccupation with objective method or technique alienated researchers from life and he describes what we do when we interpret, even if this is unconscious. His hermeneutics is an experience of truth, a way of doing philosophy. It is:

> …not, therefore, a methodology of the human sciences, but an attempt to understand what the human sciences truly are, beyond their methodological self-consciousness, and what connects them with the totality of our experience of the world (Gadamer, 2013, p. xxii).

In this study, Gadamer's *Truth and Method* was used as a philosophical foundation rather than a true methodology and his development of the hermeneutical situation became a guide for the development of the research.

4.3   Prejudices and Horizons

Gadamer (2013) develops the hermeneutical situation ontologically, in terms of making conscious any anticipatory ideas. He sees that our fore-conceptions can be derived from the things themselves, thereby enabling us to exclude everything that could hinder us from understanding:

> It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition…(Gadamer, 2013, p. 282).

Gadamer is seeking to bring prejudices out of their hiding. Montessori also wrote many times about unconscious prejudices within science and education, similarly claiming these were obstacles that hid from us the child's true nature and potentiality. Aligned with Gadamer, she argued that prejudices had a historicity and were so universal that it was difficult to have them recognised:

> As we mentioned, however, there is a great obstacle to the scientific study of man. This obstacle is formed by the prejudices accumulated during thousands of years and which have become as solid, as majestic and almost as inaccessible as glaciers. A courageous exploration is therefore needed, a struggle against adverse elements, for which the ordinary weapons of science, i.e. observation and experiment, do not suffice (FM, p. 9).

Montessori called upon adults to become conscious of these obstacles, and to guard against the effects of prejudice, when trying to understand the child. Even within trained and experienced adults, however, she acknowledged, prejudices could become a barrier:

> A kind of *amour proper* withheld the attention of the great from these manifestations which none the less were connected with an unknown factor of a psychological nature. Thus an obstacle was put in its way – *an insurmountable barrier was raised between that illuminating experience and those very people who by virtue of their culture should have been able to interpret and utilize it* (FM, p. 20).

Gadamer resurrects the notion of prejudice, doing justice to people's historical mode of being. Prejudices now become conditions of understanding:

> …all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice [which] gives the hermeneutical problem its real thrust…the fundamental prejudice…is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power (Gadamer, 2013, p. 283).

Gadamer continues to outline the hermeneutic situation, introducing his notion of the horizon as the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. To have a horizon means not being limited to the nearby but being able to see beyond it:

The concept of "horizon" suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand – not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion (Gadamer, 2013, p. 316).

For Gadamer, the concept of horizon is open and dynamic. The hermeneutical phenomenon assumes there is never a true closure:

The horizon is rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion (Gadamer, 2013, p. 314).

This aligns with Montessori's vision of development as dynamic and pertaining to the individual. Gadamer demonstrates that hermeneutics owes its central function within the human sciences to the rise of historical consciousness. A text cannot be reducible to the author's intentions, but is shaped by a lengthy tradition of history and culture, and interpretation is necessarily guided by both our horizons and prejudices. Prejudices, not fixed and limited, nor distinguished from past ground, influence the hermeneutic situation as they constitute the horizon of the present, beyond which it is impossible to see. Gadamer sees that the interpreter must make a special effort as we:

…are always affected, in hope and fear, by what is nearest to us, and hence approach the testimony of the past under its influence. Thus it is constantly necessary to guard against overhastily assimilating the past to our own expectations of meaning. Only then can we listen to tradition in a way that permits it to make its own meaning heard (Gadamer, 2013, p. 316).

Here, Gadamer is adding the temporal element to interpretation, appearing to warn that good research takes time, and that historic texts retain meaning for modern situations. According to Gadamer's guidance, considering Montessori's work as merely historical would be to consider it as the voice of an unreachable other:

The text that is understood historically is forced to abandon its claim to be saying something true (Gadamer, 2013, p. 314).

The purpose of this thesis was not to limit the research to a reconstruction of Montessori's historical horizon, nor to highlight the researcher's own experience of leadership in a Montessori context. Rather, these elements formed an interpretive triangulation with the work of contemporary Montessori leaders, whose own historical consciousness has shaped the horizons out of which they live. Echoing Gadamer, these are not isolated horizons, and:

> Understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves (Gadamer, 2013, p. 317).

To move toward a fusion of horizons, Gadamer explicates the hermeneutic priority of the question:

> In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know… the path of all knowledge leads through the question (Gadamer, 2013, p. 371).

The research question in this thesis relates to what perspective on leadership emerges from the principles and practices advocated by Montessori. Gadamer writes that the suspension of judgments and prejudices has the logical structure of a question. He claims the essence of the question is to open up possibilities and keep them open. In this study, semi-structured interviews with current leaders were undertaken to ensure the inclusion of contemporary perspectives. These interviews formed a platform for further questioning about a Montessori perspective on leadership.

4.4   Qualitative Method

This study fits within the qualitative field of enquiry outlined in Denzin and Lincoln's (2008a) benchmark handbook, a field offering strength in handling small samples, and the absence of a requirement for precision. The first edition of the handbook in 1994 mapped the field and was expanded in 1998 to include justice and equity issues. By 2005, the authors argued qualitative research was still defined by tensions, contradictions and hesitations, but calls for mixed-methods were becoming common. The 2008 edition reports that all enquiry is

now perceived as political and moral and the days of value-free research are over. By 2011, the edition demonstrates the fracturing of the field into diverse directions, contending paradigms and blurred genres. Online methods, critical race and ethnic studies, border theory, queer theory, zombie categories, self-reflexivity, poetics and performance texts and others represent expanding ideas of what constitutes legitimate inquiry.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008b) write about the contemporary qualitative researcher as bricoleur, one who has learnt to bring together pieces from many disciplines and fit them to a complex situation. While for the researcher, the investigation aligned with Montessori's concept of a personal and multi-disciplinary "great work", the scale of the data collection was small and intimate. Patton (2002) argues that it is quality, rather than quantity that matters in qualitative work. A small number of cases may generate empowering insights that can become the centrepiece of policy, staff development, or further research.

In this study, the researcher is positioned as an insider, one who already has an attachment to, or involvement with, the institutions or social groups in which their investigations are based (Sikes and Potts, 2008). Patten (2002) claims the inside perspective powers qualitative reporting, potentially offering findings which are simple and elegant, yet nuanced and insightful. Studies such as Yakushko, Bandiee, Mallory and Wang (2011) show insider researchers can experience tensions and misunderstandings in their work with participants arising from issues of power or privilege, or differing goals and priorities. Consideration has been given to the insider-outsider problem by researchers in philosophy and religion (Gardiner & Engler, 2012) and other qualitative fields (Gair, 2012). Insider positioning brings access to the people and/or phenomena being investigated and is growing in legitimacy and use, particularly within fields such as education where relationships are central (Sikes and Potts, 2008). Webber and Sherman (2008) write that insider perspectives are useful for their political sensitivity in studies of educational leadership.

In this study, the researcher's two decades of involvement in the Australian Montessori community brought more depth than challenges to the work. An outsider stance is no longer considered necessary or even possible to guard against over-identification and the significance of the insider's potential insight

and empathy within a study has been confirmed. Insider-outsider positioning can be dynamic along a continuum and even illusory. McNess, Lore and Crossley (2015) revisit the dualism in light of qualitative research methodologies seeking to be more inclusive, participatory, reflexive and nuanced. They argue that increased migration of people, ideas and policies makes it more difficult to define who is inside or outside professional communities or research environments, identifying a third liminal space on the boundary where socio-cultural and individual understandings meet. Planel (2016) claims that the positioning of the researcher depends on the positioning of the research and that this should be seen as an additional methodological dimension that impacts the value and relevance of the findings in different contexts. Polarised insider-outsider stands do not account for individuals involved in the research having multiple identities, as do the agencies with which all have to interact (Milligan, 2016). Gadamer (2013) brings the argument back to dialogue, stating that the first condition of the art of conversation is ensuring that the other person is with us. In this study, insider status could be argued to ensure the interviewer and participants were "with each other". To be an insider, is to support an interpretation of vignettes that is coherent with Montessori's pedagogical orientation.

Miles and Huberman (2002) argue that qualitative research is a craft with its own disciplines and their work informed this study's consideration of methodological risk. These writers document the maturation and cross-fertilisation of qualitative research but argue that in spite of progress, the actual research process remains unclear. Textbooks often draw on hypothetical cases, and the empirical reports are often vague about how the analyses were actually done. Miles and Huberman also claim methodology sections are sometimes buzzword shopping lists of devices with scant demonstration of the processes involved in analyzing particular sets of data. Similarly they claim:

> …terms such as *patterns, leitmotiv, capturing* and *bracketing*, and core codes seem to appear almost magically in reports that have boiled down hundreds of pages of transcripts and field notes to a half dozen pages of meaningful findings, with little explanation of *how* this process was accomplished…arguments made for the trustworthiness, validity, or usefulness of the findings are largely rhetorical or, at best, questionable (Miles & Huberman, 2002, p. x).

In response to their challenge, considerable time was spent experimenting with and documenting data analysis techniques that formed a transparent trail from data to findings. However, while regulated and formulaic approaches were straight-forward for the researcher, the true pathway in this research was an upwardly spiralling mixture of straight sections, side trips, cul-de-sacs and u-turns, so that the journey was ever unpredictable, uneven and nuanced.

4.5   Semi-Structured Interviewing

Gadamer's (2013) hermeneutics confirms that questioning and inquiry are more than a data collection technique:

> The certainty achieved by using scientific methods does not suffice to guarantee truth.… Rather, what the tool of method does not achieve must – and really can – be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiring, a discipline that guarantees truth (Gadamer, 2013, pp. 490-491).

Boudah (2011) states that there are several types of interviews that can be conducted in qualitative research from informal conversational interviews to those that are closed with a fixed response. Semi-structured interviews with guiding questions provided a good balance for this study by avoiding randomness and inconsistency, but offering flexibility and the opportunity for spontaneity. Kvale (1983) confirms there are no binding rules and the semi-structured form mirrors a guiding balance, neither free conversation, nor a highly structured and limited questionnaire. Questions may not be asked in the same order, nor identical wording used in each case, but the flexible structure retains an alertness that allows us to step back and reflect. The semi-structured interview offers a vehicle to develop a conversational relationship with a partner about the meaning of an existence (Van Manen, 1990). Gadamer (2013) writes that interrogation involves a mindfulness of the horizon brought to our questions. Experience cannot be had without questions, though they are not all explicit. Gadamer also reminds us that deciding the question is the path to knowledge:

> Only the person who knows how to ask questions is able to persist in his
> questioning, which involves being able to preserve his orientation toward
> openness. The art of questioning is the art of questioning ever further, i.e.
> the art of thinking (Gadamer, 2013, p. 375).

Galletta (2013) sees the semi-structured interview as a repertoire of possibilities with potential to attend to the complexity of a story in need of contextualisation. This standpoint, guided by theory but open to experience, confirms the researcher's horizons and prejudices are wound in to the iterative research to yield a more complete story. In designing the interview schedule for this study, the research themes were approached from a number of directions. This was considered preferable to an interview prompted by a single narrative-seeking question. Rather, the questions were potential prompts and not a battery that was asked of all interviewees. The idea was not to seek a biographical account, but to investigate what connections the leaders were making, as leaders, to aspects of Montessori principles and practices. The schedule did not strictly follow Galletta's three-segment example which moves from very open-ended questions focused on concrete experience to more specific theory-driven questions. The first question in the main body of the interview invited participants to open up their leadership trajectory by beginning a narrative on how they had become leaders. From this question, the schedule subsequently roamed around much as one might do when first setting forth on a relatively unexplored field:

> There is no such thing as a method of learning to ask questions, of
> learning to see what is questionable. On the contrary, the example of
> Socrates teaches that the important thing is the knowledge that one does
> not know (Gadamer, 2013, p. 374).

However, in keeping with Galletta's approach, meaningful junctures in the participant's stories could be noted and where possible, probed for greater exploration. The researcher as neither a passive, nor an equal participant, responds to Gadamer's (2013) invitation to transpose the self. According to Gadamer this can be understood as:

> Neither in the empathy of one individual for another, nor the subordination
> of another to our own standards; rather, it involves rising to a higher
> universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of
> the other (Gadamer, 2013, p. 316).

Kvale (1983) explains that in the interview, vocalisation, facial expressions, other body language are observed and interpreted and the interviewer must be sensitive to the said and not said, and be open to the unexpected. Meaning may be implicitly derived by reading between the lines and a formed message then returned to the interviewee for confirmation. Gathering precise description for interviewer interpretation is the focus, although the interviewee may also interpret. Kvale also describes the reciprocal influence whereby the interviewer and interviewee have interpersonal interaction characterised by positive feelings, anxiety or defensiveness, in either or both, gives strength to the method. Cognitive and emotional tones add to the interpretive information coming from the interview and it can be difficult to terminate an interview with someone who has responded well to the interviewer's interest, sensitivity and understanding. In this way, the semi-structured interview has the tone of a conversation. Gadamer (2013) writes that a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct. Rather it takes its own twists and reaches its own conclusions, so that the people involved are the led, not the leaders:

> No one knows in advance what will "come out" of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us. Thus we can say that something was a good conversation or that it was ill fated. All this shows is that a conversation has a spirit of its own and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it – i.e., that it allows something to "emerge" which henceforth exists (Gadamer, 2013, p. 401).

Montessori's emphasis on purposeful work and consciousness provides balance here. In this study, the interview was a purposeful conversation in which comments from the researcher were intentionally minimised to play an affirming, guiding or checking role. The interview closed with an "anything else?" question.

4.6   The Preliminary Interview

A few weeks before the main data collection, a one-hour preliminary or pilot interview was conducted with a Montessori leader in Australia. A pilot is

recommended to fulfil the role of a rehearsal before the main event (Wengraf, 2001; Galletta, 2013). In this study, the pilot leader was invited to participate because of her qualifications and her longstanding and varied experience as a leader within the Montessori sector. This pilot interview was conducted via Skype videoconferencing at a time of the pilot leader's choice. The pilot leader spoke from her office at the school where she worked, and the researcher worked from home.

The pilot interview served a number of specific purposes. Firstly, it was a valuable exercise in testing out the some of the technology used for the data collection process. Skype, together with the use of a voice recording tool, proved useful and cost-effective in bridging the geographical gap, though it did not give the same feeling of rapport and intimacy between researcher and participant that can be achieved in a face-to-face setting. Only the leader's face could be seen on the computer screen and the jerky character of the picture feed, while the best option available, could not match a face-to-face situation for ease of interpreting body language and the wider physical space of the interview setting.

However, use of Skype facilitated a non-pressured time space in which both interviewer and researcher could come together. For example, at the scheduled time for the pilot interview to begin, the pilot leader was required to attend to a conversation with a staff member. This brought a brief delay to the beginning of the pilot that could be easily accommodated by a researcher working from home on a flexible time schedule.

Secondly, the pilot enabled questions on the interview schedule to be tested out, both in terms of their wording, and also in terms of the number of questions that could be comfortably addressed within the interview timeframe. Some tweaking of the interview questions and schedule occurred as a result of the pilot to ensure the meaning of all questions was as clear as possible, and to encourage more in-depth responses. One of the questions in the interview schedule asked participants whether their Montessori beliefs or training had been any kind of hindrance to their leadership work. This was a question that had been considered for deletion. It was thought that there was a risk that participants might uniformly leap to a "no" response to highlight the benefits of Montessori

training and/or pedagogy, or to defend their philosophy. However, the pilot leader was cheerful and clear in her response:

> Yes, I am trained to recognise potential and in a classroom, seeing potential in a child is a really, really good tool. As a head of school, sometimes it can cloud your view of an employee. And so I think there have been one or two times when seeing someone's potential and overlooking really what they bring to the plate is not a healthy thing. So, in other words, I've given someone more than once the benefit of the doubt for too long. You know, sometimes you just need to part ways with someone. And if you see their potential and you want to nourish that, sometimes as a leader you have to put that aside (Pilot Leader).

The hindrance question remained in the schedule.

Thirdly, the pilot provided an opportunity to practice the techniques of interviewing and identify potential points of consciousness for the main data collection. For example, a transition question between the background questions and the main body of the interview was "How did you become a Montessori leader?" In answering this question, the pilot leader described some facts that precipitated her moving into a leadership role. She finished her answer to this question by making the statement that it had become evident to her that "there was probably more for me to offer." In the interests of keeping the interview moving toward the main body of questions, this comment was glossed over. However, in hindsight, further exploration of the meaning behind this comment may have shed light on the pilot participant's ideas about the meaning and experience of Montessori leadership for her.

During the main body of the interview, techniques to draw out more or clearer statements from the participant were practiced. These included using "Hmm…" as an acknowledgment that did not totally close the door on an answer, but provided opportunity for the participant to continue if desired; and specifically seeking clarification by paraphrasing and checking on an answer, asking "…is that what you mean?" Finally, the pilot proved a particularly important exercise given that the main data collection was to occur internationally, with a small sample, in a "one opportunity only" setting.

4.7   Choosing the Participants

In this study, AMI pedagogical standards informed the selection of participants. The United States has the largest number of AMI Montessori training centres and was hence perceived to be the richest source of leaders who had experienced the traditions and rigour of AMI Montessori teacher training. The United States was also distinct in having an established system of recognition for schools through the AMI-USA affiliate organisation. Qualified leaders who had a minimum of five year's leadership experience in an AMI-USA recognised school were invited to participate in the study. Informed decisions about the way participants are chosen, are critical to improving the quality of research. Galletta (2013) writes that an ideal approach is to continue to recruit participants until there is a saturation point and no new thematic patterns are emerging. This challenging and hard to determine ideal, could not be approached in this study due to practical and financial constraints, as well as the broad nature of the inquiry. Rather, given the tight time frame within which data needed to be collected, the method of choosing participants was what Patton (2002) refers to as purposeful sampling. This approach is used to select participants who are information rich and who are therefore perceived as holding considerable potential for learning about the phenomena in question.

Around the middle of 2012, the time planned for the data generation, two immediately sequential events, a retreat and a training course, were scheduled for Montessori administrators at one location in the United States. More than sufficient qualifying leaders were expected to attend either or both of these events over a two week period. It was decided to capitalise on the events for data generation, so that the selection of participants was therefore not only purposeful, but convenient. Patton (2002), states that convenience sampling makes use of geographically concentrated populations for ease of access and can be beneficial through saving resources. In this study, it would have required extensive interstate and international travel to select a more ideally representative group of qualified and experienced leaders globally. The drawback of convenience sampling is that the population is rarely representative of the general population and there are often underlying, perhaps unmeasured attributes associated with membership of the convenience sample. While this could potentially bring about bias toward a particular social or cultural

background, the practical benefits of choosing the participants this way were critical to the success of the study.

At the two administrator events, participants were invited to volunteer for the study. A brief summary of the research was read to all attendees at the beginning of each event, and interested volunteers were invited to make discreet contact with the researcher as a fellow attendee during the events. One potential respondent sought further clarification of the requirement for at least five years "leadership experience", but this requirement was not defined further and it was left up to potential participants to make their own decision about whether they qualified.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that commonly in interview studies the number of interviews tends to be around fifteen, plus or minus ten and speculate that this number may be due to a combination of available resources as well as the law of diminishing returns. The plan was to find ten to fifteen qualifying respondents. This proved achievable and fourteen participants (Leaders A to N) were selected and engaged with the researcher. The group included three males and eleven females and although all were current leaders in a school context, there was some diversity. The youngest participants were aged in their 30s and the oldest in her 70s. In keeping with the study requirements, all leaders had a minimum of five years' experience in a leadership role, but the most experienced participant had been a head of school for over forty years. The schools in which the participants worked, varied between large and small, city-based and rural. Some participants worked in a role that involved teaching and others were solely devoted to administration or governance.

No practical and ethical means was found for checking the qualifications of participants or their history of leadership experience. Trust was offered to volunteers that they would only put themselves forward for this study if they met the criteria announced at the events. Although it had been requested that participants were to have at least five years of experience in an AMI recognised school, it emerged after the interviews that one participant's school had not yet met one of the technical requirements for recognition. However, it seemed clear that this participant was committed to the process of recognition and met the

other criteria for recognition, so the interview data for this participant was not eliminated from the analysis.

4.8   Generating the Data

The interview data for this study was generated between July and October 2012. Nine of the fourteen interviews were conducted face-to-face at the conference centre in the United States at mutually agreeable times in program gaps over the duration of the two Montessori events in July and August. Each participant was given a copy of the approved Explanatory Statement associated with this study, to read just prior to the interview and had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. Each participant was also asked to complete a formal consent to the interview. All participants gave permission for their interview to be audio-recorded digitally and a small hand-held device was used for this purpose. Every practical effort was made to ensure the confidentiality of interviewees. However due to the confined nature of the event it is possible that some others gained some knowledge of which event participants may have volunteered for the study.

Interviews took place at a mutually agreeable time for the researcher and participant and were up to an hour in length. These were mostly at the conference centre, but some took place at a later time via Skype. In one case, at the interviewee's suggestion, an interview was conducted in a large room with two other conference attendees present in the room, but at a distance. All other face-to-face interviews were conducted in an isolated room or outside in the garden. Due to time constraints, the remaining five volunteers agreed to be interviewed via Skype from Australia following the two events.

Wengraf (2001) describes a general top-down model for developing an interview schedule progressing from the research question to a number of theory questions, to the final set of interview questions. In this study, the development of questions was less formally undertaken but reflected a balance of question types as described in Boudah (2011). As there were no known studies of a Montessori perspective on leadership, an open mind was kept about what questioning approaches and which aspects of Montessori philosophy or of

leadership might be most revealing. The interview schedule consisted of two main parts. The first part was a preliminary section with mostly closed questions that gathered some background data about each participant. The second part was a guiding toolkit of open-ended questions which were developed from the researcher's own experience and which invited participants to reflect on their own leadership within the Montessori context.

Asking each participant about the meaning of leadership was an ontological probe rather than an exercise in analytical philosophy. Finding out who the leaders were as people and gaining a sense of their lived experience was of interest. Questioning how they came to be leaders cast them as persons with historicity and provided a basis for further questioning. The study aimed to draw out an epistemology of Montessori leadership – beliefs and truths, a knowing that and a knowing how, to form a perspective that could be articulated. Questions also sought to understand the participants' values. How the good, the right and the beautiful were balanced in a contemporary setting supported by Montessori's century old axiology.

Ragin, Nagel and White (2004) write that it is often a challenge to specify a structured data collection and analysis plan in advance. They claim that qualitative research is similar to prospecting for precious stones and where to look next often depends on what was just uncovered. The researcher as miner/prospector learns the lay of the land by exploring it, one site at a time. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) contrast the miner metaphor with the traveller metaphor where one journeys to a distant land. In this approach, the interviewer roams over uncharted terrain, or wanders along with a map, encountering locals who contribute to the story to be told upon arrival back home. As some of the interview knowledge was given and some was constructed, both of these metaphors seemed important in this study.

The interview schedule was used as a guide rather than a proforma for questioning, and none of the participants were given the questions prior to the interview. While all interviews began with the preliminary background questions and the first of the main body questions, the order of questioning subsequently varied within each interview. The schedule comprised thirty-one potential questions, with the last question inviting participants to add anything

relevant that had not been covered. The list of questions was too lengthy for the time available, but the interview was selective and not all questions were asked of each participant. There was a maximum time limit of one hour allocated for each interview. Within this hour, participants were allowed as much time as they wished to explain their experiences. As well as this, interviews sometimes unfolded in unique directions or stayed for a long time in one part of the schedule to delve more deeply for clarification.

At the end of each interview the electronic audio file from the hand-held recording device was copied to the researcher's laptop computer and labelled with the participant's name and the date of the interview. An additional backup was made on an external hard drive that was kept in a different travel bag to the laptop. Upon arrival back in Australia, whereby the laptop and external drive remained with the researcher at home, a further backup was made and sent off site. All interview recordings were personally transcribed by the researcher. While this was very time-consuming, initial immersion within the data reflected a craft-like approach to research that was authentic to Montessori philosophy. This approach brought more learning opportunities for the researcher and was considered a more authentic means of capturing the meaning of leadership for the participants. Recalled body language or apparent emotional states were added to the verbal testimony during the transcription to give a more complete response to questions. For example, two of the participants experienced a level of emotion that seemed to almost bring on tears during their interviews. This element of the interview could have been lost had the transcription been outsourced. Hence transcribing in this study, became a way to gain a feel for the data before the more formal processes of data analysis got underway. Transcribing the data personally also affirmed the ethical responsibility of the researcher who is bound by the university's policies and procedures to ensure confidentiality as far as possible.

To begin with, a verbatim transcription was made, ensuring that all the long pauses, hesitations, ums and ahs, laughter and requests for the question to be repeated were maintained. This kept the conversational tone of the interview in tact within the written transcript. However, an interview varies from

conversation in question forms, dynamics of interactions and a consciousness toward what is said and interpreted:

> The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter-change of view between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p. 2).

Thus, the conversation is not between equal partners because the researcher defines and controls the situation, introducing the topic and critically follows up the participant's answers to questions. The experience of interviewing in this study confirmed any similarity of research interview to everyday conversation was illusory. A novice interviewer finds many methodological decisions must be made on the spot, without immediate recourse to a mentor, and there is considerable challenge juggling the time, space and framework of the interview, while being conscious of the purpose of the interview and mindful of ethical considerations. Contrary to the requirements of some professional contexts, thorough personal training in research interviewing may receive little emphasis in academia:

> The road to mastery of the interview craft through a transcribing task, an interview practicum, or ideally a research apprenticeship, may appear too cumbersome and time consuming. Rather than such a slow learning process, fast learning in a weekend course and an introductory textbook may in some instances by considered sufficient to embark on a Ph.D. project based on interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 94).

In this study, questioning became tighter, the interviews more relaxed and the management of mental distractions generally more polished over the weeks of interviewing. Not all participants received the same level of researcher proficiency and an appreciation for the long slow apprenticeship required to achieve interviewing mastery was an outcome for the researcher.

Realistically, the data analysis stage had already begun during the interview. As participants give their responses, a continuum was invoked in the mind of the researcher between being wholly in the moment, generating data and allowing a connection to form with the interviewee; and leaping forward, already

interpreting and analysing, anticipating and acting on insights gained. In transcribing, further interpretation and analysis is done to choose spelling for non-words made by the interviewee, apply punctuation and paragraphing, and to note where both participants in the interview were speaking at once. The overlap of transcription with data analysis, is explained by one writer as:

> …conveying in writing sounds used in speech that are not words, such as "uh" — I am starting to make arguable interpretations on paper of flows of sound in interaction. I create "sentences" by putting in capital letters, and full stops, and produce semi-colons, commas, dashes, etc. to make reading easier. The requirements of page, and the suggestions of meaning, induce us to produce the equivalents of "paragraphs". This cannot be avoided but it can be made conscious and explicit (Wengraf, 2001, p. 223).

This writer also refers to systems of paralinguistics, sometimes complex, which can offer formal micro-analysis of interview data. Such analysis was considered superfluous in this study where the emphasis was on maintaining a good balance between understanding the high-level whole and the parts. A copy of the transcription was sent to all participants with an invitation to make any changes to correct or clarify their comments. One participant proved hard to track down as she had moved to a different job and location between the interview and finalising the transcription. But eventually all transcriptions were approved by the participants with minimal changes requested. Changes sought were almost totally limited to correcting spelling errors or points of fact.

4.9   Analysing the Data

The relationships of the parts to each other and to the whole have an epistemic significance within the Montessori traditions:

> Here is an essential principle of education: to teach details is to bring confusion; to establish the relationship between things is to bring knowledge (FCTA, p. 58)

Gadamer (2013) considers the consequences of belonging to a tradition to be a condition of hermeneutics. He considers the ancient hermeneutic circle – understanding the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the

whole – as fundamental to all understanding. The circle is not formal, and neither subjective nor objective:

> …but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition (Gadamer, 2013, p. 305).

It is not a methodological circle, but describes an ontological structural element in understanding, in which only what constitutes a unity of meaning is intelligible. As we begin to understand at one level we are already governed by expectation of meaning following from what has gone before. As this expectation is adjusted, if the text calls for it, the text then unifies its meaning around another expectation and the movement of understanding goes back and forth from whole to part to whole again:

> Our task is to expand the unity of the understood meaning centrifugally. The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding (Gadamer, 2013, p. 302).

When we try to understand a text, we don't try to transpose ourselves into the author's mind, but into the perspective within which he has formed his views. We try to understand how what he could be saying is right:

> Hence the task of hermeneutics has always been to establish agreement where there was none, or where it had been disturbed in some way (Gadamer, 2013, p. 303).

This agreement is a continual fusion of these horizons:

> The discovery of the true meaning of a text or work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process…new sources of understanding are continually emerging that reveal unsuspected elements of meaning (Gadamer, 2013, p. 209).

In qualitative studies, the actual research process has often been unclear, with pages of transcripts almost magically boiled down to half a dozen pages of meaningful finding, with little explanation of how this was accomplished (Miles & Huberman, 2002). Gadamer guides the researcher in maintaining interpretive rigour:

> All correct interpretation must be on guard against arbitrary fancies and the limitations imposed by imperceptible habits of thought, and it must direct its gaze "on the things themselves"…For the interpreter to let himself be guided by the things themselves is obviously not a matter of a single "conscientious" decision, but it is "the first, last and constant task"…to keep one's gaze fixed on the thing throughout all the constant distractions that originate in the interpreter himself (Gadamer, 2013, p. 279).

Gadamer writes that these fore-meanings that determine our own understanding can go entirely unnoticed, but we cannot stick blindly to these if we want to understand the meaning of another:

> All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text…not everything is possible…The hermeneutical task becomes of itself a questioning of things… (Gadamer, 2013, p. 281).

Gadamer writes that a researcher trying to understand a text is prepared for it to say something and that a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be sensitive to the text's otherness. This means foregrounding prejudices, which is often provoked by an encounter with the text:

> Hermeneutic work is based on a polarity of familiarity and strangeness…it is in the play between the traditionary text's strangeness and familiarity to us, between being a historically intended, distanced object and belonging to a tradition. The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between (Gadamer, 2013, p. 306).

Gadamer clarifies the conditions under which such in-between understanding takes place. Prejudices cannot consciously be separated in advance into those that enable understanding and those that hinder it. This separation must occur during understanding, bringing about the significance of temporal distance. Over three decades ago, Kvale (1983) argued that the analysis stage of a study can be time-consuming and stressful and may be terminated by exhaustion or time-limit, rather than because the material is sufficiently analysed. Exhaustion and lack of time were not issues within this study, and a full year of even-paced part-time work was devoted to analysing the data. Identifying the best way for the data to be analysed was more challenging. Galletta (2013) offers up to date possibilities for analysis that acknowledge the role of political, social, legal and

other contexts providing a multi-layered and textured analysis characterised by a continual critical shift back and forth between individual experience and structural conditions. In this study, some themes such as trust and respect, which were explored in the early or middle stages of the data analysis, were later discarded or reframed. Montessori emphasised to a far greater extent than Gadamer, the importance of interest as a driver of mental processes. As there are limits in any doctoral project, personal interest was a welcome factor of influence in decision-making about which themes to explore and discuss most thoroughly.

The hermeneutic approach has been derived from a specific philosophical position, but tools such as coding were drawn from the general literature on qualitative method. Initially the raw data was hand-sifted and any alignment with key leadership theories noted. A few of the questions specifically referred to aspects of leadership that had been highly articulated in some of the main theories that were described in the literature review. These included questions on elements such as service, transformation and spirituality. In order to identify how leaders thought about these elements, a table in the format below was drawn up in which specific responses could be recorded against theories. While "alignment" suggests similarity of conceptualisation, differences of language made notes from this early analysis imprecise and tentative. Does servant leadership convey all of what Montessori explicates in her conception of "servant"? How do we find the areas of overlap between spiritual leadership as a model and the particular spirituality described by Montessori?

Chowdhury (2015) writes that the researcher must go beyond mere transcribing, coding and sifting. A whole range of analytical strategies including discourse analysis bring the work into a deeper region. Chowdhury's view is that qualitative data analysis risks contaminating the data and requires understanding of how a situation or process is interpreted from a particular background. Gadamer (2013) claimed that any act of analysis may be influenced by the distance that a text stands from the original speaker or writer.

Leadership Theory	Major Theorists	Characteristics of Theory	Leaders
Theory 1			Leader 1: Leader 2: Leader3: Etc.
Theory 2			Leader 1: Leader 2: Leader3: Etc.
Theory 3, etc.			Leader 1: Leader 2: Leader3: Etc.

Fig. 1: Table for first pass of data analysis

This first approach to data analysis offered some useful information about the data and provided a direct link back to the literature review, the writing of which was being undertaken at the same time. However, this approach proved to have too weak a connection to the research question, which focussed not on existing perspectives of leadership, but on a yet to be defined potential Montessori perspective on leadership. Compromising Montessori's vision to fit narrower conceptions of service, transformation, spirituality, and other leadership notions was found to be too limiting.

Issues of rigour also emerged from this first approach to data analysis. Some researchers feel comfortable with the haphazard appearance that can characterise the data analysis phase. Ragin *et al's* (2004) metaphoric description of data analysis as expert prospecting for precious stones, which may seem aimless to a naïve observer is nevertheless underpinned by an assumption that the expert prospector has become so, from knowledge of and experience with geological principles. In this way, the data was revisited for a second approach to analysis with the Montessori principles firmly in mind. This reflected the generally accepted process of data analysis as recursive (Boudah, 2011).

Gadamer (2013) writes that fusing horizons involves foregrounding the temporal distance. Only with time, does the real nature of a text appear. The subjectivity of the observer fades and then understanding can be authoritative and universal. Montessori also recognised the significance of spontaneity in the relationship of activity and hence understanding, to time (MM). Insight does not always need temporal distance and overthinking can be detrimental. Nevertheless, the benefits of temporal distance brought implications for the way in which this study was approached. The painstaking craftsmanship of slow research, often necessarily sacrificed within contemporary calls for speed and managerialist modes, formed part of the methodological approach. This seemed appropriate in that it mirrored Montessori's own approach to her work, which balanced cognition with cross-disciplinary study, and a deep historical consciousness, a regular pausing to consider the genesis and evolution of phenomena and its relationship to prejudice:

> Our contribution – however small and incomplete – however insignificant in the opinion of those working in the field of scientific psychology – will serve precisely to illustrate this enormous obstacle of prejudices which are capable of cancelling and destroying the contributions of our isolated experience. We would already have conferred a benefit of general importance were we only to succeed in proving the existence of these prejudices (FM, p. 16).

Brief consideration was given to using specialist software to save time and energy in this second data analysis stage. While this can free the researcher up to focus on the data, Stewart (2012) acknowledges this can also distance the researcher from the data. A fear of too great a distance from the data gave the researcher's preferred working style of painstaking open-ended craftsmanship priority. The detailed, coherent and paradox-embracing technical preparation of the Montessori teacher facilitates a distinctive approach to work that mirrors that of a traditional craftsman (Cossentino, 2009). Maintaining closeness to the data was seen as important and analysis was valued as an intellectually laborious endeavour which simply took time. No software other than Word was therefore used. However, a procedure was developed, based on the work of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), for the second approach to analysing the data in the phenomenological tradition:

1. Read through the whole interview to get a sense of the whole;
2. The researcher determines the natural meaning units;
3. The natural meaning unit is restated as simply as possible;
4. Interrogating the meaning units in terms of the specific purpose of the study;
5. Essential non-redundant themes of the entire interview are tied together into descriptive statement.

The researcher's first step should be to read and reread the data to begin grasping the sense of the whole. Gadamer explicates what happens in this process:

> …a person reading a text is himself part of the meaning he apprehends. He belongs to the text he is reading. The line of meaning that the text manifests to him as he reads it always and necessarily breaks off in an open indeterminacy (Gadamer, 2013, p. 349).

Reading and rereading the data with Montessori principles, rather than existing leadership theories in mind, generated a different "feel" for the data. The researcher is responsible for hearing the participants' voices, interpreting their perceptions and constructing meanings. Wengraf's (2001) formulaic pathway from research question to interview questions and back again to answer the research question, inspired the detail for the second pass of data analysis in this study. A more rigorous and transparent sequence for the analysis was developed to form a trail from raw data to results that could be more easily retraced back to raw data. This sequence involved the use of a number of data analysis tables, included as Appendix C. Digital cut-and-paste within and between Word tables was undertaken to organise the data, but the analytical thinking and decisions about which themes to code were made totally by the researcher.

At first the verbatim transcript and notes were chunked into units of meaning, and superfluous material from the interviewer or interviewee removed, to form a second transcript. This second transcript was then summarised into dot point form, which lost the verbatim comments, but simplified the responses in preparation for coding. Once this third transcript was completed for each participant, the sequence of the interviews was given up in order to place results into a table comparing the responses of different leaders to each interview question. Concepts raised by each leader were clustered into themes in another

table, even where the theme did not relate directly to an interview question. The key themes were therefore not predetermined but unfolded as the data analysis progressed, and although the mechanics of the analysis seemed strong, the concepts always took precedence.

Some themes involved limited data and most of the analysis focussed on those themes that contained the richest data. Ogden and Cornwall (2010) problematise the concept of richness in interview data. They suggest that response factors such as length, degree of emotion and description, and level of analysis, indicate dimensions of richness. The responses were investigated for patterns of repetition in the views they contained of leader experience. Repetition is an important Montessori concept that "develops life" (MM, 358) and has the potential to lead to insight. The researcher moves between the whole and the parts to discern relationships and meanings, and an enduring interpretation becomes reinforces through repeated encounters with the data and with temporal distance. Essential facts must be distinguished from incidental or accidental facts and grasped so to best capture the participant's psychology and illuminate the broader study question. In spite of the methodical approach to analysing the data, in practice the approach was imperfect and incomplete. Echoing Gadamer (2013), the transcripts remain open to other interpretations.

4.10 Ethical Issues

Interpreting the experiences of individual professionals brings about ethical obligations which go beyond the live interview and which are embedded in all stages of an interview enquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Wengraf (2001) writes that with interviewing, the legalities and the ethics are complex and controversial and each interviewer must develop an individual solution to questions of control and use of interview data. In some investigations, the participants are involved as co-researchers and even named co-producers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However in this study the researcher took responsibility for interpretation of interview materials and the participants were not involved following their approval of the transcript.

An ethical consideration felt in this study was related to the trust placed in the researcher as a Montessori community insider with an existing bond to the subject. This trust gave rise to a deep obligation to interpret the data in a way that was faithful to Montessori traditions out of which the voices of the contemporary leaders emerged:

> Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks (Gadamer, 2013, p. 306).

Yet, the researcher's own training and experience of leadership in a Montessori context could be seen as both an aid and a hindrance to data collection and analysis (Ragin et al, 2004). Researcher reflexivity is now central to qualitative research (Galletta, 2013). It illuminates blind spots, and strengthens the rigor of the design by attending to thought processes, assumptions, decision making and actions in order to locate and explore ethical and methodological dilemmas. The person of the researcher, the relevant research community, society as a while, intellectual and cultural traditions, and the central importance of language become important (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). In this study, reflexivity with respect to the insider positioning of the researcher offered an opportunity to reveal and navigate a more productive insider-outsider middle ground throughout the analysis and discussion. Thus researcher reflexivity, as a methodological self-consciousness, may also be seen as a kind of multi-levelled hermeneutics, involving interpretations of interpretation.

> The meaning of a text goes beyond its author…Understanding is not, in fact, understanding better…It is enough to say that we understand in a *different way, if we understand at all* (Gadamer, 2013, p. 307).

No obvious additional problems arose from the researcher's insider status beyond the inescapable problem of researcher prejudice. An insider perspective was also seen to offer potential insight and empathy with participants that counters the risk of over-identification. In this study, the participants perceived the Montessori leadership question to be of importance and were grateful for the opportunity to participate in the study. Several articulated a desire to maintain

contact, provide additional help or even work together with the researcher to further develop the research. This enthusiasm from the participants could be read as a trust in an insider project.

This study was conducted in accordance with Monash University ethics requirements (Monash Ethics Project No. CF12/0650 – 2012000267, 16 May 2012). Each participant consented to be interviewed, to allow the interview to be audio-taped and/or video-taped and to allow a further interview if required for follow-up. Participants were told they would be given a transcript copy, that they could withdraw at any time without disadvantage, but that data could only be withdrawn prior to their approval of the transcript. Participants were also advised that any data extracted from the transcripts for use in the thesis, reports or published findings would not contain names of identifying characteristics. In some quotes within the following chapters, potentially identifying names or words have been changed.

Wengraf (2001) guided the editing of raw data for the purpose of reporting, giving meaning priority above technical precision. Three participants referred to their ums and ahs or other distracting vocalisations when accepting the transcription. These mostly non-words denoted pauses, hesitations and changes of direction, appearing to add little to the meaning or experience of leadership as described by the participants, and potentially drawing focus away from the key ideas. In a few cases, quoting verbatim from the transcript could have painted the participant's response as incoherent, repetitive or unflattering, an inconsistency with the elite character of the participants. Observations from the researcher, by contrast, suggested participants' verbal expressions emerged from active engagement in high level cognitive processes normally associated with experienced leadership. In this study, therefore, verbatim quotations that appeared to sit uneasily in conventionally written text were rendered in a more fluent style for the purposes of publication. Qualitative faithfulness in documenting each leader's voice was the overriding factor.

4.11 Validity

The question of validity arises naturally throughout the qualitative research process due to its subjective nature. The question is constantly whether the investigation is true to the research question. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest the content and purpose of the study precede questions of method. Common sense balances the postmodern extreme of everything can mean everything, and an absolutist quest for the one and only true, objective meaning.

The significance of understanding Montessori terminology was discussed in Chapter 3. In this study, being an insider facilitated conceptual demarcation and dismantling of the participant's Montessori language in different situations, offering a potentially more valid interpretation:

> An interpreter's task is not simply to repeat what one of the partners says in the discussion he is translating, but to express what is said in the way that seems most appropriate to him, since he along knows both languages being used in the discussion (Gadamer, 2013, p. 319).

> ..the text, whether law or gospel, if it is to be understood properly – i.e. according to the claim it makes – must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new and different way. Understanding here is always application (Gadamer, 2013, p. 319).

Immersion in the field made possible an understanding of the potential complexities behind the participants' use of expressions such as "work", "prepared environment" or even "respect" and "trust". A more distanced approach to studying Montessori leadership may appear to minimise bias, but may lack an appropriate level of cultural literacy or values orientation and be inimical to the findings. Riehl (2007) puts forward the argument that if scholars do not have strong value orientations they may produce research that is simply not very interesting or relevant. Nevertheless, this study incorporated a regular evaluation of focus, and also elevated time as a resource, in the hope of maximising credibility and avoiding getting too close to participants or their situation. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) refer the relationship of reliability to the consistency and trustworthiness of the findings. Questions arise such as whether the participants would give different answers to different interviewers, or under different interviewing techniques. Basit (2010) cautions against the Hawthorne effect, where the participants' performances are affected by the presence of the

researcher; or the Halo effect, where knowledge of participants affects the researcher's judgement.

A strong emphasis on rigid methodology that prevents creativity and improvisation is not seen to be ideal, and in this study participants appeared to give wholehearted responses to questions. A hermeneutical review of Montessori's texts through a leadership lens, provided a foundational framework for the investigation. The researcher's own leadership experience, prior Montessori training and further AMI-specific training, which was undertaken simultaneously with the analysis phase of this study added further richness and validity. There is always a possibility of over-identification with a preparation programme because of its status and reputation, but researchers can engage in self-reflection, information analysis and further data gathering to mitigate this risk (Webber & Sherman, 2008).

4.12   Reporting the Data

> The illumination of the [hermeneutic] situation…can never be completely achieved…due not to a deficiency in reflection but to the essence of the historical being that we are (Gadamer, 2013, p. 313).

Gadamer (2013) elegantly exposes the provisional nature of all interpretive research. It has been said that writing increases the power of reflection, so that research and writing must be acknowledged to form two aspects of the one process (Mortari, 2013). The literature offers no standard mode of presenting hermeneutic findings and the researcher must seek out the perspectives and contexts that render the results of interviews engaging to the reader. Miles and Huberman (2002) argue that serious explanation and the route to understanding does not have to be limited to converting words into numbers that are manipulated according to statistical canons, nor to long narrative accounts. However, they confirm that the findings in any qualitative study are loaded with the researcher's interests, intentions and prejudices. One aspect of building trust in the study is knowing when to write assertively based on solid evidence and when to write tentatively because questions remain unanswered and answers are

ambiguous (Webber & Sherman, 2008). Returning to Gadamer (2013), guidance is offered for the reporting of scholarly understanding as it evolves:

> Every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of a tension between the text and the present. The hermeneutic task consists in not covering up this tension by attempting a naïve assimilation of the two but in consciously bringing it out. This is why it is part of the hermeneutic approach to project a historical horizon that is different from the horizon of the present…on the other hand…it immediately recombines with what it has foregrounded itself from in order to become one with itself again in the unity of the historical horizon that it thus acquires (Gadamer, 2013, p. 317).

Following Gadamer's direction, an attempt is made to fuse the historic horizons from Montessori's literature with the present horizons of contemporary Montessori leaders. These are also fused with the horizon of the researcher who is present as a third person voice in this thesis. Use of the third person was a conscious passive positioning of the Montessori self and part of the research leadership process.

Rather than analysing the data and discussing it separately, this study also fuses data and findings together over three chapters. Understanding, interpretation and application are hence united into one circular hermeneutical process that Gadamer (2013) finds occurs through the medium of language. Theses word limits necessary impose upon the researcher a need to be selective, prioritising which data to include, to build a case most strongly. This is a subjective task. Yet as the findings are written up, meaning is conveyed and the fundamental nature of the research question is perceived (Van Manen, 2006). In this study, individual quotes from participants and from Montessori texts were considered for illustrative inclusion, positioned within the thesis and then reconsidered and repositioned as bricolage. The documentation of findings must work from the common language binding a Montessori researcher to an interviewed Montessori leader and translate this to a wider academic audience. Each passage is hence the outcome of a double hermeneutic process - both a translation and an interpretation:

> …every translation is at the same time an interpretation. We can even say that the translation is the culmination of the interpretation that the translator has made of the words given him (Gadamer, 2013, p. 402).

Gadamer identifies the inevitable gulf that exists between two languages even where translation is faithful:

> …we have to make difficult decisions. In our translation if we want to emphasise a feature of the original that is important to us, then we can do so only by playing down or entirely suppressing other features. But this is precisely the activity that we call interpretation (Gadamer, 2013, p. 404).

His voice has been woven into the reporting of findings and the subsequent discussion as a guide for the interpretation of the leader's voices, as they (and the researcher) in turn reach into a historical space to interpret Montessori's pedagogically-oriented principles. The gulf becomes bridged through Gadamer's notion of temporal distance:

> …as a positive and productive condition enabling understanding. It is not a yawning abyss but is filled with the continuity of custom and tradition, in the light of which everything handed down presents itself to us (Gadamer, 2013, p.308).

The continuity of Montessori customs and traditions over the years was revealed as the interviews fell into conversations that formed a process of coming to an understanding. These understandings as interpreted findings and discussion are presented as an interwoven whole in the following three chapters. Use of the third person was made to present the data and findings. This did not negate the emotional involvement and subjectivity of the researcher as an insider. Nor did it hide the complexities of comparing personal and impersonal data analysis, an ongoing struggle for social scientists that has been reported by authors such as Davies (2012). Rather it helped to de-centre the researcher and maintain a focus on the participants and the perspective of the universal child in keeping with Montessori philosophy.

Montessori structural elements provide the basis on which material is organised: preparation of the self, preparation of the environment and the more direct interactive work of practice to foster the release of human potential. Recurring motifs in the data suggested themes for highlighting within each chapter. Connections are made with existing leadership theories and models and this

gives rise to more questions, so that the investigation proceeds by spiralling through Gadamer's (2013) writings, Montessori literature and the participants' words.

In the next three chapters, the study falls into conversation with the participants and is led into its analysis and findings. Chapter 1 introduced the study as seeking a perspective on leadership that emerges from Montessori principles and practices. Chapter 2 reviewed the general literature on leadership. In Chapter 3, Montessori's own words were referenced, including her view that leadership was something for which one must be prepared. Chapter 4 outlined Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as the approach guiding the analysis of the data. In the next chapter and the following two chapters, the voices of the participants are analysed and discussed guided by Gadamer's hermeneutics and Montessori's pedagogical principles and practices. Chapter 5 foregrounds Montessori's notion of preparation of the self. Chapter 6 foregrounds the preparation of the environment and Chapter 7 moves the analysis and discussion from leadership preparation to leadership enactment.

Chapter 5

Preparing the Self for Montessori Leadership

It is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it…the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led (Gadamer, 2013, p. 401).

5.1   Introduction

The purpose of conducting interviews with current trained and experienced Montessori leaders, was to draw out their contemporary views. Montessori wrote many times about the importance of preparing oneself to guide a community of children. She argued that this preparation was of a spiritual and moral nature, but incorporated an understanding of scientific techniques such as observation (MM). In this chapter, the participants speak about their personal backgrounds and some aspects of their lives that helped prepare them for their current leadership appointment.

5.2   The sensitivity for service leading up to Montessori training

Two of the participants in the study, Leaders C and I, had attended Montessori schools as children. No substantial research studies were found on second generation Montessori families or the role of succession planning within Montessori practice. However, these two participants were clear that family values and experiences in their early lives had played significant roles in forming the attitudes and beliefs they drew on in their Montessori leadership. Leader C was clear about the importance of serving others:

> Leadership is service. I one hundred percent get that mindset from my father who worked in non-profit management as an executive director for thirty plus years and before that was in a religious service and I sort of grew up in a house that had these conversations about what does it mean with these different people in these different sorts of relationships, and the Tao of Leadership and you know all these sorts of books, and servant leadership and these were the sorts of things that sat around our house.

There was a strong sense that Leader C's values and home life, developed within a highly mindful or conscious environment, though how this supported his preparation for adult life and leadership may have been unconscious:

> …my mum was in health care so, as a nurse and so I grew up in this, maybe not so much entrepreneurial, but certainly social justice, social service...Even the dinner conversations would be about, you know, my mum taught nursing for a while, so what does it mean, she used to say to the nursing students, it's not just a clinical chart management, so ah, anyway, this is sort of the house I grew up in, and, but you know how it is, you don't think about these things very consciously when you're twelve or thirteen or fourteen…

Montessori's developmental perspective honours the long slow period of unconscious preparation for later work. The child is understood as incarnating the human spirit whose germs are within him, though in a latent form. The teacher transforms herself into a spiritual servant leader:

> Although the relationship between child and teacher is in the spiritual field, the teacher can find a very good model for her behaviour in the way a good valet looks after his master (AM, p. 256)

Leader I, who also grew up surrounded by practices of service and leadership aligned with Montessori principles, ultimately arrived at a point of consciousness coupled with independence, and a decision not to merely imitate a family model:

> Teaching was always something I was determined not to get into. I was a Montessori student. I went to Montessori school for primary, and the school at the time was just a tiny little one room primary school. My mother became involved as a parent, obviously, and was on the Board…and she ended up taking over as head of school. That was thirty-two years ago and…the school has really grown and now has toddler through upper elementary. And so during high school, I kind of worked in an after school program a little bit. I worked in school in the summer. Maybe it was just because that was what my mother did, I thought I would never teach.

This leader pursued studies in Mathematics, but kept finding herself drawn back to a fundamental Montessori triad of environment, education and social reform:

I've always been very connected to the natural world. I love camping and hiking and gardening and I feel very at home in nature and of course it's very sad to see what is happening with natural environments…as I progressed through college, I came to this conclusion…environmental health is a reflection of societal health. You cannot have a healthy environment if you do not have healthy societies because human beings are so integrated in the environment…Healthy society is made up of healthy individuals, but education is at the root of any real reformation paradigm shift in societal growth and health and so you know maybe, that's where I should think about putting my energies.

This leader was able to integrate the natural, social and technological disciplines to "see" the psychological significance of addressing problems within education:

…I felt this real connection to humanity, to society to the environment, to the world. I felt empowered through these models of education, and I realised my goodness - does Paulo Freire realise he was talking about Montessori? And I remember reading Education and Peace around that time too and…working part time in an after-school program at a public school…and thinking to myself, "This is not OK. There are 6, 7 and 8 year olds who are unhappy, who hate school."

These two leaders are responding to the values and culture instilled within them as children through what Montessori called the Absorbent Mind. Montessori wrote that the child comes to love the land into which he is born, its geography, social values and customs. Each adult receives this adaption from the child he used to be:

He then feels he belongs to this country; he is obliged to love it, to feel its fascination; nowhere else does he find the same peace and happiness (AM, p.57).

Nothing has more importance for us than this absorbent form of mind, which shapes the adult and adapts him to any kind of social order, climate or country. On this, the whole of our study is based. It is opportune to reflect that anyone who says, "I love my country", does not say anything superficial or artificial but reveals a basic part of himself and of his life (AM, p. 58).

However, the bulk of the participants in this study had fallen into conversation with Montessori pedagogy as adults, by either hearing from a lecturer, fellow teacher or family member, by researching education options as a parent, or by

gaining work in a Montessori school. For some, pursuing the Montessori direction was unconscious:

> I think I've ended up being so caught up in this Montessori world for so long, without ever making an intentional decision to be in it. I know there's a lot of us like that (Leader K).

For others, there was a distinct experience when earlier unconscious preparation crystallised into conscious feeling of attraction to the Montessori approach beyond the pedagogical, but as a comprehensive philosophy to aid social life in all its vitality:

> Originally, when I first came to America, I came on vacation and really wanted to stay. And somebody had talked about a child care course that was very liberal with student visas. So, I applied for this child care course and it turned out to be Montessori and I knew when I had finished it that I had hit on something that I was going to be part of for the rest of my life. Even though children weren't anywhere in my future, I knew… it was just an amazing aha moment in my life (Leader F).

Whatever the participant's beginnings, preparation of the self for Montessori leadership began long before the period of formal Montessori training. Pre-training experiences sensitised the participants toward the pedagogical and philosophical principles they would later come to find in Montessori's approach. By contrast with most contemporary teacher education courses, the sensitivity of an applicant for Montessori training is assessed before the student is accepted on to the course:

> A teacher, therefore, who would think that he could prepare himself for his mission through study alone would be mistaken. The first thing required of a teacher is that he be rightly disposed for his task (SC, p. 149).

In the lead up to Montessori training, the dispositions of the participants could be seen as already prepared from one direction or another, consciously or unconsciously for service. In his redefinition, Gadamer (2013) reminds us that understanding must always honour this embrace:

> …to distinguish between a normative and cognitive function is to divide what belongs together. Hermeneutics in literary criticism and the historical sciences is not "knowledge as domination", as a "taking possession of" but rather a subordination to the text's claim to dominate our minds. Legal and

theological hermeneutics are the true model. To interpret the law's will or the promises of God is not a form of domination, but of service (Gadamer, 2013, p. 277).

Ideal candidates for Montessori training are not merely those who love working with children, but those who have the capacity to pursue an interpretive mission that is not subservient, but guided by the child as an authority, and that embraces service with all its moral and intellectual dimensions. In Chapter 2, it was found that Greenleaf's Servant Leadership emerged from practical experience rather than scholarship and that aspiration to serve precedes aspiration to leadership. This theory spotlights the desire to serve as a natural trait and contrasts with hero models of leadership by seeing the served as heroes. Leader C sees this operating in the work of what he calls the high-end leaders:

> They say, "Look. I'm just a…I'm not here because I can do all these different jobs. I'm here because I can serve each of you in some advisory capacity, as you do that job. It's not my job to do, and I'm not here because I can do. I'm not the best marketer, I'm not the best development person or I'm not the best admissions person, but I hope I've hired the best people in all of those roles."

Frierson (2015) describes Montessori's virtue epistemology as having open-mindedness about nature and truth that offers a broader humility than the merely interpersonal. To serve as a leader of a Montessori classroom is to subordinate oneself to nature, even to worship nature, based on observation of phenomena (MM). The intensive face-to-face training brings an opportunity to develop intellectual habits of movement and language highly infused with moral and ethical threads derived from Montessori's view of human nature. The training is founded on universal ideas such as human tendencies that are at odds with the major thrusts in anthropological fields. Antweiler (2016) explains that academic voices, schooled in cultural relativism, have a fundamentally contextualist and comparative perspective and will almost always regard universal claims with a sceptical eye. He rehabilitates universals arguing that even among critical postmodern texts, assumptions about universal are implicit. Further empirical research on the human tendencies is needed to offer contemporary constructive steps in understanding and explaining what it is to be human. Montessori did not

advocate suppressing cultural differences, but delighted in setting them in the context of a nontrivial cosmopolitan order. Her construct of social cohesion was infused with practical and solution-focussed ideas of the common denominator that binds us all together even during complex periods of intense change. Without universal notions to balance our interest in the Other, Montessori training would merely offer what Antweiler believes is a "scientific cul-de-sac".

Not everyone who undertakes Montessori training completes or passes the rigorous and demanding course requirements. No data on completion and pass rates within Montessori training has been published, and no formal research is known on factors impeding success. There are also highly skilled Montessori leaders without formal Montessori qualifications, and the extent to which the mindsets of these leaders are sensitised toward Montessori principles in their prior experiences and the range of impediments to their training has not been explored. Despite the different pathways that led each participant in this study toward a Montessori career, his or her formal Montessori training program was a watershed moment relating to the aspiration to serve.

5.3   Montessori Training as a comprehensive moment of significance

In Chapter 3, it was found that Montessori argued that leadership is something for which one must be prepared. An outstanding point of clarity for the participants was the meaningful connection they made between the self as leader and the initial Montessori teacher training, which for some leaders occurred decades earlier. Montessori training is an educative preparation of the individual self from two standpoints:

> Our aim in education in general is two-fold, biological and social. From the biological side we wish to help the natural development of the individual, from the social standpoint it is our aim to prepare the individual for the environment (MM, p. 215).

The participants in this study built up their detailed understanding of Montessori principles and practices during this training. The challenge and transformative potential of Montessori training was referred to in Chapter 3. A strong theme in

the participants' voices was their reflection on how the initial training had helped them in their leadership work. Leader A stated:

> Well I think it gives you self-confidence, you know I never visioned that, I came from a teaching family, I envisioned myself definitely as a teacher, but never as a leader, never. I mean I just sort of fell into this position when our head directress starting our school left of course and there was me, and I never ever expected that I would be in a leadership position, it just happened, so I found out I could maybe do it. And it worked. But that is what Montessori training gives you, such strength.

For this leader, Montessori training appeared synonymous with leadership training:

> Well I feel that, I took my training, and that's what's given me the ability to do what I do in our school. I mean, because I am primarily a teacher…I started the school with my friend. And I was just put in this position. I don't have any…I just feel like I do what I was trained to do. I don't really think about Montessori leadership. I just look at it that we are fulfilling what we were taught.

This comment suggests Montessori training incorporates a breadth and longevity that surpasses classroom teaching. Kahn (1983) characterises the Montessori trainer who oversees AMI-affiliated training courses as a philosopher in residence, a global thinker and universal soldier dedicated to the curriculum in its totality. This is an old school, renaissance trainer working from a body of interconnecting disciplines to build understanding in relation to the unfolding drama of the whole. Kahn writes that trainers are a taskforce of metaphysicians who have chosen to dedicate their lives to children. They are grounded in Montessori heritage in a thorough apprenticeship within a lineage directly connecting their contemporary work back to Montessori's original oral training tradition in which the educator gives lessons characterised by conciseness, simplicity and objectivity (MM).

As face-to-face training with high attendance requirements, the course mitigates risk by expecting trainees to develop an embodied values epistemology under close supervision and guidance. No essential part of Montessori's structured philosophy is missed, nor is any element left to develop an overstated or understated place in the trainee's practice. Implicit in the training is

Montessori's principle of "just enough" and the training appears most effective when the trainee can place trust in the trainer as a life-wide guide for the journey. Trust can be founded upon the trainer's distinguished authority, which has emerged over the trainer's own lengthy and gruelling apprenticeship. Gadamer (2013) reminds us that authority is based on:

> …an act of acknowledgment and knowledge – the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgement and insight and that for this reason his judgement takes precedence – i.e., it has priority over one's own. This is connected with the fact that authority cannot actually be bestowed but is earned, and must be earned if someone is to lay claim to it (Gadamer, 2013, p. 291).

By accepting the wisdom of the trainer, the trainee in turn becomes "trained" and begins a new cycle of emerging authority in which ever deepening understanding of universal human activity is applied to situations of everyday living, initially within a classroom or other limited environment. Over time however, an experienced trained teacher might leave the classroom to take up a different or wider position of authority. The leaders in this study believed that being trained was a significant help beyond the classroom and provided evidence of transferability of Montessori values and philosophy to non-classroom contexts.

Leader H explains:

> My Montessori training…I think it's helpful in providing an authoritative position. It gives me the background and it gives me the support. My training gives me the support to make decisive, to take decisive actions and take a decisive stance in what may be a contentious or ambiguous issue. So just the fact that I have training, and that I feel that my training is…I feel good about that. I feel like I understand the core values and philosophy of Montessori. It's helpful. So I go into any situation with that as my foundation for making a decision and I think that's healthy.

Training seeks to invoke within the trainee, a recurring cognition in relation to the developing human being. As the trainee gathers experience, this moves from re-cognition to a humanistic recognition, so that the authority conveyed by the training can deepen and broaden. Montessori authority is not based on

unchecked power, but aligns with Gadamer's (2013) notions of the concept of authority:

> Authority…rests on recognition and hence on an act of reason, which aware of its own limitations, that others have better understanding. Authority in this sense, has nothing to do with blind obedience to command. Indeed authority has nothing to do with obedience but rather with knowledge (Gadamer, 2013, p. 248).

Knowledge is presented in Montessori training in an ordered and organised manner according to the structural elements of the philosophy. Training is then an exercise in understanding complex concepts and dilemmas, and mastering connections and procedures that weave between them. This is an aspect of leadership in any context. Leader H continues:

> When I went to law school, I did very well and…I think it had a lot to do with Montessori training. And partly because what Montessori training does, is it takes relatively complex procedures and concepts and breaks them down into their component parts, and does so in a very deliberate and process-oriented way, and that is exactly what law school is like.

The coherence of Montessori training is possible because of its unified and broad philosophical base. Approaching leadership through a single philosophy stands in contrast to approaches that incorporate an eclectic mix of theoretical perspectives, each addressing an aspect of the leader's work. Under this latter scenario, the leader is burdened with having to find the links between theoretical models, having to address gaps not covered by theory or practice, this in turn adding to the eclecticism. The benefits of broad humanistic philosophical and psychological cohesion do not appear well articulated or understood in existing leadership models, and a fragmented adjectival approach to leadership training has been predominant in the field. In Montessori training, the limit of a single pedagogically oriented social philosophy that is outward looking, and both framed and based on open science, is considered beneficial.

From the limit of a single overall philosophy, to Montessori's notion of "just enough" limits provide a structure and scaffold for creativity and innovation. Gadamer (2013) reminds us that every finite present has its limitations and this is inherent in his concept of horizons. He invites us to think about traditions and

about expanding our horizons and opening up new horizons. Massey (2007) commented on Montessori training drawing in trainees to new traditions through a specialised techne. In spite of the intensity, depth and breadth of this techne, the participants in this study were clear about its limits. Leader D explains that the effectiveness of the training depends firstly on what the trainee brings to the course:

> Montessori teacher training that people go through, is a transformative process. Montessori talked about the transformation of the adult, and of course it's not a mechanical thing. It's not, you take the training, you've been transformed. It's if it has spoken with you and resonated with you and you've connected with it, you become transformed in your understanding of children in the world and so on. And so I certainly felt that. It resonated with me as I went through that year of training…

Secondly, the educator must be willing to implement the training and to keep it fresh over the years. Leader D goes on to say that graduation merely qualifies the trainee to make a beginning in leading a class of children:

> …at the end of my training, and as I imagine at the end of all Montessori trainings, every point of arrival is a point of departure. The last day of training, we were told "You have now not, you have now *not* completed being a Montessori trained person. You have now begun the beginning of being a Montessori trained person" at the end of the year. And at the time you go, "OK", and 23 years later I can go "Absolutely I understand that"…

The preparation of the self in Montessori training is hence not the result of a teacher training method, but a search for truth in human science, a work of philosophical understanding and application. There is a connection back to Gadamer's (2013) hermeneutics here, wherein method and truth stand in opposition. Montessori training is predominantly concerned with questioning and thinking differently, expanding and fusing horizons so that the trainees develop as individuals beyond their original perspectives to embrace new viewpoints about children, the environment and social living. Gadamer advises that this sort of openness characterises the hermeneutic enquiry, the "same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 370). Montessori training, as an

opening up to the characteristics of the natural human being, can be seen to elevate education as an aid to life. Montessori clarifies:

> If we were to eliminate not only the name "Method", but also its common conception, things would become much clearer. We must consider the human personality and not a method of education. For the word "Method" we should substitute something like this: "Help given in order that the human personality may achieve its independence," or "means offered to deliver the human personality from the oppression of age-old prejudices regarding education". The defence of the child, the scientific recognition of his nature, the social proclamation of his rights must replace the piecemeal ways of conceiving education (FM, p 6).

The participants were able to see that an ecology of science, philosophy and daily practical living gained through training, oriented them to a guiding role within their community that was a form of leadership. Their views echoed previous research elucidating the vitality of Montessori training:

> Like the whole of the Montessori method, the preparation of the adult entails a fully integrated conception of the adult as guide. The practice of Montessori education entails mastery of a large and complex technical repertoire, which is directed toward the moral and spiritual goal of fulfilling human potential. It is precisely the link between technique and ideology, between means and ends, between how and why, that renders vitality to Montessori pedagogy and, by extension, Montessori teacher training (Cossentino, 2009, p. 526).

Cossentino (2009) is an experienced Montessori school and academic leader, who identifies herself as "untrained". Leader C suggested that Montessori training as head of school versus no Montessori training as head of school could be an interesting conversation. Leader D says:

> Somebody else may have taken some leadership training courses and so on, and be told here's an effective way to do this, but it's not usually, from what I've seen, informed with these kinds of deep principles of human respect and dignity and those kinds of things. It's more, well it's effective, and it works, you know, business is a little bit harder that way.

Leader D goes on to clarify that in spite of the intense preparation offered by Montessori training, there are many effective untrained Montessori leaders who seem to have bridged the gap between trained and untrained by developing a child-centred disposition and working alongside well-trained leaders:

So, if you haven't been trained as a Montessori teacher, there are people who I know who are in that situation, who are very effective at what they do, and by some unbelievable process have come to really understand Montessori in its essence and that's no easy feat when you haven't had formal training. So, preparing myself to being a leader, having been trained with a large staff, I couldn't imagine really doing that work without having the training…

No known research has yet been done on these differences and there may be more to be gained from investigating common ground. Leader C confirmed that untrained Montessori leaders had a lot to offer:

There's those who have the training and who have taught in the classroom, and then there's some others who've got a business degree and management or non-profit management and they're very savvy in many ways, and so there are lessons to be learned out of both of those camps.

There are many opportunities for Montessori training through non-AMI-affiliated organisations. The prevalence of shorter or fully online Montessori courses, or courses that emphasise Montessori as a curriculum, disrupt the trained-untrained binary. In this study, the leaders emphasised the need for respect no matter what training the leader brings to the position. Leader C said:

…I think the only difficulties come up when people get into sort of fundamentalist positions in one of those two camps and can't see the value of the other. It has to be a good marriage.

Leader F considered there were individuals who could ensure quality implementation of Montessori principles and practices without completing the full AMI Diploma:

…I see it, with [untrained leader named] who's not an AMI…trained teacher…I would imagine that a lot of those really great leaders are few and far between, teachers out there in a traditional setting who really in essence are Montessori people at heart, and parents…you see them straight away and you know that they really have a Montessori method that they use in their house, that they are just naturally that way…

This leader acknowledged that even for those rare untrained school or family leaders who appear to understand many Montessori principles and practices, formal training would offer them the chance to develop additional capacity:

> I think it's just that it's a deeper, deeper understanding of it. I would, I probably would have difficulty if I were to take this leadership role without the training. I feel, you'd have to do a lot of reading, have to do a lot of studying to, I don't know, to get that really core belief…

As the significance of preparation is an embedded feature of Montessori philosophy, a question in the interview schedule probed whether training was ever a hindrance. While most of the participants did not envisage training in this light, Leader G explains:

> I think it can be a hindrance when it becomes a tool of exclusivity. There have been times in my leadership work when I have rolled my eyes and said, "Oh my God, I can't even talk to this person, they have no idea, they're not trained" or whatever. Then it sets me apart from them. And whether that's with a parent or a Board member or whatever, it's been a hindrance in that it makes me feel like I have answers that they don't have, and I think it's a dangerous quality in a leader.

This observation highlights the importance of self-awareness in preparation for leadership. Gadamer's (2013) ideas about prejudices have relevance here, including his invitation to consider what distinguishes those legitimate prejudices from the countless ones that it is the task of critical reason to overcome. Montessori professionals may need to consider how to better articulate what it is that training has provided. Leader L underscored training as a point of departure from which the individual can continue growing:

> …when I started in this position, I…had an avid need to label everything in our approach and what we did as Montessori, and that Montessori is the only way to, you know, change the world and meet the needs of a child. Whereas now, I would say, kind of similar to Montessori saying "follow the child, not me"…, I would say, you know all of these approaches that I think work really well are Montessori, but I don't need to stamp it as Montessori, I don't need to only go to Montessori trainings to learn more…

This leader is completing the circle, bringing the discussion back to the basic characteristic of Montessori's philosophy and psychology as developmental. She is also highlighting the problem of "Montessori" as a label and hinting at

questions about where this should begin and end. The leaders in this study acknowledged that while the moment of Montessori training was substantial and significant in their preparation for leadership, additional skills and perspectives were deemed necessary to fulfil their roles as school leaders well. Kellerman (2013) has raised the question of whether leadership can be taught. The participants in this study seemed clear that leadership in a Montessori context was cultivated during training, though the willingness of the teacher to implement what had been conveyed in the training course was a condition for success. In this next section, the voices of the participants articulate how commitment to implementation was built during the training.

5.4 Observing, Knowing and Understanding

A scientific recognition of the child's nature is provoked through the detailed study within Montessori training. From the beginning, Montessori advised that the first qualification of the Montessori teacher is a scientific attitude comprising interest in the observation of natural phenomena (MM). Learning to put aside assumptions and biases as far as possible, and actively working to "see" what is there, remains a central and regular trainee activity. Empirical skills are practised by trainees, in isolation from other skills, for weeks at a time during the initial teaching diploma. Montessori referred to this technique of preparing oneself for complex tasks, by preparing each aspect of the complexity separately as "isolation of the difficulty". For Montessori, this was an enabling pedagogical principle made operational on a daily basis. Isolating observation as "absolutely, unbelievably the crux of the whole thing", was described by Leader B:

> It started with one rainy day at the National Zoo. At that time, the Washington Montessori Institute was just a few blocks south of the National Zoo on Connecticut Avenue in Washington and they told us we had to go there and observe a certain animal for three hours, and I was "Oh I'm going to be bored". And you know here I am thirty plus years later. When I took my assistant to infancy training I had to observe that age group for 350 hours. They have since cut it back to 250. Again, with my consultants' training, multiple hours, untold hours, because you have to do an apprenticeship. And now that I'm a consultant, I have to spend two or three days or four days in a school and observe for hours on end. It's almost like a curse now, don't get this wrong, but I see everything. I can't not notice…

Observation is the seeing of "what is". Montessori always begins with the observed psychological dimension. Her two publications devoted to Mathematics, for example, are entitled *Psycogeometry* and *Psycoarithmetic*, signifying that Mathematics is best appreciated in conjunction with the human mind. Observing what is, over and over, is a manifestation of Montessori's principle of repetition. Interpreting the observations brings us to see beyond the horizon of what is, to what may be needed next. The participants in this study outlined a kind of psycho-leadership in which the doing of leadership emerges from interpreting observations. Leader B explains:

> …we are told many, many times, to be objective and don't draw conclusions, so that's such a big thing and not to label a situation, and that's a big thing, to be objective, to write down, or to make a mental note, what you saw…

This is a different approach to teaching and leadership. It does not negate that leaders are part of the regulatory landscape and this has implications for the positions they adopt. However, the participants emphasised that work of the Montessori leader is re-centred around the observed requirements of the human being. Decision-making is not a product of policy or regulation alone, but a more considered search for meaning for the individuals within the environment based on observed situations. Their descriptions of the demanding and precise nature of observation within Montessori training and professional practice appear a striking contrast to the more limited preparation for observation in conventional teaching and leadership. Yet Montessori always maintained that observation of natural phenomena formed a foundation for the educator:

> My method is founded on the child himself…It is always based on our ability to interpret our observations of those phenomena which originate in the child himself (1946, p. 7.)

In the analysis of interview transcripts for this study on leadership, observation appeared as a key theme. Leader B feels she did not appreciate in her early Montessori years how challenging it would be to observe, and believes that observation remains an "underrated" skill today:

> People think it's some kind of a joke, and I didn't take it seriously at first, until I realised how hard it was. And I was only twenty-one and I thought I'd take the easy way out…and take an animal that wasn't that active. It was even harder because it was a sloth and it would twitch its ear and there was nothing else happening…ten minutes, he's twitched his ear, nostrils flaring. Nothing else is happening…

Gadamer (2013) writes that clear meaning is not available everywhere at all times and that the whole guides the understanding of the individual parts in a circular relationship. This hermeneutic approach is applied within Montessori praxis to move understanding beyond a mere aggregate of observations. Trainees practice different aspects of observation in the training centre before integrating these skills and then undertaking further practice in an operating classroom. In the first weeks of this "teaching practice", trainees are expected to sit on a chair observing the children in different ways for lengthy periods. Counter-intuitively, this exercise seems to demand great physical and mental stamina. Over the weeks, trainees develop increasing stamina for longer and longer periods of sitting still, maintaining comfort and relaxation, blocking out mental distractions of noise, temperature, bodily discomfort, random thoughts, emotional reactions but simultaneously staying highly alert and focussed. The researcher personally experienced the exacting art of confining one's energy to the inner self during training. Unless one is still, so much of what the children say and do is missed. Any badly timed wriggle near a concentrating child all too easily breaks into the moment. The child's attention is then taken away from the environment as teacher, making the observer, the inadvertent centre of attention.

Gadamer's (2013) hermeneutics concentrates on expanding horizons of understanding through dialogue. Kennedy (2006) writes that the adult is a "hermeneut" or interpreter of childhood. In the Montessori approach, observation takes on the character of dialogue. Montessori praxis demands classroom leaders move beyond a mere aggregate of observations to an understanding of children's needs. Leader D transfers this methodology to help him support staff:

> The idea is that if you're watching the child, you're going to follow the child…looking at them and paying attention - that's what observation is. I don't know what part of development you're doing today, but I'm going to

pay attention and observe you and I'm going to think about that and I'll then be able to know, oh you need more of this, less of that. So I can do the same thing with my staff.

Leader C confirmed observation as significant in Montessori culture – "we say that if you're not doing observation, you're not doing Montessori." While in training, it may be treated as an independent exercise, on the job, Leader C reports observation is "just constant" and "not a separate activity". He tells how the initial training in observation is a support for the day to day work of the Montessori leader:

> So, Montessori's based on scientific observation to create scientific pedagogy, responding to needs and characteristics as presented in children and then the response is to create an environment which helps to optimise this particular stage of development and then as they move into other stages, with new characteristics and new needs, then the environment changes. Ok, so what if we had adults? And what would be the role of observation in helping the adults execute what we just described? Which is to be good observers and create these environments. The good school leaders are quick and I don't mean that they have snap judgement, but they read people and they read inner personal dynamics well, and accurately…

From the beginning, Montessori did not aim for her teachers to become talented experimental psychologists:

> …when we considered the scientific preparation of teachers to be simply the acquiring of the technique of science, we did not attempt to make these elementary teachers perfect anthropologists, expert experimental psychologists, or masters of infant hygiene; we wished only to *direct them* toward the field of experimental science… (MM, p. 9).

Yet later in the same work, she writes:
> In fact, when the child educates himself, and when the control and correction of errors is yielded to the didactic material, there *remains for the teacher nothing but to observe.* She must then be more of a psychologist than a teacher, and this shows the importance of a scientific preparation on the part of the teacher. Indeed, with my methods, the teacher teaches *little* and observes *much…* (MM, p. 173).

Observation and interpretation of observations leading to action, is a central thread that builds knowledge and understanding within Montessori work, but

observation remains an underexplored aspect of leadership in the literature. It is not always clear from the various theoretical positions how leaders build up evidence for their decision-making. No theories were found which articulated an empirical approach with such distinct and detailed attention to observation as what Montessori had advocated. Montessori began her work with children using observation as a key technique. She returns to this theme as a mature lecturer speaking about the universal child, appearing to clarify that the Montessori approach is both based on psychology, and is an application of it:

> …He can only be an object of observation, of a study which we must undertake to find out what are the laws of life, for if we want to help life, the first condition of success is that we shall know the laws which govern it. Yet it is not enough merely to know them, for if we stopped there we should remain exclusively in the field of psychology. We should never go further and become educators (AM, p. 12).

For Montessori, observation of human beings goes beyond the interest held by a student of zoology or botany and that form of nature which he studies. She claimed that waiting and watching implies a far more tender love of man for man. It is not the privilege of any especially prepared intellectual class, but lies within the reach of all men (MM, 1964). The participants in this study saw how the empirical psychological root and pedagogical orientation of Montessori principles and practices could be applied outside the classroom. Leader B describes how she inspires parents to undertake observation:

> I'm big on telling parents that just because a child is just standing there, don't interrupt, wait and see. They might be thinking about what they've just done. They might be taking a little break. They might be considering their options for the next choice, so don't break that magic moment that spell. Let the child take a few minutes and think. Maybe another child will pass by and maybe they'll look down and think, "Oh that looks good, maybe I'd like to choose that" and they'll go to the shelf and get something similar to what they see on the floor. Yeah, there's all that interior construction that's going on with children, especially when they're still at the unconscious level, you can't jump to any conclusions.

Leader K talks about how observation is the foundation of her leadership communication:

> It gives you the basis to have conversations. So, if you're observing with any other people that are under you. You can't talk to them in a vacuum, you can't understand what they're doing without observing. And you

cannot make assumptions either about what you're observing, but it does lead to a two-way conversation that you can have. I think the openness is a very important aspect of that.

Leader C relates observation back to the careful but subtle educative guidance he perceives is offered by the great Montessori leaders, who are:

> …able to sit in a meeting with two or three people and they're not pushing people, but they're hearing what's not said, they're reading all the body language and they are able to sort of…they really do understand what's the next question to ask, to move this in a direction that's healthy now, and then you know, it's sort of like a, it's a little bit of a, I say it's like chess in that you're trained to look ahead and part of it, to be a leader there's some fixing, you've got to do. You can't just say, well I'm not going to tinker with the gears. I don't want to touch the machinery. I'll just ask questions and see what happens. I don't think, I don't see the great leaders working that way. I see them asking great questions, but they're working extremely hard to steer and guide with just incredible subtlety, and I see the people who work for those leaders get it, and they sort of like, it feels like, this guy's like a sage in the mountain. I go, with my problem and all he's got is three questions and somehow, it's solved.

This leader is saying that observation alone is not enough, but must be seen as part of an eternal cycle of activity comprising seeing, interpreting and doing. Frierson (2014) confirms that while penetrating the directly observable is important, an ordered philosophical framework allows knowledge to extend with subtlety beyond the objects of direct experience, to the profound. The superior mind distinguishes the essential from the superfluous, the useful from the peripheral. The participants in this study pursued such a lofty understanding through observations that they interpreted through a Montessori lens. In this way, they construct a perspective on leadership that has an empirical base, but is developed philosophically.

5.5 Consciousness, Interest and Work as a Vocation

For Montessori, being conscious is becoming awakened to, and acting in, the world in a fundamental way:

> This reform of the adult is of enormous importance for society as a whole. It represents the re-awakening of a part of human consciousness which has

been covering itself progressively with layer upon layer of impediments. Moreover, without this awakening all other social questions become obscure and the problems raised by them insoluble. "Consciousness" has been dimmed, not in some adults only, but in all adults – because all have dealings with children. As their consciousness is dimmed regarding the child, they also act unconsciously. On this point they do not use their powers of reflection, their intelligence which leads them to make progress in other fields (FM, p. 48).

At first glance a connection appears between conscious and the more commonly used term in the leadership literature, "mindful". Montessori conceived of consciousness as innate. McKenzie and Hassad (2012) define mindfulness as the practice of paying attention, knowing where our attention is and how to direct it. These authors argue that it can be learned through mindfulness training, but also acknowledge the mindful child, claiming that mindfulness is our natural state. Langer (1992) finds mindlessness is pervasive in adult life and affects the way we communicate.

For the participants in this study, Montessori leadership was not always a conscious choice. But each could sense that consciousness of the regenerative power of the child gave them a point of distinction from those who merely advocated or aimed for effective leadership. Leader D explains:

> …a lot of what is talked about in effective leadership today echoes a lot of Montessori principles. Do I think that somebody who is a Montessori leader might be still a little bit different in how they do their leadership work, from somebody who is not a Montessori leader? I would say yes, for this reason. I think that the Montessori leader is more conscious of why they're doing what they're doing and why they're doing it this way.

Leader E concurs that consciousness is significant:

> I think that a Montessori leader has the opportunity to apply universal principles of leadership, that are rooted in Montessori. So, I don't necessarily think that a Montessori leader is different, but there are some grounding principles that will ground a Montessori leader that another leader might not be aware of, because they don't have the benefit of the Montessori philosophy.

These leaders are hinting at the blind spots to which Montessori referred as she justified the need for human beings to be prepared for their work. Blind spots in the

adult represent a lack of consciousness and function as obstacles for the developing child, which Montessori saw as a moral problem:

> …we speak of a blind spot in the heart of man, notwithstanding his capacity to understand so much. This blind spot is similar to that in the retina of the eye, which nevertheless, is the organ by which all things are seen. The moral vision of the child falls upon the "blind spot" of the human heart and there it strikes a barrier of ice (FM, p. 31).

Montessori is arguing that a new approach to human development would address these blind spots. Leader C felt that addressing blind spots was a necessary component of leadership work:

> I've seen it in, these great leaders. They're working hard on these blind spots. And I think the work of a Montessori leader in a school can't just be knowing and working with the pedagogy.

The Johari Window is an interpersonal awareness tool that has been used for over half a century (Luft & Ingham, 1955). In this window, leaders can identify four quadrants:

1. arena - the part of ourselves we see and others see
2. blind spot - what others see but we are not aware
3. unknown - unconscious or subconscious seen neither by us nor others
4. private space – we see but keep from others

The framework links blind spots to consciousness. The participants in this study argued that the Montessori leader is ideally conscious of Montessori's moral and developmental vision of the human being. Leader L expresses this:

> I think that the Montessori leader is hopefully very conscious of theory and how each person even beyond the first three planes of development into adulthood…we're all on a spectrum of development and…we can all get better at things we're not good at…hopefully Montessori leaders, who are trained in Montessori philosophy, would come at their work with that kind of perspective.

Montessori claimed each person is naturally motivated by individual interests "rooted in personality" (PSG, p. 6). Under conditions of freedom, the pursuit of purposeful activities of interest leads to sustained concentration from which education develops. Montessori asked:

> What is the task confronting education? It is above all the task of mending breaches, filling in gaps that are vast and serious. Its primary goals must be the realisation of the values of the human personality and the development of mankind (EP 54).

Following their initial Montessori training, the participants in this study continued to work on isolated difficulties to maintain their preparation for leadership work. Leader E gives an example:

> I joined Toastmasters, because, as our school grew and I found I had to go and find funding and do public speaking and it absolutely terrified me, again I just grew into this position and I started this school with a belief in my children but all of a sudden it was sort of required that I go out there and do all this stuff...

Haines (2001) describes how isolation of the difficulty is used in the classroom to teach separately those procedures or movements that might prove troublesome to the child. In the same way, the leaders in this study applied reflection and analysis to break down the complexity of leadership into its parts and concentrate on addressing these individually according to their interests. In this way, work that appears to be beyond a person's skill level can be approached confidently, joyfully and without undue intellectual fatigue. Leader C explains how this can be applied when working with staff:

> …so once you distill these principles, then you can take on this question of OK so these are principles...so like isolation of difficulty. Does that really apply to adults? OK, so here's what would apply. I've got a faculty member who's got three serious problems to work on. You know, what's the most, what's the one, what's the *one*, that we want to deal with right now.

For Leader E, the transition from applying Montessori principles in a classroom to application on a larger scale was pivotal in her self-development as a leader:

> For me it's actually been transforming to go from just the mother who wants this for her children to evolve in such a short time to developing

these programs and to you know two and a half million-dollar budget, when we were just starting with a couple of hundred dollars nine years ago. There's been a whole transformation between the start of that the belief in myself, the whole building, the public speaking…

Leader J finds her own interest and curiosity motivate her to attend to the various parts of preparing herself for leadership, and as she goes about this, she finds the additional understanding she gains, propels her to learn more about leading others:

> As much as it's something that I naturally do, maybe through the force of my personality, I've learned to temper that with background knowledge, and with guidance from experts. And I've sort out mentors in my life that I like. I like how they conduct themselves and their teaching style, and also continually adding to my bank of knowledge about child development, child psychology and leadership theories. I love reading about that. It's part of my organisational systems leadership training as well. To me it's continually adding to that pool of knowledge that allows me to comfortably put myself in positions of leadership. And not because I feel I know more. It's because I feel I have a curiosity to try to understand where people are coming from and it allows me to have more information to kind of conduct that inquiry.

Gadamer (2013) confirms that the single experience arises from many perceptions and from the multiplicity of experiences, there arises something like a consciousness of the universal. He argues that this endures through the changing aspect of the life of experience. The participants in this study sought the universality of leadership by conducting inquiry that enabled connections to be made between the elements of their leadership consciousness. This gave them a philosophical inclination that they believed was essential in a Montessori context. Leader H says:

> I think probably because you're dealing with a philosophical approach that everyone has to be committed to. I think also a leader who is thinking from the big picture and is not managing at the level of minutiae is probably pretty important. Whereas maybe in some other business situations, I'm thinking maybe the manager of a restaurant, or maybe that isn't a good example, or of a retail store or something…It's a leadership position, but it's not…the operational functions are the priority. And so, you may not have to have the same philosophical attention to the big picture, whereas in a Montessori school, I think that's critical.

In Chapter 2, it was seen that from the days of Plato, who envisaged philosopher kings within a city-state, there have been large-scale philosophical approaches to leadership. Yet much of the contemporary literature has been characterised by narrower viewpoints and short-termism. For the participants in this study, philosophical consciousness spilled over into other parts of their lives. They did not see a stark boundary between their thinking on the job as leaders, and their thinking as private human beings with a distinct personal life. For some, Montessori philosophy permeated so deeply, it was no longer always conscious. Leader D says:

> As people, parents sometimes or newer teachers and so on, or just outsiders to Montessori, as they hang around more and eventually they'll say things like, as I heard someone say this weekend, "You know this Montessori stuff isn't just a way of teaching children, it's a whole way of life. You people live and breathe this. It informs everything you do all the time", which is exactly what we tell people. Montessori is *not* just a way of teaching reading or writing or any particular content delivery, it *is* a way of being. If you're transformed, it affects everything you do and how you do what you do, so it's there. It's who I am as a Montessori leader, informing everything I do always, but not in some conscious causal way that I'm consciously aware of.

Yet the participants were also interested in the day-to-day practical arrangements of leadership and prepared themselves in an organised way. This was much as they had been trained to do as classroom teachers, balancing periods of concentration and periods of rest:

> I find that taking care of myself is a critical part of being a leader. So that means that for example, two days a week, I block out time, or I work uninterrupted, a three-hour uninterrupted work cycle. And I don't get three hours, I mean I don't get a whole day to do that, but I block out two days each week, so that when emergencies come up I get one day (Leader E).

> …I work hard during the day, but I very rarely take anything home. I rest. I need a lot of rest. I'm very energetic during the day. I really feel that I'm very energetic, but I don't take work home. I take my weekends free. I'm very balanced as far as my own personal life. My personal life means a lot to me. My family, my husband, so I keep a balance… (Leader A).

Balance implies a systemic view. Montessori's background in medicine may have given her a sensitivity to the relationship between independence, self-discipline and human health:

> Personal health is closely related to man's mastery of himself and to the reverence shown to life and all its natural beauties (EP, p. 11).

The participants in this study acknowledged the demands of leadership and the inevitable challenging times, but there was always a sense that the work was personally interesting to them:

> Existing interests are the foundation for further interests – logically connected to them. Increasingly extensive knowledge can gradually arrange itself around a primitive nucleus, as mental development takes place. Moreover, it is evident that if the personality includes special aptitudes, *personal sensitivities…*, the entire unfolding process centres around this sensitivity, generating that which we know as a *vocation* (PSG, p. 7).

Vocation, from the Latin, "vox", meaning voice, implies a calling. Two of the participants spontaneously referred to their work as "my calling". Others used different language to express their work as something more than a job. The

participants explained that aligning their personal aspirations and strengths with a perceived social need, allowed them to serve others in a joyful and personally nourishing way. The mindful link between work and happiness has already been firmly made in the literature (Warr & Clapperton, 2010; MacDonald & Shirley, 2016). The participants in this study consistently found their work to be an elevated and psychologically nourishing aspect of their lives. Leader I explains:

> This isn't just a job. It really is my capital W "Work". I feel so lucky to have found this, to get paid to do this work. Because not everybody gets paid to do their work, their work that is engaging and fulfilling to do. I know sometimes it's hard to understand or may be frustrating for my husband for example. His job is definitely not his "Work", you know it helps pay the bills…

Cossentino (2006) examines Montessori's notion of "work" concluding that she introduced a new holistic conception of work to the lexicon of education. The participants in this study spoke about their leadership work from practical,

technical, pedagogical and philosophical perspectives and from the scientific perspective of psychology. They made links between the parts and the whole and could articulate the place of personal values such as service, within an ecology of nature and human universality. While contractual accountabilities may form the economic or professional basis for Montessori leadership work, in this study, participants made little mention of these. The extent to which Montessori leaders are driven by their personal morals, ethics and values has not been explored in this study, and could be a further avenue for research. There is evidence that the participants framed discussion about their work with the same richness and breadth as they might frame discussion about their full life. Further investigation might reveal how the participants balanced the separation of work and personal life, while acknowledging the intimate inter-weaving of the two.

In Chapter 2, it was seen that much debate in the leadership literature is framed narrowly. The universal ecology of human life experience, its techne and traditions appeared less evident in the literature than a new professionalism based on technology and innovation, about which an inherent positivity is claimed, limiting scholarship. Gadamer (2013) writes that:

> Things that change force themselves on our attention far more than those that remain the same. That is a general law of our intellectual life. Hence the perspectives that result from the experience of historical change are always in danger of being exaggerated because they forget what persists unseen (Gadamer, 2013, p. xxii).

Montessori's preference for an oral tradition of face-to-face training, observation of universal human tendencies in real time and real space, and holistic conceptions of adult work as child-centred, developmental and vocational, offer an alternative framing of leadership debates. Her view of classroom leadership, offers leadership as an "organic acquisition" within the social group (Swan, 2016). This study argues it may be transferable to adult communities to foster a spiritual process not unlike the normalisation process that brings concentration, self-discipline, socialisation and love of work to children. Leader I continues:

> I am so invested in this work with the children and not only because of the importance, but because of the joy. This is fun. Sometimes it's hard and exhausting, but also, it's fun. It feeds my spirit. It feeds my soul. Sometimes it's really easy for me to stay at work for hours and hour and

hours and through the summer and so I, that's the spiritual piece for me. It feeds a very fundamental part of me, it's very nourishing work.

This leader is summarising the viewpoint of the participants that work using a Montessori approach is paradoxically energising. Being able to connect one's work to one's personal interests is a significant aspect of a Montessori perspective. The participants in this study found that being conscious of one's self, of others, of the environment and the relationship between these life elements helped them address social questions in their roles as leaders.

5.6   Preparing the Humble Spiritual Self

In her closing remarks at the end of her seminal work, Montessori referred to the power of the child to provide spiritual nourishment for adult leaders:

> The "Children's House" seems to exert a spiritual influence upon everyone. I have seen here, men of affairs, great politicians preoccupied with problems of trade and of state, cast off like an uncomfortable garment the burden of the world, and fall into a simple forgetfulness of self (MM, p. 376).

Throughout this publication, she elaborated her belief that human beings must act on the spirit as a secret key to success, inspired by Seguin, her predecessor. Montessori argued there was a direct link between scientific observation and spiritual discovery. She wrote that children were spiritual embryos who grew in spirit according to their own deep natural laws. Montessori argued that the spirit opened the door to broader and bigger possibilities, and that this had relevance for a spiritual, but disciplined adult preparation:

> If we try to think of parallels in the life of adults, we are reminded of the phenomenon of conversion, of the superhuman heightening of the strength of martyrs and apostles, of the constancy of missionaries, of the obedience of monks. Nothing else in the world, except such things, is on a spiritual height equal to the discipline of the "Children's Houses" (MM, p. 349).

For Montessori, there was a connection between religion, spirituality and science:

> We give the name scientist to the type of man who has felt experiment to be a means guiding him to search out the deep truth of life, to lift a veil from its fascinating secrets, and who, in this pursuit, has felt arising within him a

love for the mysteries of nature, so passionate as to annihilate the thought of himself. The scientist is not the clever manipulator of instruments, he is the worshipper of nature and he bears the external symbols of his passion as does the follower of some religious order (MM, p. 8).

In this study, the participants considered Montessori leadership as giving space for a perspective of the cosmos, as letting ancient fundamental questions spring forth again, which ultimately also means working with a spiritual pedagogy. Some of the participants made a link between their particular religious spirituality and the broader human spirituality that was supported within their Montessori training:

> I'm a spiritual person myself. I was raised in a Catholic environment, I went to an all-girls convent school and colleges and I think, an international order of religion all over the world. I was educated by these religious nuns who were very highly educated themselves. And I think probably one of the things that drew me in to Montessori was the fact of my own spiritual background in my own spiritual education with the religious of the Sacred Heart… (Leader A)

Not all of the participants claimed religious beliefs and some introduced the concept of soul as an unconscious source when talking about their personal and spiritual transformation. Leader N's experience of Montessori training was put in these terms:

> …and I had a very special relationship…I'm not sure if she felt it, but kind of reaction to what she was teaching. It was very striking. It's very hard to explain. The best way I've explained it is that she was speaking to my soul. She was saying things that I knew already and she was just putting them in words. And I just had some really profound…it's interesting now thinking about the spiritual transformation of the guide and I really did go through that in her training. There were days when I was calling my mum and saying "I understand now. I was just a teenager…" [laughs]. It was really phenomenal and profound at times. So, for me it was this heightened almost spiritual experience at times…

Leader F felt that this spiritual experience was maintained over time in the leader's intentional connection with nature and that this could be expressed in terms of a universal soul:

> …there is sort of an essence to a Montessori person, a sort of a soul. I think that we have there's something sort of pure that's tied in I think to

really natural development, a sort of wholesomeness that you don't really see with a lot of other forms of education. I can't really find a word that would sort of epitomise what I'm trying to say, but I think of soul and I think of nature and I think of natural and pure…

These words echo Gadamer's (2013) understanding of the link between scientific and spiritual elements:

When we go back to "productive life" the antithesis between nature and spirit does not prove to be of ultimate validity. Both the human and natural sciences are to be derived from the achievements of the intentionality of universal life (Gadamer, 2013, p. 259).

Montessori's connection of spirituality, discipline and nature, could be inferred in the words of the leaders in this study, particularly in the way they spoke about their work carrying them through daily challenges. Leader E explains:

I think that the spiritual component of leadership is in my case in essence the underpinning of all, everything else I do. So, it's not an out front stated, we do not have a religious affiliation for example, and I do not proclaim my belief system, but instead it is those basic grounding spiritual tenets of who I am and faith in the child and the earth and the universe, that carries me through the challenges of the day to day work.

While the literature on spiritual models of leadership is still developing its theoretical base, it represented a lengthy heritage and was inclusive of many integrated threads. Zohar and Marshall (2004) have connected spiritual elements to quantum physics and philosophy to underscore leadership as having meaning. The search for meaning in everyday living has been described as an aspect of the holistic curriculum in action in Montessori settings (Bone, Cullen & Loveridge, 2007). Spirituality is from *spirare*, the breath of life and the participants in this study saw spirituality and spiritual opportunities revealed in the life of their different prepared environments. Leader N offers a dialogue to illustrate how the spirit of humanity infiltrates her guidance of staff toward respectful communication:

If someone comes in and they've complained about another parent or complained about another staff member…I talk a lot about filters – "You're hearing this person talk to you through your set of filters and that's how you are, but that's not what this person is really saying"… a

little bit of a spiritual transformation and "Wow I've never thought about it from their perspective before because I'm so angry." "Well it's fine to be angry and we should definitely go and talk to that person about it, but I want you to know that when you tell me those words that that person says, this is how I hear it. It's not how you hear it." So just helping in a calm and thoughtful way…You know I think that's kind of spiritual…

Leader N is conveying the universality of the significance of interpretation within human spirituality. Gadamer (2013) is an exponent of an expanded view of hermeneutics in our everyday social experience. He claims that even great achievements in the human sciences almost never become outdated and the subject matter acquires its life only from the light in which it is presented to us. Interpretation is the universal human condition and that we are all confronted with a formed cultural world, the meaning of which we must interpret. Yet meaning is no mere fuzzy idealism. Montessori claimed the soul of the child has its own reward, and its peculiar spiritual pleasures through her experiments with an activity she called The Silence Game (MM). In this game, children are invited to stillness and quietness, to sacrifice their own needs to achieve group calm and to maintain a tranquil presence as each child is called one by one in a whisper. Montessori saw the link between silence and human potential:

> …people who are trying to improve themselves or who wish to attain a high level of intellectual achievement – artists or poets, for example – need this silence. It is a necessity (CSW, p. 52).

> *Silence is missing from human life*. Silence is missing, yet all those people who are on a higher spiritual plane, all those who achieve greatness, have felt the *need for silence* (CSW, p. 57)

Montessori began with a vision of the teacher as "not a *passive* force, but a *silent* presence" (MM, p. 371). In her later work, she was to give more detail on the inner spiritual preparation of the teacher. She believed pride was the worst sin of man because of its negative impact on the child's tentative attempts to express his developmental directions. Montessori said, "the untimely intervention of the adult, exalted by his illusions of power, could cancel out these strivings and frustrate their inner realisation" (CF, p. 13). Specifically, Montessori asked her teachers to:

…shed omnipotence and to become a joyous observer. If the teacher can really enter into the joy of seeing things being born and growing under his own eyes, and can clothe himself in the garment of, many delights are reserved for him that are denied to those who assume infallibility and authority in front of a class (TEHP, p. 83).

Humility as one of Montessori's central epistemic virtues, has been elaborated philosophically (Frierson, 2015). Her view of humility was not limited to the interpersonal, but formed the spirit of teachers, even connecting science and spirituality through a self-abnegation and a renunciation of spiritual ideals in the face of truth. Montessori argued:

> The teacher quite apart from the authority to whom she is responsible, feels the value of her work, and of what she has accomplished, in the form of a satisfied spiritual life, which is "life everlasting" and a prayer in itself from each morning to the next. This is hard to understand for one who has not adopted this life. Many think it is due to a virtue of self-sacrifice, and say "how humble these teachers are, not to be interested even in their own authority over the children", and many say: "How can your method succeed if you ask your teachers to renounce all their most natural and spontaneous desires?" But what no one understands is that not sacrifice, but satisfaction, is in question; not renunciation, but a new life in which the values are different, where real life values, hitherto unknown, have come to exist (AM, p. 259).

The theme of humility was not introduced through the interview schedule, but was articulated clearly by the study participants. On the question of an ideal leader, Leader I explained:

> …as you were framing the question, one of the things that came to mind is humility. And I think that to be an effective teacher, you have to have a tremendous amount of humility. The classroom does not revolve around you, nor should it. And I think that that's true of school administration as well. You have to be able to have enough humility to ask questions, to admit when you've made a mistake, to…know when you and the group would really benefit from another perspective, or when you're really getting into areas which aren't your expertise, or even if they are, maybe you'd really benefit from additional contributions.

Leader I is acknowledging the balancing act needed to ensure a confident but humble presence. Several leaders touched on this point by elaborating that it had taken time for them to consider themselves as leaders. Leader K explains:

> I'm in a leadership role, but I don't really consider myself a leader. I am unmistakably a leader now, just by the responsibility of the position, but I think I've always hesitated, even when I was just really a volunteer…

It would have been good to explore why these leaders had felt this way, given they had been well-trained to lead their classroom communities. Understanding current perceptions of leadership amongst Montessori teachers may be helpful in addressing the issue of administrative leadership scarcity in Montessori schools. Leader F spoke specifically about how her own perception of leadership was at odds with that within her community:

> … you ARE the school. You've got to…" That's why I had to develop myself with public speaking and everything, because it was a burden, if I can say that. It was put upon me, that "you are the face of the school", and I know I have to change that perception because actually I'm not. I think that they just…families tended to lean on me because I was out at the front, the warrior, charging, taking on the zoning, taking on the neighbours, just believing in our mission and knowing that we could definitely do this. I can see where they got that.

Here, Leader F is identifying the struggle all Montessori leaders face in responding to their community's needs, while staying firmly grounded in Montessori principles. She is challenging herself to be prepared in stronger ways and to make a stronger contribution. Montessori's advice was that when undertaking new challenges, the principle of being "friendly with error" was paramount. Leader I spoke about this distinct principle in the context of Montessori leadership:

> I think that our ideas about our work and about failure are really different. I see within our society, American society, this kind of fear of failure and fear of weakness, and I think that that's a terrible tragedy. I think that we're human beings and that's how we learn. And I'm sure that that reflects itself in, you know, visions of a leader. If you envision a leader that must never fail and never show weakness, that's not us, that's not Montessori – we can embrace our foibles, and so yeah, I think there's a fundamental difference.

These insights support arguments from Burns (1978) onwards that heroic leadership as an autocratic, hierarchical, non-participative and single-person model are less relevant, and may even be incompatible with today's needs. The

literature has moved toward post-heroic thinking, yet there remains interest in the lives and values of "great leaders" and the power of personal example. It has been demonstrated that heroism in leadership is no binary, but a complexity that has currency (Drysdale, Bennett, Murakami, Johansson & Gurr, 2014). Montessori's honours this complexity through her request that teachers model humility. Montessori related humility to attention, the will and even beauty (SA), so that humility is expressed in classroom leadership as a graceful, dignified and confident authority:

> The teacher must be dignified as well as attractive. The teacher must be superior…The teacher and the children are not at all equals together. There are enough children in the class without the teacher becoming a child with the children...they need a dignified, mature person. The children must admire the teacher for her importance. If they have no authority, they have no directive. Children need this support…The children must not be attached to the teacher but they must have confidence in her. The children must be attached to the material. If they are attached to the teacher, they cannot be independent. Dignity is not arrogance. To be dignified is just to be a superior person and the adult must be superior to the children because she has lived longer (CSW, p. 17).

Montessori's understanding of virtues moulded her conception of the teacher as a moral guide so that Montessori classroom leadership offers the community of children an exemplary role model of good character:

> Her cooperation is not all excluded, but it becomes prudent, delicate, and manifold. She does not have the need of words, or energy, or severity; but she must be able to make prudent observations, to assist a child by going up to, or withdrawing from him, and by speaking or keeping silence in accordance with his needs. She must acquire a moral alertness which has not hitherto been demanded by any other system and this is revealed in her tranquility, patience, charity, and humility. Not words, but virtues are her main qualification (DC, p. 150).

The discipline required to sustain a balanced approach is immense and preparing the self must be seen as developmental work in progress with inevitable mistakes. The initial training:

> …is only an initiation, a beginning apprenticeship. The human being is so complex, so vast, so special a creation, that it will take a lifetime, and beyond, for anyone to comprehend fully the immensity of the vision so vastly greater than ours, that could contemplate the creation of man...so I

wish you that humility which Dr. Montessori asks of her teachers, enabling us to recognise the right of the child to his own work but also to our unfailing aid in the process - if we forget the first, we are dictators, if the second, we will lose sight of the fact that our task is to give "aid to life" (Stephenson, 1974, p. 4).

A lifetime of career development is articulated in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2016), explicitly covering stages of development in the teaching career - Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. Development is also articulated in the Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (AITSL, 2011) that describes the developmental pathway of a principal's increasing proficiency. These two resources are flush with references to "quality" and "effectiveness", though what is understood by these terms is not substantially addressed. There is no mention of "humble", "humility", "error", or "mistake". These words are not a significant part of the professional education discourse. Payne (2004) investigated development in school governance and places the mistake in a position of importance, claiming for example:

…when those in authority distance themselves from negative outcomes or attempt to put "positive spins" on mistakes, distrust is further reinforced (Payne, 2004, p107).

Building a culture of trust is becoming part of the professional educational discourse, though how a leader prepares the self for this is unclear. In Montessori philosophy, trust emerges through a belief in nature and a universal human spirit. From the beginning Montessori considered trust even between children and animals:

It is well then, to develop this feeling of trust and confidence in living creatures, which is, moreover, a form of love, and of union with the universe (MM, p. 159).

Montessori conceived of love as a "reality" and an "eternal energy" (AM, p. 265). Yet love is rarely mentioned in the leadership literature. Montessori argued this spiritual element has relevance for the preparation and ongoing development of the self:

> He who prepares himself, and he who perfects himself, both follow the same path. It is the same way in life, for, deeper than any social distinction, there lies an equality, a common meeting point, where all men are brothers, or, as in the spiritual life, aspirants and saints again and again pass through the same experiences (MM, p. 292).

Leader F brings all of the inner spiritual preparation of the leader back to the core beliefs and practices set in motion during the initial Montessori training – the power of focussed observation, and the need to be able to interpret observations consciously with humility to inform service to the spirit of the child as a central regenerative force:

> …it's spiritual in the way in that our belief in the child in that you know we're not looking at the test scores. We're not looking at anything else. We're just looking at this amazing form in front of us and believing in that, in the spirit of the child.

As the search for spiritual meaning extends from personal to professional arenas, greater emphasis is being placed on spiritual aspects of leadership, which have been historically neglected outside of religious models. The participants in this study suggest the Montessori approach has something to offer contemporary leadership discourse and further investigation on spiritual elements such as meaning, faith and soul and their connection with science may further demonstrate how Montessori's voice remains contemporary.

5.7   Refreshing and Expanding the Moment of Training

This chapter began by discussing the early experiences of the participants in this study as a preparation for the transformative process offered in formal Montessori training. However, following the moment of training, the participants maintained the Montessori approach as a bedrock from which they continued to develop themselves as leaders. Leader J found the personal transformation continued unconsciously after the training finished:

> I had a very close relationship, it happened through the classroom, with this child and I got to know the parent quite well and she got to know my story - my story, meaning how I grew up in a very rough and tumble type of home, with three brothers, and a mother who had a lot of depression. And I was kind of like that scrappy child who foraged for herself and

found other support systems within my neighbourhood and then went and had my own children fairly early and got Montessori training early, became an assistant in the primary and then trained you know and then taught six years of primary, and then fourteen at lower elementary, and then whatever the balance of thirty years has been in upper elementary. And she comes back and she said, "You realise what you've done.", "No, you've got to tell me." … and she said, "You've raised the little [name withheld]". Through raising other people's children, you've actually been raising yourself…

That was the kind of childhood experience that I didn't have. In the nurturing of other people's children, I was nurturing myself through all of that. And I think that's so true. And we don't ever stop. It's the giving back…because we're not formed, but we're learning so much through the experience of guiding the children that it can't help but grow us. And this process doesn't stop.

This leader is describing her ongoing personal growth as an adult and how through her own efforts to serve children, she was able to address facets of her own development. The leader is drawing attention to the dotted lines that proceed on from the point of maturity in Montessori's two charts presented in Chapter 1 and the role the child can play in refreshing and expanding the adult self.

Professionally, Montessori teachers are expected to consciously maintain the vitality of their training through refresher courses, which like the initial training, are tied to the defined stages of human development. The refresher courses, often run over a weekend, may delve into aspects of the Montessori philosophy in more detail than the initial training or offer opportunities to expand practice. The leaders in this study found these face-to-face events, essential to maintaining the joy and vitality of their leadership work, while also fostering new opportunities for personal growth:

…we try to go up to all the refresher courses and we'll take time out. Maybe rather than just going to the academic part, we'll take two more days and have like vacation type experiences, two days before and be like tourists in the city of our conference and then we drop over to the conference…I think a lot of it is to have fun and you know, sense of humour, having a lot of fun together is most important (Leader A).

…continued professional development, being able to come to things like this conference or refresher courses so that your professional perspective stays informed and dynamic. You can do a lot of that by reading articles and so on, but it doesn't replace that human interaction pieces that comes from workshops and so on (Leader I).

In addition to the refresher courses, where the focus is on Montessori philosophy and practice, Montessori leaders may attend retreats in which speakers from outside the Montessori sector are also invited. These may address best practice in areas not covered in teacher preparation, such as financial literacy or business approaches to strategy and risk. The data collection for this study was undertaken at such a retreat. Leader B captures the mood of the participants at this event:

> I love being in these weekend retreats, because you can almost see people's heads or hearts or something about their presence is expanding.

Nevertheless, external untrained presenters do not normally make deep connections between business and administration topics and Montessori's viewpoint, and this remains an area to further cultivate. Leader E explains how having Montessori's concept of development occurring in stages, helped him interpret leadership learning in terms of emerging responsibility:

> …if you have a three-year cycle or a three-stage cycle, and you picture when you first become a leader and you're just thinking about how to become a leader, you're not thinking about how to help other people become a leader, you're just trying to keep your feet on the ground. And then you become more familiar with it and it starts to feel like OK, I'm starting to get the hang of it, I'm doing it right and there's that third stage when you can start to say, OK it's time for me to pass this on to others and to share it as I am more in the fullness of my phase of leadership.

In this study, several participants had experienced the formal Montessori training course twice for two different age groups. Leader M had experienced training three times for three different age groups and found this helped her leadership:

> I hope that it helps me to make a connection between the different levels in the school a little bit more. I hope that it helps me to bridge the differences…I like it when our teachers are able to interact with everyone in the school easily whether that's setting limits or conversing with them.

While the Montessori teacher is trained formally for classroom leadership, the training is first and foremost a transformative preparation of the self, a psycho-preparation. Leader E explains:

I see that Montessori principles that are embodied in our approach to leadership, and I emphasise "our", actually transforming those people who are part of that process. I see it transforming the directors of our programme and of our business office and of our development team. I see it transforming the teachers who come to the school and learn and grow, so I see it simply the process of living together and resolving the issues that come up being transformative and that's so steeped in Montessori that I consider that's just an integral part of the transformation.

The strong focus on transformation that has characterised the leadership literature since Burns (1978), comes through in Montessori philosophy. How best to support transformation via understanding of Montessori principles and practices within a more time-limited preparation seems yet to be resolved. Leader F grappled with the frustration of seeing Montessori marketed freely by centres employing staff without strong preparation of self. She ponders the question of whether it is better to offer short Montessori courses to stay accessible to a time poor market:

…they are turning out Montessori teachers really quickly. The training is very short, and so it's not the same and so you're not turning out the calibre, and so I think what's happening it that Montessori is essentially getting a bad rap, because there's no patent on the word Montessori. Anybody who wants it hangs out their sign and says "we're a Montessori school. We're applying the principles of Montessori." – they're not. They're not. There's no halfway to do it. You can't do it halfway. You need the prepared environment, you need the belief in the child and you need the teacher who is trained specifically to connect those two things together and believe in it a hundred percent…and so you don't have the calibre and that really core belief you know. You're giving the children something, but therein lies the question, is it better to get some Montessori…

The question of thoroughness comes through in Montessori debates about training. How much preparation must be undertaken in order to make a beginning as a Montessori teacher, head of school, parent or any other type of leader remains. Does an emphasis on thoroughness within training, foster thoroughness and quality in post-training work? We refer to a "thorough investigation" when things go wrong in leadership, but is thoroughness as part of our leadership preparation culture? Where is the trade-off between

thoroughness and the limits that are implied within Montessori's "just enough" principle? More research is needed and the answer may be contextual.

The preparation of the self is a component of the wider preparation of the environment, which Montessori advocated for human communities. This chapter explored the notion of preparation of the self as a primary component of Montessori philosophy that had specific relevance for leadership. The voices of the leaders were presented and discussed in terms of themes such as observation, consciousness and human spirit. When analysed in terms of current leadership models and pedagogies, the Montessori approach to preparation of the self is empirical, broad and interdisciplinary, while simultaneously detailed, precise and intricate. Existing leadership theories largely overlook the role of detailed observation and its connection to understanding. Servant leadership incorporates a philosophical approach to succession planning, and this aspect of Montessori philosophy is yet to be explored in the literature. The literature does confirm, that even those leadership models that are developmental in character, lack the complexity of Montessori's concept of the human being, elaborated by the participants in this study.

5.8   Conclusion

In this chapter, the preparation of the self as a contribution to leadership has been explored. The participants' voices demonstrated the comprehensive and complex nature of this preparation. It was noted that early family and school influences have a role to play in developing the value systems and sensitivities of future leaders. This is in keeping with discussion from the literature. A blend of unconscious and conscious experience is argued as the basis from which the choice to undertake Montessori training emerges. Training is defined as a moment of significance in the preparation for Montessori leadership. Training as a Montessori teacher is about leadership of the self as well as leadership of a community, and offers applicability beyond the classroom context. In school leadership or leadership of any community or organisation with wider responsibilities, there may be social pressure to provide a greater focus on business or economic aspects that reflect the zeitgeist, but the self has already

become a leader. There may be other cultural perspectives that can be woven in to the Montessori fabric, but over time this only allows the Montessori training to percolate, broaden and deepen thereby moving from a rich moment to a rich momentum.

The participants in this study demonstrated that their Montessori training was a distinct developmental preparation characterised as a rigorous face-to-face experience within which detailed observation was a key to understanding. Their training approached complex concepts and dilemmas by isolating difficulties before integrating elements into a single philosophy that is sophisticated but not an unlinked eclectic mix. The limits and traditions defined within the Montessori approach were not seen to repress innovation, but were valued by the participants as transforming and freeing, enabling the leader to serve and to find joy and spiritual meaning in work. Further development of the leader maybe conscious or unconscious, but follows an individual pathway according to personal willingness and interest.

The preparation of leadership for the classroom was found to be transferable to other wider leadership contexts, though support may be needed to facilitate this transfer. As much of the preparation is about building a confident authority while cultivating humility, the participants did not find the Montessori approach to be dominated by the hero model of leadership. Charisma plays a part in enticing individuals toward engaging work. However, the overriding concept is one of equilibrium. By comparison with narrower or adjectival approaches, the participants voiced a broad and cohesive perspective, that aimed to balance an ecology of interwoven scientific and philosophical elements. The Montessori preparation of the self was demonstrated to have something to offer contemporary leadership discourse. Further elaboration of Montessori spiritual elements may be helpful in defining this contribution. Research exploring the trained/untrained binary may also be worthwhile. Finally, further investigation of perceptions about leadership in the Montessori context might also be beneficial in view of the scarcity of leadership candidates.

Chapter 6

Preparing the Environment for Montessori Leadership

...acknowledging authority is always connected with the idea that what the authority says is not irrational and arbitrary but can, in principle, be discovered to be true. This is the essence of the authority claimed by the teacher... (Gadamer, 2013, p. 292)

6.1   Introduction

This chapter, the second of three chapters to report and discuss the findings of the interviews, continues the participants' conversation with respect to preparation. The previous chapter addressed how the participants prepared for the work of leadership by exploring the development of the self. Montessori's notion of the prepared self was encapsulated within her broader notion of the prepared environment, discussed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the participants give voice to the conundrum of preparing an environment for adults, within the broad reaches of society. Leader C considers how we might know whether a leader's work was aligned with Montessori philosophy:

> What would be the qualities that you would look for? And so you have to get at what are the principles that apply in Montessori across the ages, you know, is observation one? Maybe that's one. Prepared environment…

Montessori did not offer many clues about preparing the environment for adults. In referring to education at the different stages of human development, she states that the fourth level is life itself (EP). Here she appears to be referring to young adults in the fourth plane, the university stage of eighteen to twenty-four years. She laments the education system that culminates in university and that "abandons them…and dumps them on society without bothering about them again". Rather Montessori considers life-long learning and perceives a reciprocal relationship between the self and the environment. She is also seeing that education has left a gap between human beings and their technologically advanced environment, so that the individual becomes a cipher, a cog in the blind machine that his environment represents (EP). Montessori called the work of elevating the human being to close this gap, a "great work" with moral and systemic aspects:

> Morality must be regarded as the science of organizing a society of men whose highest value is their selfhood and not the efficiency of their machines. Men must learn how to participate consciously in the social discipline that orders all their functions within society and how to help keep these functions in balance (EP, xiii).

Each preparation of the environment could hence be seen as a fresh interpretation of Montessori's legacy, a re-creation or translation of her original texts in order to serve contemporary human potential. When Gadamer (2013) speaks of translating a foreign text he writes:

> The translation of a text, however much the translator may have dealt with and empathised with the author, cannot simply be a re-awakening of the original process in the writer's mind; rather it is necessarily a re-creation of the text guided by the way the translator understands what it says. No one can doubt that what we are dealing with here is interpretation, and not simply reproduction…The requirement that a translation be faithful cannot remove the fundamental gulf between the two languages. However faithful we try to be, we have to make difficult decisions (Gadamer, 2013, p. 404).

In her literature, Montessori's discussion of the prepared environment is not formulaic, but an ongoing thread that permeated her work beginning in Chapter 4 of *The Montessori Method*. She regarded the prepared environment as a secondary developmental factor compared to the creative energies within each human being, but one that could help or hinder development. The leadership literature has begun to examine the relationship between leaders and their work environment, though studies continue to reflect the adjectival phase of leadership research. Recent studies connect leadership to an environment that is safe, healthy, rapidly-changing, complex, caring, ethical or agile. Montessori's key descriptor was "prepared". Her prepared environment was also a "life-environment" (EP, p. 80) with just enough material to support development at each stage of life, and prepared with aesthetic elements to promote concentration and serve the human spirit.

Montessori argued that people work to perfect the environment. She offered churches as exemplars, as they gather beauty within their precincts and are *par excellence* places of meditation and repose for the life of the soul (AMMI).

Montessori believed that every element within the prepared environment is ideally considered and not arbitrary. In the classroom, the furniture should be:

> … "artistically beautiful", not in the manner of luxurious or superfluity, but by grace and harmony of line, colour and simplicity (AMMI, p. 113).

The Melbourne Declaration stated that schools play a vital role in promoting the development, including the aesthetic development, of young Australians, and that schools share this responsibility with others in the wider community (MCEETYA, 2008). The Declaration saw that the curriculum will enable students to understand the aesthetic dimensions of life. Montessori recommended the aesthetic dimension permeate the classroom, extending beyond the furnishings and the materials, to the exposure to nature, the grace and courtesy of social interactions and even the personal presentation of the adult in the room (MM).

Yet Montessori also argued that the prepared environment must support the development of individual independence as well as social interdependence. She referred to the wider social environment, of which the school is a part, as the "supernature" (EP, p. xiii) or "supra-nature" (CSW, p. 110). Montessori felt this term represented the handiwork of humanity, a creation of physical, social and emotional labour that humans had formed above the domain of nature. The supernature consists not only of physical construction such as architecture, and transport and communication systems, but also laws, government policies and social attitudes, together with economic elements such as production and exchange, and technology. Montessori argued that human weakness and unhappiness were indications that there were errors in human society and the supernature. To address this, the first thing that must be done:

> …is to construct an environment that answers the needs of young people…we must begin to do something concrete, something practical – to construct the supernature necessary for this life of children and young people (EP, p. 68).

By preparing an environment for children, Montessori claimed adults would be enlightened to the mistakes within the wider environment. An important principle pertaining to the prepared environment and the materials within it is

control of error, which makes self-education possible (MM). Haines (2001) writes that control of error is a way of providing feedback, a way of assessing one's own progress that puts control back in the hands of the learner, protecting self-esteem and self-motivation, thereby being an essential aspect of auto-education. The prepared environment thus becomes:

> …a means of education. If by an awkward movement a child upsets a chair, which falls noisily to the floor, he will have an evident proof of his own incapacity; the same movement had it taken place amid stationery benches would have passed unnoticed by him. Thus the child has some means by which he can correct himself… (MM, p. 84).

In a prepared environment for adults, elements such as regulation, policy and social and moral guidelines may be considered to function as part of the control of error. Montessori provided no blueprint or model for developing whole schools or for environments which functioned for adults and it has been up to successive generations of Montessori professionals, led by researchers such as Kahn (1999) and Dubble (1998) to lay the groundwork. To embody Montessori principles, a school for example, cannot merely be a collection of well-prepared independent employees and well-prepared compliant silo classrooms. Holistic systems are characterised by connection, complexity and interdependence. This chapter discusses and analyses the way in which participants interpreted Montessori principles to prepare an environment on a broader scale than the classroom in response to their communities' needs. The participants' voices are brought together around environmental themes such as motivation and engagement, freedom and responsibility, and daily practical living, which have relevance for leadership.

Montessori's biological conception of the prepared environment appears not only to operate at each stage of life, but at every scale from the womb to the whole earth. Dubble (1998) believes this has relevance for human organisations, including school communities that operate like living organisms developing through interaction with their environment and responding to inner directives that promote integration. This is both a practical and philosophical view of human and natural systems that Montessori claimed was observable and therefore needed no proof:

> We must study the correlation between life and its environment. In nature, everything correlates. This is the method of nature. Nature is not concerned with the conservation of individual life; it is a harmony, a plan of construction. Everything fits into the plan: winds, rocks, earth, water, plants, man, etc. This is not philosophy of man, it is a philosophy of nature expressed in facts which we can all observe… (TwoNat, p. 11).

Here we see Montessori's ecological stance, a valuing of harmonic environmental order within limits. The need for limits has been a strong feature of the environmental literature since The Club of Rome (Meadows, 1972). Order has been identified in the literature as having implications for human activity and leadership:

> "…the need for leadership applies to every area of human endeavour. All of us belong to groups and organisations of various kinds, ranging from the family to the workplace. Virtually every one of these groups and organisations maintains some kind of order, and some kind of order means some kind of leadership" (Kellerman, 2004, p. 17).

Montessori's concept of order was based around the idea that the origins of development lie within and that development unfolds within limits:

> The child does not grow *because* he is nourished, *because* he breathes, *because* he is placed in conditions of temperature to which he is adapted; he grows because the potential life within him develops, making itself visible…Life makes itself manifest, – life creates, life gives: – and is in its turn held within certain limits and bound by certain laws which are insuperable (MM, p. 105).

For Montessori, the motivation for engaging in purposeful developmental activity is intrinsic. In Chapter 5, it was discussed that the personal interest was influential in drawing the participants in this study toward Montessori and in maintaining intrinsic motivation for their leadership work. In this chapter, the participants speak about how they work to prepare the environment as a developmental aid of interest to others.

6.2 Intrinsic Motivation and Progressive Engagement

The participants in this study spoke about how their understanding of human tendencies and how these present in different circumstances helps them to

design successive environments for children. Like Montessori, Gadamer (2013) argues that a conclusion based on universals, a reasoned proof, is not sufficient, because what is decisive is the circumstances. Gadamer claims the moral and historical existence of humanity as it takes shape in our words and deeds is determined by the *sensus communis*. Montessori insisted we make the child our point of departure (EP). She argued that the environments can be set up to respond to the observed psychological characteristics of each child as they are individually manifested at different stages of development. Leader M explains:

> …if we're setting up the right environment, then they're going to be interested in everything that they're supposed to be because that environment, the whole class, the correct class ratio, the fully equipped classroom, all of those things are really going to inspire and motivate, and allow those interests to peak.

In setting up an environment for adults, the participants were equally considerate of what factors in the environment might allow the human tendencies, personal interests and social integration to flourish. Leader N states:

> We think of boss or principal, that's the person that tells you what to do. But a leader inspires people and talks them through things and helps them get through whatever it is that they're going through. I think of that more.

This participant is conscious of what Montessori referred to as obstacles in the environment, which hindered development. Ideally, obstacles are identified by the teacher and removed whenever possible. Where an obstacle cannot be removed, the teacher offers respectful help to navigate the obstacle. Leader K also believed that leadership in the Montessori context was more about assistance and respect for the person, than imposition:

> …what would a Montessori leader be? And I guess that's the ideal, it's the person who has, respect for other people and for their thinking, who is not trying to lead by control and making decisions and imposing upon others. I don't think that works very well. It's not good for the health of the organization or the people within and it doesn't lead to growth. So there's a connection with Montessori education and teaching in that way.

Both of these leaders are considering the primacy of the leader's role in supporting human development by creating the conditions under which the

natural power of intrinsic motivation can be actualised. This study supported research that shows in spite of the pressures inherent within educational leadership, the role is still inherently motivating for many. Leader H searched for a way to demonstrate the connection he feels between motivation and respect:

> I think I'm motivated by the need to learn how to do the job and everything that that entails. So, motivation has not been something that I've been concerned about. And also, just the idea that someone who is responsible for trying to help people solve their problems, I think it's disrespectful not to be motivated. Or something like that. I don't know if that's the right way to say it.

Montessori argued this work must offer the right level of challenge and therefore must develop alongside the person. Herein lies the dynamic element of the environment and indicates the need for the Montessori teacher to be able to connect the child to the environment. For this, the teacher must be charismatic, or, to use Montessori's words:

> Sometimes I use a word easily misunderstood: the teacher must be seductive, she must entice the children…. must be like the flame which heartens all by its warmth, enlivens and invites (AM, p. 253).

In the Montessori context, charisma is used to link the human being to purposeful work within the environment, for the value of that work to the person's independence and for the development of the group. This is a different emphasis from the use of charisma in some heroic models of leadership where the cult of a single personality brings diverse people to obey a leader with a mission. It aligns better with Degenaar's (1981) statement that obedience to a leader should come because he pursues worthwhile goals in a worthwhile way and because he follows the rules that they have accepted. Charisma in the Montessori context also speaks to Gronn's (2010) idea that capability building is the most useful corrective to heroic individualism. The leaders in this study are saying that Montessori charisma is not used to elevate perceptions about the leader, or to build reverence, trust or satisfaction with the leader. It is being used to help people over, around or through obstacles and to facilitate their ongoing connection to the environment as development takes place. Offering a staircase

of opportunity for activity within the prepared environment fosters engagement and concentration, which are linked to normalisation (and which Lloyd [2008] has connected to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde's Flow).

The question of how to maintain interest within the prepared environment concerned Montessori through her whole life. In her lectures on peace, she claims that each person was set apart from every other person by his own private interests, and that interest was developmental:

> …children are assigned tasks that do not interest them because they are too easy. We must investigate and discover the limits of the difficulties the child can handle and discover the level that keeps him most interested…Children's interests do not remain the same as they pass through the various stages of childhood…What interests a child today will not interest him at all when he is older (EP, p. 80)

Montessori is saying that to understand a person's successive interests and how they are unfolding is to understand something of the person's ever-changing relationship to work. Leader L spoke about how diversity of interests and capabilities was essential within the community, how this needed to be considered for the prepared environment for adults, and how it related to Montessori' s principle of freedom and responsibility:

> …we revisited this again with our board. We've talked about using concepts that we would use in a Montessori classroom community in the way that we lead our school, and so some aspects of that would be, having some diversity of ages, interests and capabilities amongst the team of leaders at the school. It would involve trying to have each person's role as a leader and a community member, really meet their best challenge level, and meet as much as possible, their patterns of interests that they have, so they can really work more joyfully in meeting the needs of their individual interests in their work. While at the same time, in the Montessori classroom we also have to do things that we probably wouldn't choose to do except that we're doing it because we want to take care of the other members of the community. So that's a part of the work as well.

This participant sees providing an engaging work environment as a responsibility, but not the only responsibility of leadership. She is offering a reminder that limits are important and that engagement must include enticing everyone to work together to keep social systems in balance. In this sense,

limitations free up the strength of the Montessori leader to include and link individuals to the larger meanings of community. Progressive human engagement for meaning has been given attention by many contemporary positive psychologists. Csikszentmihalyi (2003) argues meaningful opportunities leading to a psychological state that he refers to as "flow" enable us to experience the remarkable potential of the body and mind to function in harmony. A key condition for flow is the match between challenge and skill – just enough challenge that the person is not overwhelmed, but neither bored. Therefore, flow depends on the evolving relationship between the organism and its environment. One early Montessori scholar notes that while there may be fewer clear developmental milestones to guide our understanding of adult interests, this may leave us with flexible opportunities for engagement:

> …the interest of the adult is not like that of the child – something fixed in its type at the different ages and turning naturally in certain directions; for example, sensorial and motor at the pre-school age; mathematical, geometrical, lingual and scientific form seven years to eleven; social in the period of puberty, and so on; but that adult interests are not foreordained, but can be ignited and pass from one spirit to another like a flame (Claremont, 1995, p. 170).

Leader E found, for example, that it was helpful to consider staff management from the perspective of individual interests and engagement:

> Well, we're all on a path of human development. We're all on a continuum. So as a leader, I want to offer that opportunity for each person to grow, not to pigeon hole them…and oh, she's an assistant, but at the same time, not to assume that all assistants want to get their college degree and their Montessori certification, but to simply explore with each person where they are at that point in time and what they internally, what their internal motivation is, about where to go next. And it may be that they're very happy being a custodian and just want to focus on taking care of the children and being a wonderful custodian and have no interest in moving on to facilities management or whatever…

In another example, Leader J suggested that parents of young children were particularly sensitive to learning about child development and this presented opportunities to strengthen community relationships between leadership, staff and parents in the environment:

> …I think parent education and sometimes facilitating the needs of parents to be together and to learn from each other and share experiences as well as sharing knowledge with the individual teachers and the leadership of the school. So, it's providing those opportunities where they can learn about different aspects of child development. Because they don't come with a manual. We all need the camaraderie, support and the knowledge.

The participants in this study mentioned many other aspects of preparing an engaging environment for their community that mirrored the work of the Montessori classroom leader. These included consideration of aesthetics; openness, transparency and inclusion; spiritual purpose and meaning; a diverse multi-age group; and having the right tools for the work. Leader G said:

> Another way that I prepare the environment for the community is to make sure that it's really open and it's very transparent. I think that that's really important as well. There's not a lot of secrets at staff meeting. People have to know and feel like they are part of the community. Another way that I prepare the environment for the community is just to remember that purposeful work, and that beauty and aesthetics, and meaningful connection and our three-year age span. And that it takes all kinds of us to make a community, but I try to do that - to make sure every parent's invited to every event, to make sure every staff in service is going to be a place where they feel that, and to know that everybody was purposeful work, just like the child wants to be included in that work. Parents and teachers want to be included in that work, so include them in that work. I think that really helps prepare the environment for them to be there. Give them what they need, you know. Just like the child needs specific tools to do specific jobs.

Montessori offers specific staged advice on ensuring all the physical and psychological tools are set up within the prepared environment of a classroom. In the first stage, the teacher avoids distraction and focuses attention on being the keeper and custodian of the environment:

> The teacher's first duty is therefore to watch over the environment, and this takes precedence over all the rest. Its influence is indirect, by unless it be well done there will be no effective or permanent results of any kind, physical, intellectual or spiritual (AM, p. 252).

Secondly, the classroom leader must generate interest for the children. Montessori asks her teachers to be "seductive" in their efforts to invite and call to the children. Finally, the third stage arrives when the children's interest is

spontaneously captured in an activity and we see evidence of Csikszentmihalyi's flow. Now the teacher has linked the child to the environment, the teacher must not interrupt. Montessori advises that as soon as concentration has begun, the teacher should act as if the child does not exist (AM). It is at this point that Montessori almost appears to be stating that the teacher can pass her leadership to the children. Leader G distils the process of moving towards this point:

> …I feel like a lot of my leadership style is very similar to what I was told to do in the classroom. Step number one: Prepare myself to be with the children; Step number two: Prepare the environment to be with the children; Step number three: Meet the children where they are; Step number 4: Give the child something to do, purposeful work, but at their level and then guide. And guiding means side by side guiding, getting out of the way. And I think the leadership model that a Montessori organisation needs is very much the same way.

This leader is confirming the broader application of the classroom model. There is a sense of strong overlap between what a Montessori teacher does and what a Montessori leader does, and that being prepared to teach using Montessori principles, is being prepared to lead. The Montessori leader is considered to have a pedagogical orientation. This speaks to Montessori as a life philosophy oriented toward human development and invites further exploration of the continuities between Montessori teaching and leadership. The Montessori professional appointed to a position of leadership is the holder of the big picture with which everyone is progressively engaged. Leader H confirms that:

> …you're dealing with a philosophical approach that everyone has to be committed to. I think also a leader who is thinking from the big picture and is not managing at the level of minutiae is probably pretty important.

Yet the minutiae are experienced by the leader in every conscious moment of interaction. In the interviews, the participants in this study explored some of the practical details inherent in Montessori's principles and their relevance for the keepers and custodians of their environments. Leader L speaks about how she physically checks the whole school in anticipation of the start of the school year:

> …it's interesting this timing for us, because the school has just begun last week, and so all the staff were back a week or two before that to prepare

their classroom environments. But, certainly as one of the program directors, I would walk through the whole school and look at the lobby and the dismissal area and the arrival area, and the playground and all the communal spaces that we use throughout our campus and think is this place prepared for everybody who is coming here...?

This is more than a safety check, or a check that the environment presents well and everything is merely neat and tidy. Safety and presentation are important aspects of making the environment engaging, but they are not its entirety. The Montessori leader must work with a good sense of balance. One foot must be constantly engaged in the moment and one foot steps back to the bigger picture of the whole system. Leader C explains:

> …being in the moment, you know, that really resonates. There's a lot of truth to that of course, and yet to lead, in this organization, you need to figure out how to be in the moment, in each of these successive moments, and also create and kind of barricade moments where you can prepare for upcoming moments…

This leader is almost suggesting two apparently conflicting ideas of spontaneity and adaptation that are embodied in Montessori's subtle concept of natural law. Gadamer (2013) reminds us that Aristotle's position on the problem of natural law was also subtle and misunderstood. Gadamer interprets Aristotle saying that some laws such as traffic regulations, are mere agreement. Yet there are other things that cannot be regulated because the "nature of the thing" constantly asserts itself (Gadamer, 2013, p. 329). Gadamer describes Aristotle's "area of free play permitted within the set limits of what is right", linking natural law to hermeneutics. According to Gadamer, the law is always deficient, not because it is imperfect in itself but because the human reality is necessarily imperfect in comparison to the ordered world of law, and hence allows no simple application of the law. Later Gadamer brings in limits, an understanding of which he finds comes from experiences in reality. Limits are present not only within the natural world, but are characteristic of the human being:

> Real experience is that whereby man becomes aware of his finiteness. In it are discovered the limits of the power and the self-knowledge of his planning reason. The idea that everything can be reversed, that there is always time for everything and that everything somehow returns, proves to be an illusion (Gadamer, 2013, p. 365).

By shining the torch on human finitude, Gadamer (2013) seems to be inviting us to consider our choices carefully. This is an echo of Montessori's framework of life unfolding in accordance with natural law involving freedom within limits. Montessori acknowledged the significance of the environment as a secondary force that can help the progression of life or that can be an obstacle. In her lifetime, she argued that "the social conditions produced by our civilization create obstacles for the normal development of man" (FM, p. 9). This has led one respected Montessori leader to consider a different label for Montessori teachers:

> We are not teachers in the traditional sense. In fact, the term *teacher*, and even the term *directress*, seem too self-important as a title or a job description. *Guide* is closer to describing what we do, but it is still focussed on the adult and is a kind of distraction from a focus on the child as a learner. I almost wish we could re-label ourselves to indicate what we truly are: environment designers (Ewert-Krocker, p. 7).

The participants in this study interpreted the needs of others to determine how best to design an engaging environment that calls to human potential. They saw this as a dynamic activity that responds to the unfolding inner motivations and skills of the community. The leader is a guiding element in the environment working to maintain balance to support development at the individual and group level. Two key aspects needing a particularly delicate balance are freedom and responsibility.

6.3   Freedom and Responsibility Leading to Trust

In reporting on her work at the casa, Montessori notes how difficult it is to observe the nature and needs of the butterfly when it is pinned to a board. To observe life and determine the psychological needs of the human being at each stage of development, Montessori said the human must also have liberty:

> It is not enough, then, to prepare in our Masters the scientific spirit. We must also make ready the school for their observation. The school must permit the *free, natural manifestations* of the *child* if in the school scientific pedagogy is to be born. This is the essential reform (MM, p. 15).

Montessori further outlines in her many publications, some of the many freedoms she advocates for the human being - freedom of movement, freedom of language, freedom to choose, freedom of time, and others. In Chapter 3, some of Montessori's ideas about freedom and its relationship to responsibility, limits and independence were discussed. For the leaders in this study, Montessori freedoms were empowering, but were balanced by the responsibility to use these freedoms wisely, in particular, to be a good role model. Leader J says:

> I think primarily leadership is leadership by example. It's being the best you can be, using the skills and experiences that you have and not shying away from stepping up to using those skills. I think that's really it.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Montessori argued that the collective interest defined the limit to individual freedom. Limits to freedom are not merely a construct of Montessori traditions, but are, according to Gadamer (2013), relevant for all human life:

> Does being situated within traditions really mean being subject to prejudices and limited in one's freedom? Is not, rather, all human existence, even the freest, limited and qualified in various ways? (Gadamer, 2013, p. 288)

Gadamer is highlighting one of many Montessori paradoxes - freedom and limits. Nevertheless, developing precision in the placement of limits, to cultivate discipline and responsibility, is a highly sophisticated skill that takes time. Leader M reflects on her early years as a classroom leader:

> …I'm thinking of my first year of teaching, I really fumbled with setting the limits, or turning over the levels of responsibilities that children needed. That was something that I found hard. I was definitely drawn to Montessori thinking about the freedoms. And so, when I think about that learning process that I went through…I think that that probably guided me in how to be a leader, and thinking about what Maria Montessori wanted…

This leader went on to describe a classroom situation in terms of Montessori's call to follow the child. She sees how easily this can be misinterpreted and emphasised the role of limits in guiding social life to a point of balance:

> …following the child is one of those areas that society can really have a big misconception about Montessori, so I think that following the child, there are certainly points where we are following their interests, and in the day to day, so they want to paint, so we're allowing them to paint. But they're not going to be allowed to spend their whole day, their whole week, their whole month painting, because they're going to be missing out on all these other things.

This leader is pointing to leading and following as rotating, even integrated roles that move Montessori leadership beyond the polarity. Leader H feels that proper understanding of Montessori's notion of freedom is essential at all levels of school leadership right up to the school board:

> …a collaborator of Montessori's was commenting on the fact that lots of people think that Montessori is an overly permissive approach and that… anyone who saw Montessori herself, even for five minutes even on a film would know that that's ridiculous…the idea that a child should be allowed to just do whatever they want at any moment of a given time because they have an inert force that's driving them to do right things is just such a misconstruction of the core philosophy and that would, that would also apply to governance of the school and the administration. You know, the idea that you should just let it go in whatever direction it's going to go without providing some direction and some decisive actions that are going to move things in the right direction. You know, it might be subjective, but it's still a journey.

These leaders are clearly stating that guiding the systemic balance of freedom and responsibility is an important foundation of Montessori leadership in action. Several of the participants in this study spoke about how when the balance is right, a culture of trust builds up. For example, if Montessori teachers have been prepared with rigour, they can be trusted to prepare their classroom environments. The school leader needs then only to observe this is happening, in order to validate that trust. Leader A spoke several times about how the mutually constructive components of freedom, responsibility and trust operated in her school to build up a strong, stable staff team:

> I just respect. I expect the teachers to do everything to their environment that they were told to do. And I am not at all a hovering person. I really leave it up to them.
>
> I put a lot of trust into the people that work for me…I trust the teachers to do what they are supposed to do and do what they've been trained to do. Do what they've been told in their training courses, in their AMI training

courses. And I'm very, very fortunate, that our teachers have been there for many years. I've had very little changeover, unless someone leaves the area, or perhaps, leaves you know, to raise a family…

This leader is speaking about the Montessori notion of "constant effort" (AM, p. 82) and its relationship to freedom and responsibility. Observing staff to check that they have just enough freedom to do their work effectively, and offering any necessary guidance with friendliness toward error requires great consideration. Leader G explains that professional observation must be built up carefully to enable trust validation without staff feeling under threat:

> But I think observation has to be a tool, because I think, a good leader needs to know what is going on in the classroom in terms of the children. I think you have to create a culture of observation in your school so that your teachers are used to you being in there, so that they never feel threatened by you being in there.

The trust generated when freedom is balanced with responsibility, provides a sense of safety that is particularly important in a crisis situation. Leader K was one of several participants in this study who spoke about leading through a crisis. Offering the community freedom to express themselves under duress was an important factor in successfully negotiating a very difficult situation:

> I came into this role as the overall leader in this environment not that long ago and I came into it in a crisis. And how I approached it was to, with really with honesty as much as I could and I found that it worked beautifully. People want to know what's happening. I think that creates a safe environment. You're building trust. You give them an opportunity to speak.

In Chapter 2, it was discussed that a charismatic leader can emerge during a crisis with an attractive vision or solution for followers. For the leaders in this study such charisma would be accompanied by humility and an acknowledgement of the resources within the environment. The prepared environment becomes not merely a beautiful ordered space, but an active dynamic developmental and purposeful place of shared commitment that can build trust. Ultimately freedom and responsibility work hand in hand to create mutual respect, helped by the principle of friendliness with error. Montessori described many times how this operated in practice in our approach to children:

When we are going to take him out for a walk we must let him know about it beforehand…We must respect the child and he must understand that he is respected. He needs to be prepared for everything that is going to be done for him. He must not feel that he has an absolute master. Democracy begins at birth. The child must know what is going to happen to him, that he will not be seized suddenly, that his permission will be asked first (1946, p. 128).

Montessori academics have begun to write on how the principle of freedom and responsibility can be applied to adult level interactions within aspects of school leadership. Dubble (1998) offers one example of how administrative exercises can be philosophically and practically realigned with Montessori principles. In the admissions process Dubble argues for freedom for the new parent while simultaneously advocating the responsibility to link the new parent in to the existing community environment:

…the way in which parents are brought into their child's first school experience has an important effect upon the parents' participation in the educational process. The Montessori administrator plays a critical role in shaping an admissions process to create a powerful link between parents and the school. In doing so, the guiding principle of admissions policy does not focus on the school accepting students but rather upon parents choosing the school (Dubble, 1995, p. 23).

The leaders in this study found that giving free voice to all adults as well as all children within the community, generated the same mutual respect within the adult environment that Montessori had inspired in her classrooms. Yet Montessori belongs to the group of leaders who demonstrate the need for limits to secure the rights of the led, rather than those leaders who argue for limits to secure the power of the leader.

6.4   Orienting to The Child as a Regenerative Ontological Force

A strongly consistent pattern emerging from the participants in this study was the orientation of their leadership to the universal child. Leader I represents the participants' voices:

I think that my concept of leadership has definitely changed over time and I think that one of the greatest factors informing my vision of leadership

has been the children. Because to see how leadership emerges, and the different forms that it can take in the classroom has certainly broadened my view.

This leader seems to be highlighting a significant leadership paradox within the Montessori prepared environment – the child as the leader and guide of the adult. This is an orientation of which the participants in this study appeared particularly conscious. As the interviews occurred just prior to the beginning of a new school year, some participants spoke about how they would highlight this to their communities. Leader G spoke for all participants even those who did not normally work directly with children:

> I think I start by making sure that I transmit a message to the whole community that we are here for the children, you know, that we are here for the children.

and

> And so, a Montessori leader has to say it's also about the children, but most of their interactions are with the adults, so then you start preparing the environment for the adults so that they have everything they need to prepare the environment for the children.

Leader K talks about how she sees this orientation as having physical and non-physical components, which are ideally resourced with time:

> …what comes to mind is more the intangible qualities of that. Certainly, the physical qualities are safety and a comfortable place to interact with each other, have a little respite…There's the making sure that everyone is comfortable within the environment in the sense of what our mission is again and understanding who and what is expected…and making them feel warm and welcome…I think small things are important. Never forgetting to orient. That's part of what we do in Montessori too because the children and teachers and, every individual too, and I think sometimes we can forget to do that, but everybody needs that little time to be introduced, led around and acclimate.

Leader E anticipates the joy orientation brings with the return of the community after the summer break:

> When the teachers return on Aug 13th, we will have a prepared environment to welcome them back. We will have a Welcome Back celebration, we will orient them to new things going on, we will have

different presentations, we will have dancing, we will have food and it will be a joyful moment for all of us to rejoin…

These leaders are all voicing aspects of preparing an environment for adults or for a whole community that included adults and children in a conscious systematic manner. The significance of orienting everyone in the environment to the development of human potential, originating in the child was a key point of commonality amongst the participants in this study that was reflected in Montessori literature:

> The preparation of the environment, in this wider sense, means ensuring that the school is designed to respond to the needs and interests of its members, particularly the children who are the central focus of its work. Decisions about procedures, scheduling, renovations, and staff development are all viewed in light of how they contribute to the fuller development of individuals' potential…seemingly small issues are carefully considered in view of their broader impact (Kendall, 1991, p. 182).

One of the findings of this investigation is that any perspective on Montessori leadership must place the child in a prime, central position, and as Leader G confirms, this orientation to the child has a strong connection to humility:

> …everything we do in leadership of schools, or classrooms or organisations, must have the child at the centre. It's an egoless profession and you have to learn that. Some of us learn it the hard way. It wasn't always easy for me. I used to think that I liked going into the classroom because I got to perform, you know do a performance every day, give my lessons and so on. And as I matured as a teacher, I realised it wasn't about me, but that takes time. The same thing happens when we lead, that you know you have to have at the centre of your work the child and you have to know that no matter what, you're there to protect their growth and development, and that bumps you to the sides. It bumps Maria Montessori to the sides.

Montessori was comfortable with being bumped to the sides. Her perspective went beyond humility, and linked back to her origins, as a scientist who valued observation as a path to understanding:

> When I am with children I am a nobody, and the greatest privilege I have when I approach them is being able to forget that I even exist, for this has enabled me to see things that one would miss if one were somebody – little things, simple but very precious truths (EP, 85).

Montessori repeated many times her call for the spotlight to be moved away from her and focussed on the child as the leader of men:

> This child who stands before us with his marvellous hidden energies must lead our efforts. When we say that the child is our teacher, we mean that we must take his revelations as our guide. Our starting point must be the revelation of the characteristics of the human individual…I would call this the *Child's Method*, not the Montessori Method (1946, p. 12).

This sentiment was echoed by the participants in this study. Leader F said:

> We don't think of Maria Montessori when we go to work, but what we do think of is that child in front of us and maybe all those opportunities we have to get in its way. I have to agree that we have to focus on that; the child has the potential…

This participant is recalling Montessori's notion of obstacles. Placing the child at the heart of all leadership work, means that all questions that relate to preparing the environment come back to the ultimate impact on children. Leader J explains:

> That's what it's really all about and when you have a discussion point, it is What is this child trying to express? What is being called out? What needs, or how can we best facilitate the needs of the child in this situation? and Can the environment meet that need? Is it the right environment? What changes need to be made? But it really is the expression of the child and whether we are meeting the needs of that child.

The distinctive engraving of the needs of the child in a psychologically central position for the whole community brings practical and philosophical clarity with decision–making and problem solving. Leader G states:

> I think it's always useful because when I have a dilemma with a child, a dilemma with a parent, a dilemma with a staff member, I can use any one of those examples. So, for example, if I have a dilemma with a staff member and they're doing something in the classroom that I have questions about, or if they have a practice that makes other teachers uncomfortable, or that they're very adamant that they want to do it their way, my Montessori training always comes in because I say, "OK let's back up. How is this serving the child? Tell me how this is serving the child."

These two leaders are asking questions to search for better ways to serve the child. Although theories of servant leadership appear to overlap strongly with Montessori's ideas, she seemed to go one step further. Montessori's orientation to service was pedagogical, implying service to enhance education as an aid to life, service to enhance independence as a means of enhancing interdependence. Her primary allegiance was not to an organisation, nor to her followers, but to the child. Adults may serve other adults in the course of their work, but the ultimate question guiding Montessori service, regardless of whether there are children within the organisation, is about how the work serves children. The justification for placing the child at the centre of social life emerged from Montessori's discoveries of the inner directives powering human development and the unity of the human personality across developmental stages. Her conception that the child constructs the adult implies that social problems involving the adult have their genesis in childhood:

> As a citizen, the Child must be recognised in its human dignity and it must be respected as the Builder of Man. The importance of the child's personality must be consecrated among the moral principles of humanity, because upon the child depends not only the physical constitution of man, but also his moral character. The future of Society is therefore connected with the Child as unconditionally as effects are connected with their causes (PR, p.6).

This brings a larger and deeper mission to social organisations such as schools beyond measurable aspects of education. It also brings additional obligations to adult-focussed organisations outside of the education sector. Montessori regarded education as a responsibility not limited to teachers, but one which must be understood by politicians, lawyers, business leaders, parents and other adults:

> I remember how a Minister of State, without bothering much about the feature of spontaneity, once said to me, "You have solved a great problem, you have succeeded in fusing together discipline and freedom – this is not a problem which concerns the government of schools only, it concerns the government of nations."
>
> Evidently, in this case also, it was understood by implication that I had had the power of obtaining such results. It was I who had solved a problem. The mentality of people could not accept the other possibility

that the nature of childhood can offer a solution for a problem which we adults cannot solve – that from the child came the fusion of what our mind conceives only as a contrast (FM, p. 28).

Montessori seems here to be reflecting a set of ideas encapsulated within Gadamer's (2013) notion of fusing horizons. She is saying that the child has demonstrated how to hold and balance cognitively dissonant ideas that are both potentially valid. She consciously brings out the tension between merely acknowledging the significance of the child and offering a prepared environment for the child to work on self-construction, so becoming a regenerative social force. Seeing the child in this environment actively construct the adult of the species, becomes a privilege that reinforces the dedication of the Montessori teacher as the child's guide. Leader K found her commitment motivating:

> Yeah, the commitment is really to seeing what the children become when they go through the process. And I've seen it. I've seen it over and over again now. It's just wondrous.

Whatever theoretical, philosophical and practical frameworks are used in the literature to approach the study of leadership, either within education or more broadly, the lens seems to be firmly focused on the adults and their environment. Different studies examine leader traits, behaviours, relationships, styles, preparation and development and the policies and social contexts within which these operate. Relatively few studies were found which linked leadership directly to children in ways other than their academic outcomes. A work on the rise and fall of child-centred education in Britain over the last century (Darling, 1994) demonstrates firmly that the importance (or lack of) given to children in policy and educational leadership can be the result of factors such as government political priorities, swings in the moral zeitgeist and the professional self-interest of individuals. Contemporary educators who argue for putting the child back at the centre of the business include Caldwell (2007) who states that the student is the most important unit of organisation – not the classroom, not the school and not the system, and others who claim:

> …the focus needs to be on the students, their culture, their technology, their needs. For too long the focus has been on what teachers do in

schools, the inputs of teaching and curriculum has dominated our thinking and practice (Loader, McGraw & Mason, 2007, p. 10).

These authors also include a quote from a student who says, "it is not what I think of school, but what school thinks of me which is important" (Loader, McGraw & Mason, 2001, p. 25) and call upon educational leadership to change this. Yet even these writers refer to the child more narrowly as a student. The full potential of the child is often misunderstood and missing, even within environments led by educated adults. This re-establishes the child's status as a forgotten citizen (EP). Montessori's view is that understanding the child fully informs any adult human work, because the adult emerges from the child. She writes that the interpretation of discrete psychological phenomena, cannot decipher the riddle of the human being (EP). Her words appear to invite us to reconsider whether theories that are developed by adults to address separate aspects or stages of the human condition, are adequate for endeavours such as leadership, that invoke the total human spirit:

> We are not ones who can show man what he is. One truth must be repeated again and again. The child alone can reveal to us the secrets of the spiritual life of man…The child - the spiritual embryo – reveals himself to us adults in order to guide us through the labyrinth. The child brings us light amid the shadows that surround us…How can an organism be understood if it is studied only after it has fully developed?
>
> What has the child taught us? When the child lives in an atmosphere congenial to his vital needs, he proves to have character traits quite different from those we usually consider him as having…
>
> The child then promises the redemption of humanity…The child must no longer be considered as the son of man, but rather as the creator and the father of man, pointing the way to a better life and bringing us light. The child should be regarded as the father of the man, the father capable of creating a better humanity. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to serve the child and create an atmosphere than can satisfy his needs (EP, p. 86).

What emerges from the interviews, is a case for orienting leadership to the child as a strategic approach to accomplish human redemption and regeneration. The child is integral to the participants' ongoing development and work as leaders, remaining an important influence for leadership long after Montessori training has ended. Knowing how to apply Montessori principles to prepare an environment that includes a prepared self that is oriented to the child, is an

outcome of Montessori training that becomes more and more embedded as the training is refreshed and expanded over time. Leader D finds this is observable:

> I heard someone say this weekend, "You know this Montessori stuff isn't just a way of teaching children, it's a whole way of life. You people live and breathe this. It informs everything you do all the time", which is exactly what we tell people. Montessori is *not* just a way of teaching reading or writing or any particular content delivery, it *is* a way of being.

For the participants in this study, preparing the environment becomes a reciprocally ontological leadership activity. As the children construct themselves under the guidance of teachers, the well-prepared teacher revisits her own construction as a human being, which in turn enhances the prepared environment that supports the child's development. To be a good Montessori teacher is also to be a good Montessori leader, which offers a strong experiential base for working and leading in an adult environment where children are not present. The perspective of the participants is that in an adult environment offering progressive engagement, the developing human can engage other adults in an uplifting spiral of dynamic and developmental activity. However, if there are no children present, and this is to be Montessori leadership, the developmental needs of the universal child must always be consciously prioritised in relation to those of the adult.

6.6   Practical Life: Caring with Grace and Courtesy

Practical Life, which includes what could be considered as leadership virtues - care of the self, care of the environment, and the social care of grace and courtesy - remains a distinctive foundational component of Montessori guidance. Care of the environment incorporates not only the human environment, but also the natural environment, including care of plants and animals. In the early days of the casa dei bambini, which was a social reform project, Montessori discovered a strong connection between practical life work and the children's psychic development. A sign hung on the wall read "he who cares for his home, cares for himself" (Kahn, 2013, p. 6) reflecting the culture in which Montessori's early experiments took place.

There is growing recognition of the importance of environmental, social and governance factors in assessing sustainability, ethical practice and future prosperity at the highest levels of business and investment leadership (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2016; Cheng, Green & Ko, 2015). Montessori's notion of Practical Life serves to support the healthy development of human independence and interdependence. The participants in this study made a connection between Practical Life and the fostering of leadership as a distributed concept. Leader N explains her view:

> I love, love, love practical life. I always wondered if my community building came from grace and courtesy and then practical life, that idea of taking care of oneself, taking care of one's environment. Boy, that's really tough. I'm all about teacher's being independent. I tell them I want them to try to solve their problems together, rather than relying on me, which I don't see happening in other schools. If I really try to create that space where, I'm kind of like the teacher – "I'm totally here if you need me, but I want you to try first". I'm all over that. We talk about that a lot, so that's a big aspect, the independence of the teacher.

Much of the Practical Life curriculum relates to movement. The child who repeatedly sweeps the floor, even when it has already been swept is not doing so to mimic an adult, nor necessarily to achieve the aim of cleanliness, but is practising and refining movement to construct himself as an independent, but socially and environmentally moral human being. He is shown how to do so by a teacher who has analysed, refined and presented the necessary movements, with poise and precision. Later, the child may come to sweep as a contribution to the group, so that we see practical life activity serving both individual and group psychology, as well as moral development.

Movement was significant for Montessori and she argued that we must always cling firmly to what may be called the "philosophy of movement" (AM, p. 134). She goes on to explain her conceptualisation:

> Work is inseparable from movement. The life of man, and of the great human society, is bound up with movement. If everyone stopped working for a single month, mankind would perish. So movement has a social side also… (AM, p. 135)

The importance of preparing the environment for movement is now being reconsidered by architectural and town planning leaders through an emphasis on active design (Lee, 2012). However, the role of movement was not explored in depth with the leaders in this study. No questions in the interview schedule specifically related to movement. The researcher's observations of ceremonial leadership, as well as on-camera gestures and body language of political leaders, suggests that the role of movement in leadership is considered to have significance. The literature includes recent studies such as Ausilio, Badino, Yi, Tokay, Craighero, Canto, Aloimonos, and Fadigo (2012) and Sacheli, Tidoni, Pavone, Aglioti and Candidi (2013) that analyse motor behaviour or kinematics in relation to leadership within performing arts such as dance and orchestral music, where coordination of and communication between leader and follower is critical in a moment-by moment sense. As the relationship of movement to other aspects of leadership is still being unpacked in the literature, movement was found in this study to be a specific thread that cries out for further exploration. An emerging aspect of leadership in the literature is the wider area of physicality of leadership, which relates to gender, communication and even back to trait theories of leadership.

In Montessori approaches, Practical Life is an area where the mind-body connection is made visible through movement. Practical Life also underpins socialisation, connecting the child's individual development with society to achieve independence. Leader N goes on to further explain how leadership is connected to Montessori's practical life:

> I think teachers guiding children through that process of how to be a leader, of how to be the person that stands up and says I think we should do it this way, definitely would fall under practical life. It's that socialisation, not just how do you share and how do you say please and say thank you, but how do you express your own ideas without offending people, and start listening to other people's ideas at the same time. I think that could be very valid.

Socialisation is a central part of leadership according to the participants in this study and echoed Leader E's simple claim that "Leadership is all about relationships". Leader B described how even the very young children in her school benefited from grace and courtesy opportunities to develop explicit social skills that are not always seen in contemporary leaders:

> …so, we're teaching the children how to pass, you know, walk behind...don't walk between us, or how to shake hands, how to greet a visitor, how to offer a chair, that kind of respectful politeness, civility, which a lot of people feel is lacking these days, you know in politics and it's terrible in an election year. They start name calling and mud slinging…

The literature features many examples of leaders who were tyrannical, battling demons, or simply failed to be courteous to others. Post-heroic theorists and the quiet leadership movement, emerging from work by writers such as Badaracco (2003) and Cain (2012), advocate modesty and restraint, and concern themselves with the ordinary daily work of leadership. Montessori's concept of grace and courtesy, is a thorough augmentation of civility that appears to fit well with these new leadership directions. Explicit modelling of high standard social conventions within an environment specially prepared for the development of grace and courtesy supports aspects of leadership such as negotiation and conflict resolution. Leader J finds that Montessori teaching techniques that involve grace and courtesy are directly applicable to the adult context:

> …I love that moment when you'll have five or six children together there's been some kind of kerfuffle and you're there to help them to come to some agreement on what happened. And when you get that lovely moment when they all tell their story, and you get that lovely moment when you get someone who may really have been at odds actually understands another's perspective, and everyone in the group just kind of relaxes, and you know that the process has been successful. And I think the same thing happens when you have a group of parents in front of you. … and I think that happens among parent groups too when you're addressing them and you actually speak to the essence of what their dilemmas are as parents and what we're offering as a school and you have that sense of OK, we're on the same page. We can go forth.

Leader K spoke about how she applied her understanding of the broad inclusive psychological space of grace and courtesy, as more than just knowing what to say, to bring a whole school community together following a crisis:

> …we made sure we had a meeting first thing Monday morning when they arrived, a mandatory meeting with the board members and the staff…There's quite a lesson actually from observing what made people uncomfortable and so even though the right words were said, there can still be a very different feel in what's behind the words and that's my perception of what was happening. And so the meeting we had, I just went

in with an agenda, a clear agenda…I decided to have a meeting for all the parents because within days I could feel that they were needing more information. And I was asking my staff, what do you think, how do you think we should do this, and they were so surprised to be included, and they had some wonderful ideas, you know that got incorporated, how we managed it and that's been the nature of how we've managed it ever since…they appreciate that kind of leadership…then given an opportunity to participate and for their opinions to be respected and the change is just astounding to me.

These sorts of experiences gave the participants in this study confidence in their Montessori approach to leadership. Leader L explains how this confidence is imbued with humility and a friendliness with error:

…you plant seeds of information, like grace and courtesy lessons and lessons with materials and then you need to let the child kind of explore with that and sometimes it sticks right away and sometimes it doesn't so you have to very patiently revisit that again and not get angry that they didn't get it the first time. It's more like well maybe I didn't really quite present it for that individual in the way that it was easiest for them to hear it. I think I'm going to try it a different way, or they just need some more repetition before they figure it out, you know. So, I hope that my work with children has led to some of the patience in the process with adults in the community.

These leaders are integrating Montessori's concept of grace and courtesy into their leadership. Moving from simple experiences in when and how to say "please" and "thank you" to the more complex communication required within leadership is strongly linked in Montessori philosophy to the heart of human development. This is aligned with developmental writers in the contemporary leadership literature such as Helsing, Howell, Kegan and Lahey (2008) who argue that leadership often requires a level of personal development that many adults may not yet have. Kegan and Lahey (2016) later find value in errors and shortcomings, and write of organisations becoming deliberately developmental through aspects such as the language of ongoing regard.

Balancing individual development with the development of society means that grace and courtesy promotes collaboration. Leader N speaks about her teachers:

…learning from each other in the different environments has always been very important to me. So I think a lot of that is the mentality that I tell teachers when I hire them. They all know, just even in the interview… just

being really up front, I'm trying to create a situation where you're not in an island. You're not in your classroom all by yourself with the weight on your shoulders… It's really collaborative.

Leader N finds that preparing the environment for a multi-age mini-society with a broad range of capabilities and interests is a teacher's leadership skill that is transferable to working in an adult environment:

Obviously mixed age groups in the classroom…it falls into play a little bit in the adult world, but really, I guess community from the perspective of we all have our roles. We all have our strengths and weaknesses in the community and we need to learn to rely on each other and ask for extra help and to learn from what everyone else has to teach us.

Aside from the aspect of movement, this study did not explore the aspects of Practical Life that deal with care of plants and animals. No questions in the interview schedule specifically addressed this. Yet compared to the emphasis on human systems, in conventional leadership theory and practice, Montessori always saw the strong connection between the supernature and the natural world. Further research addressing how Montessori leaders made a connection to the natural world and how they supported animal and plant life, would be beneficial. The participants in this study did speak about the way in which they managed and cared for themselves and their environments. However, the connection between leadership and Montessori's distinct conception of Practical Life appears to offer considerable scope for further exploration.

6.7 Founding a Prepared Environment

The particular issues surrounding founder leadership have personal relevance to the researcher. Some of the participants in this study were school founders or had been closely associated with the founding of a new school or program. In other words, they were involved in the design of an environment for a whole community of children and their families from scratch within the parameters of their context. Leader N spoke about the way in which her experience in one school led her to found a new Montessori school:

> …it was so interesting, my interaction with the teachers at the school and then my own assistant, who no one wanted, the assistant that I got and that I had and really turned around, and people were like "oh, you really did an amazing job with Katie", and all these pieces got together and showed me that I wanted to try to create an environment and a community for adults as much as children.

In the start-up phase of a school, the charismatic model of leadership may be particularly relevant in the same way that it may be important in the classroom to connect a new child to the work. It is:

> …often the charisma and vision of the central teacher or principal around which the schools formed. These "heroic" leaders became the foundation upon which the schools were built and thus these principals usually "enjoyed" a long tenure (Payne, 2004, p. 258).

This suggests a possible relationship between the stage of development of the school and the associated psychological characteristics of leadership, which parallels Montessori's developmental emphasis:

> By observing and discerning stages of development in the various elements of the school community, we can begin to see some emerging sensitivities, opportunities, and potential pitfalls that characterise certain stages. And just as awareness of stages of development is a key principle in shaping pedagogical practice, so this same awareness can be applied to the developing stages of Montessori schools (Kahn et al, 1999, p. 3).

The literature is full of biographies of people who have founded schools or other organisations during their lifetimes. Handy and Handy (1999) have written about entrepreneurs who create something out of nothing. In the field of education, McConaghy (2004) found little contemporary research on the unique challenges and struggles of founding of new independent schools despite rising demand for schools offering choices beyond traditional education. His thesis is that founders require a strong sense of vision and values, knowledge and skills to overcome the enormous difficulties associated with founding leadership. A key aspect is the capability to marshal resources. Leader F, who founded a school based on her personal passion for serving others, found this driving force

matured into broader community leadership in which everyone served and supported each other:

> …one of the things for me personally, a big growth area in the beginning when I started the school, I had this sort of feeling if you will that parents pay tuition, and I couldn't ask them to give anything more, to do an annual giving or to do any fundraisers, or to ask them to provide snack on a monthly basis. And the other thing that was a big no go for me because I really, because you're paying me, I'm going to provide this really amazing service, and so one area of growth for me was to be able to let go of that and say no that's actually really not how it works, a community, we have to work together, fundraising is critical you know because of budgets and because of helping other families to be here, because they can't afford to be here…

Although founding a school was a transformative process for the founding leaders in this study, each was prompted by some spark that pushes the founder forward (McConaghy, 2004). This spark is a psychological event that operates like a birth. It brings our appetite for risk together with the culmination of the gestation of our beliefs, values, prejudices, hopes and our understanding of the social environment in which we live.

> History does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live…*the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgements, constitute the historical reality of his being* (Gadamer, 2013, p. 289).

Gadamer's words relate to historicity. Montessori argued that consciousness that has to be built up in every individual and that outer expressions are of a development that has already taken place within. She writes of "explosions, as if something tremendous had been formed inside and had to find an outlet" (1946, p. 56). Psychic development is not mechanical, but a creative response to the environment. It is the way in which we are socially and emotionally linked to our environment that provides opportunity for raising human capacity and bringing a community together. Leader N states:

> You'll hear me talk about community constantly, it's my number one thing, but creating an environment where people can go to each other and solve problems and collaborate on issues that they might have…I think a

Montessori leader would create that environment. It's not just being the person that a troubled person might go to and say, "I need some help". But creating a space and environment where teachers can be together and can work through issues and problems comfortably and safely with a lot of respect and appreciation…

Thinking about what a prepared environment could be, had provided fuel for the spark of entrepreneurship within this leader:

…and so, I took all these little pieces of what I didn't want at a school and what I could see was really hurting a school and said "OK, I think I can do this".

The size of the emotional and administrative hurdles to be overcome to found a new school means many do not make the attempt (McConaghy, 2004). Leader H summarised the views of the participants in this study by saying that leadership represents a solution to the problem of how to organise collective effort to enhance capacity to face risk and deal with hurdles:

I think there's a certain amount of…a need for leadership to prevent and reduce anxiety, stress. The process of someone stepping forward and addressing the needs and concerns of other people, is a natural function of human social life. And so, if no one does that, it can be really problematic.

…as an administrative function, it's just a natural, like I said, there's a need for leadership because human beings are social animals and we have to have some way of addressing certain procedural group dynamics and they won't get addressed unless someone addresses them. And so, in spite of the fact that a Montessori school may be a pretty democratic organisation, someone has to address these problems. So, I think that a leader serves that function. It's a necessary role.

This leader is emphasising leadership as a naturally occurring phenomenon linked to the social nature of human beings. For the participants in this study, founding can be seen as a stepping forward, an expression of human potential, that emerges spontaneously, under conditions of freedom to address a dynamic situation. The founder rethinks what is needed in the prepared environment, and lives the freedom to exercise leadership with a responsibility to serve children and their community through a commitment to concentrated work.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter explored Montessori's concept of the prepared environment as an underlying principle that had relevance for leadership in a Montessori context. The voices of the leaders were analysed and discussed in terms of complex themes such as intrinsic motivation and progressive engagement, freedom and responsibility, orientation to the child, practical life and founding. The importance of the environment as a factor in leadership was a point of common ground with the literature. However, by comparison with other leadership theories, Montessori's concept of environment was demonstrated to be broad, integrated, dynamic, evolving and oriented to the child.

The participants spoke about serving their communities through the environment. Cognitively dissonant ideas such as the need for both freedom and limits were placed in balance by observation of the communities' needs, which then informed the preparation of the environment. The participants expressed that preparation could be enacted through small-scale design elements that addressed aspects such as safety, comfort, aesthetics and interest. At the same time, it is clear that Montessori offers a large-scale environmental narrative that connects in reciprocal relationship, nature and supernature.

The voices of the participants indicated that both the needs of the individual and the needs of the group are taken into consideration when preparing an environment, and the diversity of stages of development of those in the environment was seen as a potential asset. The leader's role was not simply to prepare the environment, but to link adults and children to their environment, which was seen as the true guide for human development. This study found that practical life aspects of leadership including grace and courtesy that were not seen as universal in contemporary leadership, were considered integral to the distinct strength of Montessori environments. Practical and regulatory aspects of the workplace environment are covered in the management literature though from the perspective of adults rather than children. The role of movement in Montessori leadership is yet to be explored in detail, but that there is a role cannot be disputed. Investigation would also be helpful to clarify the relationship of care of animals and plants to leadership in a Montessori environment.

This investigation concludes that Montessori leadership can be linked to theories that bring in inclusivity, refined communication with civility and time-honoured human development. The participants in this study spoke of being active, busy and joyful in their work. It might be helpful to research whether being able to work through the environment itself as a distinct distributed model of leadership supported the construction of a calm, low stress place in which to conduct human development activity. In any case, Gadamer's (2013) emphasis on language as the medium of hermeneutic experience is relevant to the preparation of leadership in Montessori contexts. With a chronic shortage of Montessori classroom leaders stepping up to higher roles and the bringing in of untrained leaders with helpful preparations outside of the Montessori sector to fill gaps, there appears an appetite for substantive cross-sectoral understanding of what constitutes Montessori leadership and its preparation. Gadamer emphasises that understanding is informed by the verbal process whereby a conversation in two different languages is made possible through translation. He states this explicit process is an encounter between the interpreters who meet in a common ground of understanding. In the next chapter once again the voices of participants are heard and are interpreted to fuse the contemporary Montessori leadership horizon with Montessori's historic legacy and horizons from the leadership field. This brings the conversation across the bridge from preparation to practice and performance.

Chapter 7

Practising Montessori Leadership

...the permanent significance of something can first be known objectively only when it belongs to a closed context – in other words, when it is dead enough to have only historical interest. Only then does it seem possible to exclude the subjective involvement of the observer. This is in fact a paradox... (Gadamer, 2013, p. 309)

7.1   Introduction

This chapter is the third and final chapter to report and discuss the findings of the interviews. The voices of the participants have been analysed through the lens of preparation - both preparation of the self (Chapter 5) and preparation of the environment (Chapter 6). Discussion now turns to the daily work of leadership, where preparation moves in to performance. This is not performance in a competitive or artistic sense, but in the sense of integrated action for daily living. The participants apply Montessori theory and philosophy to the interactive expression of life that is exercised in the moment. This chapter is guided by Gadamer's (2013) writings on application. His recovery of the fundamental hermeneutic problem emerges from reaching in to application and grasping it as always understanding:

> …we have come to see that understanding always involves something like applying the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation. Thus we are forced to go one step beyond romantic hermeneutics, as it were, by regarding not only understanding and interpretation, but also application as comprising one unified process (Gadamer, 2013, p. 318).

Echoing Gadamer, we can say that applying Montessori principles through leadership practice is also a unified hermeneutic process. The participants in this study saw their daily work as leaders to be a holistic, integrated understanding and interpretation of her legacy. Gadamer writes of an essential tension that arises between a text and the sense arrived at by applying it at the concrete moment of interpretation. In an environment offering Montessori principles, leadership finds direction through critical thinking, analysis and reflection, synthesis and axiological depth in relation to the community's interests, values

and will. One Montessori researcher who addressed school administration writes:

> …the Montessori administrator leads the whole community toward a cyclical process of choice, action, reflection, new choice, and on…transforming experience toward deeper understanding of the school's own vision and values (Kendall, 1991, p. 191).

Some of the participants in this study quibbled with one question in the interview schedule that was prefaced by a statement that Montessori did not provide a model of leadership. Leader G summarised the views of participants by saying that in the interaction leaders have with their communities, Montessori "gave us more guidance than we think". Leader M further clarified that classroom leadership was a model for leadership at other levels and in other contexts, stating, "I would say that she probably has given us a little bit more of a guide by just describing the role of the director or directress…". Leader J argued:

> I think I would quibble with your first premise that Montessori doesn't provide for leadership in her philosophy because I think it's the natural curiosity of the human being, that leads us to want to explore as a natural tendency and I think that exploration is the leadership of the personal identity. And that's how it happens. What are you being led to learn? That's in the child from the first time that they enter into the environment. And it's leading with the self which is what it's really all about.

This leader is connecting the day-to-day work of leadership back to fundamental ideas in Montessori philosophy, such as the human tendencies, stages of development, prepared environment and the individual self as a building block of society. In this chapter, the voices of the participants continue to show how moving from preparation to performance brings all their knowledge of Montessori theory and philosophy together into an integrated, hermeneutic, active and dynamic leadership performance. This is a daily practical life response to large interconnecting ideas that Montessori addressed, including morality, human development, peace, spirituality and time. Leader C gives some examples of how these large ideas are manifested in the everyday detail:

> …they protect themselves well. So in my experience, the good leaders are not sending email at eleven o'clock at night. And they're not, they

cultivate the culture where their admin team, or their faculty team wouldn't think of sending them a text message at two o'clock on a Saturday afternoon asking about some budget request…Because they know that in order for us to do these things well, we need to do other things well, whether that's family, or churches, or whatever that other thing is. People need to have this balance. The good leaders are not just doing it for themselves, they understand that they're doing it as a model, and this is where, I think like a teacher in the classroom is functioning as a school model. People are going to do what the leader does.

The relevance of deeply held Montessori principles is not denied in the moment, but rather, the leaders are implementing these principles through an ecological approach that has high reality and equilibrium indices. They describe how they tap into their own internal energies to bring everything together in balance, picking up opportunities through collaborative effort, but letting go of what they cannot shift right now, to serve the human being. This is an exemplary service, directly or indirectly for children, that provides space for everyone to be inspirational. Leader I explains:

I think that there are times when you lead through a kind of inspirational presence and motivational speeches and facilitation and bringing people together, and helping to create that vision and driving, you know, banners and whatever else. But maybe more often and maybe even at times more effectively, there are those who lead by example. And that's something that I've really come to appreciate in the classroom. Because you see these children and they may be some of the younger children in the classroom, but just through the way that they are, through the way that they interact with others, the way that they are clearly able to state their thoughts and their opinions, they inspire others to do the same. So, it's less direct, it's not the "I have a vision, come with me" kind of leader. It's more just a way of being. And they're both very powerful and I hope that I can kind of embody and take advantage of both of those ways of being in my position.

This leader is allowing the power of leadership to become distributed. She uses the term "embody" to indicate her understanding that Montessori leadership is not merely intellectual, but an incorporated ontology of leadership. It could be said that Montessori leadership is a blending and balancing act between contrasts such as mind and body; the individual self and society; between being in the moment, but acting within the larger long-term picture; between being visible, engaging and charismatic, or quietly humble and observing life from the sidelines or background; between freedom and limits; between theory and

practice; and between the child and the adult. Montessori paradoxes appeared to have special significance for the participants in this study.

7.2 Holding the Paradoxes

Some of the apparently opposing elements within Montessori philosophy have already been discussed in this thesis. Cossentino (2009) refers to the paradoxical nature of Montessori education, reflecting the many times that Montessori herself raised contrasting, even dissonant, ideas. Montessori's career as a leader can be seen as a paradox. She developed a world-renowned and long-lasting pedagogy as a little-known psychiatrist working with underprivileged children in a slum area of Rome, but ended her career as a traveller and citizen of the world, working alongside global leaders. Gadamer writes that:

> Knowledge always means, precisely, considering opposites. Its superiority over preconceived opinion consists in the fact that it is able to conceive of possibilities as possibilities (Gadamer, 2013, p. 373)

Montessori did more than consider opposites such as freedom and limits, order and disorder. She highlighted the links between them, demonstrating that every aspect of human existence is connected to every other aspect. Even Montessori's well-documented a-ha moment observing a three-year-old child, quietly concentrating on work with a wooden block holding ten graded cylinders (MM), can be connected to large-scale leadership. The child takes out the two extreme cylinders from the block, those with the most contrast and places them together front and centre. Then each other cylinder is taken out and placed randomly in front before being paired back to its place to re-establish order and equilibrium. O'Doherty and Kennedy (2013, p. 208), writing about an application of adaptive leadership, speak of the inevitability of the traverse from equilibrium to disequilibrium and back again:

> For a split second along the pendulum's arc, things are integrated, and then the process of falling out of equilibrium and into conflict with the environment begins again. As the process continues, each new adaption brings a new balance, a new place where the situation is back in balance again. All new integrations are intricate adaptions to an ever-changing environment.

These authors claim this underlying dialectic between conflict and integration finds expression at all levels of dynamic systems, from microbiology to astronomy, from the cells to the planets. This is similar to Montessori's multi-focal approach whereby tiny details can be linked to larger-scale analysis and synthesis. It is an experience from the whole, to the isolation of details, then a sorting and categorising, a re-ordering before a reintegration and return to the whole, which has in the process progressed. Whether the leader is involved in teaching, corporate governance, running a family or managing a small not-for-profit, we can use Gadamer's (2013) reminder that the hermeneutic circle of whole-parts-whole shapes our understanding. We use it to communicate with inclusion and respect, make decisions, plan strategies, address problems and experience life. This can be viewed as good paradox management.

The cylinder block can be a metaphor for the human species with "fixed characteristics [that] do not change", though each individual within the species must "vary" from another (MM, p. 105). The participants in this study did not mention the famous cylinder block story, but were alert to the possible connections between tiny Montessori details and the global perspective. Leader J said:

> …it's become a theme in my collection of information in the last few years, the microcosm and the macrocosm. And I think Montessori distills that beautifully.

Montessori was a person of her time and wrote of the insecurity of modern conditions in the world that she saw partly in a state of disintegration and partly in reconstruction (FCTA). Her work predates the postmodern movement in which the discourse of complexity, diversity and otherness challenged the assumptions of modernity including ideas about universality and objectivity. Some recent writers such as Dahlberg and Moss (2005) are suspicious of universals in relation to education. Yet Montessori resists being tied to such opposed philosophical movements being both concerned with the universal, but never trying to make the Other into the Same. In this she appears aligned with Gadamer, who states that:

> …even if all historical knowledge includes the application of experiential universals to the particular object of investigation, historical research does not endeavour to grasp the concrete phenomenon as an instance of a universal rule…the aim is…to understand how this man, this people, or this state is what it has become, or, more generally, how it happened that it is so (Gadamer, 2013, 4).

Like Gadamer, Montessori considered that human science was tied to psychological conditions and did not have to be relegated to inexactness. Montessori was aware of and understood adult constructions of childhood, but her concept of the child as a spiritual embryo was distinct and apolitical. She perceived the personality of the child would continue to be a sure guide for education that was independent of social changes. She saw adaptability as the essential quality (FCTA) as work remains "man's fundamental instinct" (EP, p. 88). While leadership is frequently seen as primarily cognitive within the literature, Montessori argued that viewing work with a one-sided approach is a misrepresentation of human need:

> We might say that those who work only with their minds are mutilated men and those who work only with their hands are decapitated men. We try to create a harmony between those who work with their minds and those who work with their hands by appealing to their sentiments but there is a need for whole men. Every side of the human personality must function (EP 110).

The participants in this study spoke about seeing each member of their community as a dynamic complementarity, a whole person. In the classroom, Montessori teachers paradoxically imagine the child who is not yet there (AM), to educate the human potential. They invite the child to work – "come with me" - like a visionary leader calling to the human spirit. Leader E talks about how the principle of educating human potential is transferable to the adult and organisational situation:

> It's just like as in, when there's a child, who's creating havoc in your classroom, and you know, you can see through that havoc and through the issues and the challenge and you can see that there's huge potential in this amazing human being that's right there in front of you and that he just hasn't manifested that yet. And so, by focusing on that, and knowing, knowing in your interactions that it's there, and then speaking to that part of that child, then you support the child as he or she learns more about

himself. So, it's the same way when you're working with adults or problems. You know the capacity of the organization to deal with this issue, and so you focus on what that will look like and how to get from here to there.

The how to get from here to there is the developmental process that Montessori referred to as "education". While imagining potential and seeing the whole human being is a beginning, Montessori states that:

> To think and to wish is not enough. It is action which counts…the life of volition is the life of action (SAE, p. 171).

Montessori argued that in spite of man's imagination and achievement, he has not acted sufficiently to investigate his own wholeness. She felt a gulf had developed between man's technological horizons and the horizons of his inner spirit:

> One is struck by the fact that man has been able to unravel so many mysteries of the universe, to detect hidden energies and harness them for his own use, impelled by his instinct to preserve life, and even more important, by his deeply rooted drive to learn and to acquire knowledge. At the same time, however, man's investigations of his own inner energies, have left a vast abyss, and his mastery of them has been almost nil. This master of the external world has not managed to tame his own inner energies, which have accumulated through the centuries and have been loosely organized in great human groups. If man were asked the reasons for this paradox, he would be unable to provide any clear answer (EP, p. 5).

This paradox is reflected in Montessori's own journey from scientist and physician to pedagogue and to an advocate for children and peace. Her more mature publications address democracy, human rights, religion, finance, production and exchange, and love. Montessori's horizon evolved into a fusion of all human horizons. Her integrated conception is suggestive of inspiration at the level of a universal and holistic human spirituality. Leader D speaks about striving to embrace that lofty horizon in his leadership:

> I'm not a deeply religious person, but I believe in being a fully integrated person and my whole self, and being and fabric of my life is to be fully, fully, fully integrated and consistent, one piece of every other piece, and if it's not and I become aware of that, I'll try to understand that and try to change that. So, there's nothing in my leadership style or practice or

experience that somehow didn't or doesn't completely flow with everything that is Montessori.

This comment invites us to consider the limits of the human horizon and the extent to which a horizon has real existence. Integration implies coherence over conflicts or chasms, offering a psychologically positive view of leadership with a moral depth. The careful management of paradox using Montessori principles that are guided by observation was enabling for the participants in this study. Their ability to bring opposites together within a philosophically and scientifically-based framework that guided everyday interactions, significantly enlarged their leadership:

> The management of paradox is the ability to bring together ideas that seem to be at odds with each other. Combining an emphasis on rigorous standards with a refusal to impose standardisation or compromise local discretion; expecting a great deal from teachers while empowering them to take control of their professional lives; responding to adolescent needs for independence while providing the disciplined safe havens they need; involving parents without compromising professional autonomy; and bringing everyone together in a common quest united by shared values while honouring diversity and promoting innovative ideas are examples. When implemented, these seemingly contradictory ideas can actually bring us together, make us brighter and stronger, and help us achieve larger purposes. The management of paradox is easier when leaders look to ideas, values, and visions of the common good as a moral sense of authority for what they do (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 136).

The fact that Montessori has consistently embraced contradiction and paradox at all scales from the detailed design of her materials to broad moral contentions, may have made it difficult for researchers to categorise her work and perhaps even to fully understand it. Nevertheless, some well-known writers from the mainstream leadership literature offer models with inherent paradox. Collins' (2001) Level 5 model emerged from a five-year study of companies from the Fortune 500 list. This study found that only a small percentage of these made a "good to great" transformation. The most consistent factor shared by these companies was having what Collins referred to as a Level 5 leader. In these leaders was a rare combination of contrasting traits such as fearlessness and stoicism combined with modesty and humility. Collins' work demonstrates a complex, dynamic and paradoxical understanding of leadership and was referred to by Leader C:

> People should read Drucker and they should read Jim Collins. It's all there. The lessons are all there…I don't need to try to get Jim Collins to understand Montessori for me to understand how he helps me in my work.

This leader is emphasising that Montessori leaders can access the work of conventional leadership writers and cognitively embed Montessori-aligned ideas from these writers into their existing philosophical framework. So far, this is a one-way exchange of ideas and a finding of this study is that Montessori leadership can contribute equally to conventional leadership.

This leader is also underscoring Montessori's legacy as an open science with practical implications that remain informed by new research. Montessori's perspective was larger than leadership, spanning human development and activity and her work defies easy categorisation into a single adjectival descriptor. Attempts to emphasise one part of the Montessori leader's work over other parts may project what Gadamer (2013) referred to as rival projects:

> …every revision of the fore-projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is… (Gadamer, 2013, p. 280)

Perhaps the unity of meaning of Montessori's legacy can be described as a developmental ecology, embracing:

> …the two seemingly paradoxical extremes which are at the centre of her pedagogy: the universal characteristics of the human child, and the child as a unique, unrepeatable, respectable and admirable individual to be unconditionally accepted as one of life's most marvellous expressions (AMI, 2012).

For the participants in this study, the notion of the child as leader held together all the competing and contrasting aspects of their daily adult leadership practice. Despite their understandings that the child has a different mind from the adult, paradoxically, the leaders drew time and time again from their skills in helping children, when trying to step back from the business of running a school and be more thorough in their work with staff and parents. Leader L describes one example:

> …we had an experience at our school in the last couple of years where we had a staff person, who really wasn't working well with others, and also had some places in the work with the children that really needed to change, and so we embarked on a long-term process of trying to help that person become aware of the negative behaviours and offer tools and ways to work through those. Um, I mean I think we, the dilemma of what to do with the staff person who, who isn't really working to the mission of the school was…that was a big dilemma and so I think we came at it in the same way as we would come at it with a child in the classroom, where there would be some role modeling, there would be some offers of some different tools to use to learn something different. Then some group things we did, like, you know we did, like you would have a grace and courtesy lesson and you're really thinking of that one child in the group but you give it to everyone, because you know it doesn't hurt.

Leader I characterises the child as a unifying force by talking about the paradox of Montessori as empirical science that is sensitive to contextual factors, with long held philosophically grounded traditions that speak to human universals:

> …child as leader - I think that's pretty clear. It's not about her, it's not about me, it's not about you. And when she says the child, I think she means children. And one of the beautiful pieces about that, is that that can remain unchanged throughout time and in any different culture. She saw this not just a potential within the child, but also certain characteristics of children in every different culture. So, children, are kind of this unifying force that unites the world, and so, when we look to Dr. Montessori's teaching, you know and when you read books and you find those great quotes, I think she did a splendid job of holding up the mirror and you can say well because this is something that's not just applicable in Rome in the early 1900s, it's still applicable 100 years later and will be 100 years in the future. I think she was also giving us a licence or reminding us that it also has to evolve. Because society has evolved and, but children are children and the needs of children will remain. And as long as you can focus on that, then you can do this whenever and wherever your circumstances are.

A finding of this study is that a Montessori perspective on leadership is complex, but applicable to human groups in diverse historic or geographic settings. The participants foregrounded the paradoxical nature of Montessori concepts including that the adult may be a leader, but follows the child. Where the leadership field concentrates on adult leadership, Montessori honoured the significance of the inherent leadership held within the child.

7.3 Actively Anticipating Normalisation

While embracing paradox, the participants in this study were keen to emphasise the importance of process to deliver outcomes in their leadership practice. Montessori referred to the personal self-constructive educational process that is invoked by education as normalisation. Normalisation implies balance, an accomplishment that does not come easily. Finding balance in leadership situations can post challenge, and this idea is well–captured in the title of Duignan and Degenhardt's (2010) *Dancing on a Shifting Carpet*. Yet when this process is successful in the classroom, teachers see a child who can concentrate on purposeful work, who is self-disciplined, who experiences successful socialisation and who is joyful. One of the questions in the interview schedule asked participants how they might know whether their leadership work was successful. Leader G describes the dilemma of measuring success:

> Oof. That's a hard question because it goes along with education. Whether you're Montessori educated or not Montessori educated, when was the point in our life when we knew we had a good education? You know. I feel like we as Montessori leaders are selling a product, the benefits of which won't be seen for 35 years, so that whole question of are you a successful leader or not, you can pull out benchmarks of my school is full, I've got good student retention, my teachers stay in place, financially we're stable, blah, blah, blah, but is that being a successful leader, or is that being a successful manager? In terms of being a successful leader, I think part of it is measured in the value in the people you're leading or the organisation you're leading, or the systems that you're leading, feels empowered to do their work, not only empowered to do their work, but feels spiritually calm, in the path that they're going on. And you know it's difficult to find a metric to measure that with, but I think that's a big indicator of success.

This leader is referring to something similar to normalisation that operates at the level of a community. Lloyd (2008) argues that Montessori's theory of normalisation can be viewed as an applied theory of self-regulation. Each child achieves differentiation by cultivating individual skills and mastering unique abilities. The child experiences integration by contributing these skills to the life of the community, co-building the framework for social cohesion. Montessori claimed that after the very active work of preparing herself and the environment, and then linking the child to the environment, there was a third stage of activity for the teacher, which paradoxically is characterised by constraint. In this stage,

the teacher must not interrupt or interfere in any way with the work of the child:

> The great principle which brings success to the teacher is this: *as soon as concentration has begun, act as if the child does not exist* (AM, p. 255).

If the teacher's leadership of her community is particularly successful, then each child, and even the whole class as a group, would act as though she did not exist. This is a moral achievement, in which leadership has become internalised within each unique independent personality and within the group. That is, a self-regulating community has been achieved. The individual works for the love of the work, for the satisfaction it gives him and for the contribution it makes to the group.

Lloyd (2008) has already discussed the similarity between Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow and the way that the children work with materials in a Montessori prepared environment. Within a community of adults, the child acts as a cohesive agent for this kind of group flow. Sawyer (2015) writes about the group operating at peak experience, merging action and awareness to adjust in situations of rapid change. The group acts together without thinking about it first like jazz musicians, a flock of birds or a school of fish. In group flow, the tensions are in balance – convention and novelty, structure and improvisation, critical analysis and freewheeling creativity, listening and speaking out. This is aligned with Montessori's notion of normalisation and community. Here leadership is subtle, distributed, and a guide serving the peaceful activity of the group.

Bringing together all the preparation of the self and the environment, so that knowledge and skills become active support of the normalisation process takes time. The leaders in this study were required to have at least five years' leadership experience in order to participate in the study, and most had much more than this. Yet several participants referred to master Montessori leaders who had inspired them. Leader C reports on the thinking and activity that he sees demonstrates refinement in a highly experienced leader:

> It's not just that somehow, they show up to a Board meeting ready to give that report. Somehow, they know the right thing to say, at that staff meeting. It's because they do that preparation. They know what it

takes…they have a good pulse and they keep good boundaries, and I'm thinking they really are quite elegant about what lands on their plate and what stays or what moves on to other people's plates…

This leader is connecting preparation to practice, underscoring the developmental nature of Montessori leadership. This is more than offering an environment with freedom and limits, friendliness with error, and opportunities for progressive engagement. Montessori leadership invites repetition, with active guidance for self, individual and group work, including the removal of obstacles that appear to support normalisation. Leader C goes on to use the example of young children playing soccer who go to wherever the ball is located, without any positional play. He is suggesting the high-end leaders regardless of organisation cultivate an order and structure for individuals and for the group. This enables everyone to see his contribution to an integrated human construction of supernature. Leadership offers direction for this, based on the agenda of the players. Montessori's position was that our agenda must come from children, not the adults.

> Shaping leadership in light of this principle of integration is perhaps the most difficult aspect of administration. It is so easy for administrators to assert their own agenda, to determine the priorities, to push for the quick solution to problems…it is very difficult not to over-direct by organising and managing according to a prepared plan (Kendall, 1999, p. 1).

Setting priorities while maintaining the integrity of the group, is a challenge for contemporary leaders. For the participants in this study, the central place of the child and the normalisation process dictated priorities, even when there were significant tensions within the community. Leader I explains:

> I guess that certainly, it dictates priorities, and I think that's probably one thing that makes Montessori schools unique. Every invested member whether that's administration or teachers or parents, we all share clear priority, and that is the child. For example, when at our school, after this kind of, you know the head of school left and the adults were feeling a lot of anxiety, we were all able to at least, if we couldn't hold it together for ourselves, we did have some staff meetings where there were tears and where there was frustration voiced, but in the classrooms, you know, with the children, none of that really mattered. You know, their work, their process of self-construction…

This leader is speaking of how adults in the Montessori environment use their will to overcome challenges for the sake of children. The will is an essential component in Montessori's analysis of normalisation and its development is necessary for the integration of the human personality (Lloyd, 2008). Montessori considered the will to be a directing force that develops from birth onward, and impels humans toward activities that are beneficial to life. Montessori teachers have a dynamic toolbox of assessments that can help them understand the strength of the normalisation process underway. Webster (2015) says in the 3-6 classroom, the silence game is the test of the evolving social culture. For adolescents, the test is, do you see and understand what needs to be done and do you do it without being asked or seen? For adults, this moves the key guides for the working person beyond mere rules or regulations, to a higher moral purpose of serving the interdependent community, with a focus on the young. Each person will be at a different part of the journey and an understanding of staged development brings a connection to moral responsibilities. Leader E ponders:

> I think that one of the things that I'm realising is that part of being a leader, is to support the development and growth of leadership of other people that you come in contact with. That's an integral charge…and of course, there are always new phases of learning, but I think that's an important part of it…that we have a responsibility to share and pass on what we know.

Interpreting and understanding the self as a leader is integral to the observations each leader makes of the community. Intervention when needed, in just the right way, is a key activity for the Montessori leader to offer support to the community as a human system. Leader G explains:

> You need to meet the adults where they are. You have to believe that parents, and staff and teachers, they all go through developmental stages just like the children do. The school goes through developmental stages just like the children do, and you have to engage them in purposeful work and you have to trust them just like we trust the child. You have to say if you're a leader in a school and you have trained teachers, you have to say "I'm going to trust you to do this work and I'm going to help you where you need help. And if you don't need help, I'm going to let you go". And be able to really do that, I think the other thing too is to know when to step in and to know when not to step in, and to continually engage them, and if it's not working…If it is working and things are going well and things are going forward, to recognise that that's their work and they did it, and if it's not going well, rather than to blame them or to say that something's wrong with

the child, or something's wrong with this teacher, you've got to look inside and say "What do I need to change to make sure this system is working well?"

To address systemic change requires transformation. The pedagogical orientation of Montessori leadership as an activity guiding human potential, suggesting that Montessori leadership is ultimately transformational:

> …the essence of leadership is akin to that of teaching; it is the process of empowering through activity toward development of potential…Leadership within the larger school community is a process of connecting human action and reflecting upon that action, ultimately resulting in the transformation of individuals within the school and the school itself…The leader "serves" the process of learning, acting as a living link between individuals and the environment (Kendall, 1991, p. 185).

Kendall concludes that leadership works in the service of the realisation of human potential at every level of the school, recognising diversity and connecting those diverse gifts and resources in service. Leader K believes the transformation in Montessori settings remains ontological:

> …if you really believe it and understand it, it becomes who you are as a person, but that's different from having a set of skills.

The concept and terminology of normalisation as a psychologically optimal process of becoming, have been problematic for Montessori professionals attempting to communicate their philosophy and practice to a broader audience. Gadamer (2013) finds that:

> Language is the medium in which substantive understanding and agreement take place between two people (Gadamer, 2013, p. 401).
>
> Conversation is a process of coming to an understanding (Gadamer, 2013, p. 402).

He guides the analysis of interview data to a deeper consideration of terminology. The word root "norma" originated from the Latin and referred to a carpenter's square (Oxford University Press, 2010). A "norm" implies something that is usual, a standard or pattern, especially of social behaviour, that

is typical or expected. Kendall (1991) argues the Montessori administrator has three key roles: keeping and defining a vision, actively confronting moral dilemmas, and creating an atmosphere of critical inquiry and reflection. For Kendall, the Montessori administrator understands leadership as involving philosophy in action, a confrontation of the "What is?" and the "What ought to be?" These are normative questions and the actions and attitudes of the leader in approaching them sets the tone for the community. Kendall classifies the Montessori administrator as a moral philosopher of courage and insight who must go beyond a given code of ethics to forge a philosophy reflective of experience and the Montessori vision of full human development.

Normalisation hence suggests a particular kind of wisdom that emerges from an ability to extract insight from experience. Although none of the participants in this study used the term "Montessori elder" during the interviews, the researcher has noted this term in use within the Montessori community to denote wise, experienced leadership such as that shown by Montessori trainers or longstanding heads of schools who pass their understanding on to the next generation. Eldership has traditional been connected with tribal or religious groupings, but is emerging in the literature as a relevant if challenging idea for secular educational leaders (Barrow, 2016). The understanding of these longstanding leaders is a helpful guide to bringing to life Montessori principles through application to everyday human work. One of Montessori's biographers was critical of some academics who judged her legacy without observing this practical wisdom in action:

> No one can fully appreciate the Montessori method by simply studying its principles in the abstract…It is the lack of any such firsthand acquaintance with Montessori principles *in action* which explains why learned persons, including certain professors of education (who have never been inside a Montessori school) so completely misunderstood it (Standing, 1966, p. 3).

Montessori's approach can perhaps be considered as a group of interwoven principles and methodologies that provide leaders in classrooms and other environments with a set of scientifically and philosophically based tools with which to support human development. The capacity to nimbly jump from the

whole of the approach to the parts and back to the whole, to aid life and enact leadership, emerges and grows through training and experience. As noted in Chapter 3, Montessori did not see her legacy as a method, but granted she could be perceived as an interpreter for the child. Gadamer's (2013) legacy with regard to interpretation is that truth and method lie in opposition, and that truth can be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiring. Montessori's ongoing questioning and inquiring led her to ponder the leadership she saw in the Hellenic spirit:

> Athens took the lead in freedom of thought. A wise man called Socrates, leader of an intellectual circle, took to going round among the citizens asking them thought provoking questions…So a critical faculty of mind was awakened, and a thirst for first-hand knowledge which was carried on by Plato, one of the greatest of philosophers, and by Erastothenes, who disclosed that the world was a sphere, and Aristotle who speculated and experimented in natural science. There were great educators, whose methods we should follow today; they kindled a flame in a few that spread to the many (TEHP, p. 72).

Aristotle's phronesis, a concept of practical wisdom, continues to be explored in the leadership literature (Grant and McGhee, 2012; Shotter and Tsoukas, 2014) today. It is a contextual notion embracing the art of the possible, with the quality of improvisation and appears as the wisdom we use when can't know what to do. It reveals itself in our practice so that leadership becomes an active wisdom that counters value-neutral managerialism and the fragmentation of understanding into units of competency. Montessori sees wisdom begins to emerge in children, when they travel a pedagogical pathway that connects them with nature:

> When the children put a seed into the ground, and wait until it fructifies, and see the first appearance of the shapeless plant, and wait for the growth and the transformations into flower and fruit, and see how some plants sprout sooner and some later, and how the deciduous plants have a rapid life, and the fruit trees a slower growth, they end by acquiring a peaceful equilibrium of conscience, and absorb the first germs of that wisdom which so characterised the tillers of the soil in the time when they still kept their primitive simplicity (MM, p. 159).

Montessori is highlighting the biological and spiritual basis for normalisation. She is speaking of the child who has been initiated into observation of the

phenomena of life and who has come to understand that the flourishing of plants and animals depends on his care. This is a mysterious conjunction of nature and the highest human love that ultimately leads to the virtue of patience and confident expectation, which is a form of faith and of philosophy of life (MM). Leader H reminds us that Montessori was also inspired by the heartfelt wisdom of Wordsworth:

> I think Montessori meant that the child is the father of the man, the William Wordsworth poem, My heart leaps up as I behold…Yeah I think she was recognising that if we do not focus on the needs of children, they will not grow up to be helpful human beings. And so that is the way that children can help humanity by growing up to be normalised adults.

The participants in this study recognised that a Montessori perspective on leadership incorporates a view of the child as the constructor of the adult. Where the adult works to accomplish a task, the child works for himself. This idea takes the Montessori perspective beyond the confines of the education sector and places it alongside human endeavour. The participants saw the Montessori leader as a practitioner working for optimal human development in all its facets.

7.4   Cultivating Peace through Love

Montessori was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in three consecutive years - 1949, 1950 and 1951 just prior to her death in 1952 (Nobel Media, 2011). Montessori's literature is clear about the paradoxical idea that peace in the social group is achieved by focussing on freedom in the individual:

> Individual freedom is the basis of all the rest. Without such freedom, it is impossible for personality to develop fully. Freedom is the key to the entire process, and the first step comes when the individual is capable of acting without help from others and becomes aware of himself as an autonomous being. This is a rudimentary definition of freedom and one that appears to be at odds with the social nature of man and the functioning of the human collectivity. How can the idea of individual freedom and that of life in society be reconciled, since the latter is fraught with restrictions that force the individual to obey the laws of the collectivity? The same problem, the same apparent contradiction, seems to characterise our everyday life in society. Yet freedom is the necessary foundation of organised society. Individual personality could not develop without individual freedom (EP, p. 101).

Montessori's placement of peace firmly in the field of education was mentioned as personally and spiritually significant for the leaders in this study. Leader H explains:

> The most important principle to me, is that the goal of education is peace. Montessori said that and it was the unifying objective of her philosophy and so I think that's a really, that's a very high aspirational goal and it's uplifting and it's a very high standard and I think that reminding everyone that that's what we're talking about, can be a very powerful thing. It puts what you're doing in a really reverent context.

This leader is reminding us that peace is connected to the fundamental human spirit that has always underpinned Montessori's work. The notion of leadership in a reverent context harks back to Montessori's early ideas of the teacher as a worshipper of nature, and of life. It reminds us of the strong links she made between her work and humanistic or religious ideas, but also addresses her mature work on raising humanity to a peaceful and cohesive global society. In this study, touching on aspects of peace within the interviews drew out the most emotion from the participants. Deeply held feelings and experiences rose to the surface at these times. Leader I's voice came from the heart:

> I think that I struggle sometimes with this faith in humanity, because there are a lot of ugly, ugly things that go on in this world. It's hard sometimes, you don't even have to watch the news. And I think that that faith in humanity, I think that when I was a teacher, I felt that it was very much something that I had to embody and it was very much an internal struggle. I think I struggle sometimes with how much of myself do I want to give to humanity vs saying I'm just going to have fun, I'm going to enjoy this life. I'm not going to worry about the future of humanity, so that's always a little bit of a…so I think that's where the emotion comes from, because to see this tremendous potential and to see the love and the creativity, and the art, the music, the invention, I mean we really are just a remarkable species, to think that we create and imagine, are beautiful and sometimes very, very ugly, so that's hard, that's where the emotion comes from.

This leader is highlighting the deep creative and aesthetic dimension to Montessori leadership and enlivening it with its moral quality. She sees beauty and purposeful work lie connected. We can conclude that there is an argument to now say Montessori leadership is not only a craft, but also an artform, in which as Gadamer (2013) suggests, man can encounter himself in nature and in the

human, historical world. Even where the participants perceived ugliness or darkness, they actively returned to the beauty of the child as a hope and promise. Leader D explains:

> …you know with every child, humanity has the chance to start over again, to get it right, so for millennia, we haven't got it right, but, I almost get choked up saying it but every time a child is born there's a new person on the face on the planet who, all it takes is one, and with everyone they are pure and perfect and wonderful in the world and the universe and it means the potential is there that we can get it right and start over again.

This leader is perceiving nature in all her glorious creativity offering hope for human development. Montessori's pedagogy begins by freeing the inner energies that power the creative development of human potential. This is a distinct approach that contrasts with the way Montessori perceived leadership was being developed in her own time:

> It is not leaders who are lacking, or at least the question is not limited to this. The problem is infinitely more vast. It is the masses themselves who are totally unprepared for social life in our civilisation. Hence the problem is to educate the masses, to reconstruct the character of individuals, to garner the treasures hidden within each one of them and to develop its value. No single head of state can do this, however great his genius. Out of multitudes of the underdeveloped no one can ever solve this problem.
>
> This is the most urgent question of our time: the great mass of folk are inferior to what they should be (AM, p. 218).

Here, Montessori firmly places leadership alongside peace in the field of education. Under the right prepared conditions, we wait for leadership to develop and reveal itself, rather than teach leadership skills directly. This study has shown that the child's development, which may be considered more closely governed by nature, sets this example:

> So, we ourselves may take courage from the child's example, and be willing to wait. From the stagnant periods of history, we may always hope that progress will come. Perhaps the foolishness of man is less than it seems. Wonderful things for the future may lie waiting for explosions in the inner life which is hidden from us (AM, p. 103).

Yet Leader E above is also acknowledging Montessori's perception that peace is

made possible by love, as a permanent human force which is felt outside the individual's life and which might unite mankind (AM). Any conception of Montessori leadership must be imbued with the phenomenon of love and with her peaceful telos. She advised that it was not enough for her teachers to love children. First, they should love and understand the universe. Here she gives clues about the connection she sees between the individual soul, the cosmos and leadership:

> The fundamental problem is to cure humanity and take the noble concept of man as king of the universe as the lodestar of the development of human individuality. This human being who has harnessed every kind of physical power must now tame and tap his own inner powers, become the master of himself and the ruler of his own period of history…The king of the universe, the king of heaven and earth, the king of visible objects and invisible energies – that is the sort of man who must rule! The whole earth is doubtless his domain, but his true kingdom is the one within himself (EP, p. 46).

Since Goleman's (2005) work on emotional intelligence, the leadership literature has embraced the affective domain. The relationship between love and leadership is not yet a common object of leadership inquiry and the relationship is yet to be subject to critical, epistemic, practical or ethical scrutiny. Authors such as Uusiautti and Määttä (2013) who have confidently approached the subject of love in the context of leading may represent a strengthening and enriching of understanding in the wider leadership literature.

Montessori's pedagogically-oriented concept was different to the love held for children within the family:

> There are two levels of love. Often, when we speak of our love for children, we refer to the care we take of them, the caresses and affection we shower on those we know and who arouse our tender feelings, and if a spiritual relationship binds us to them, we show it by teaching them their prayers.
>
> But I am speaking of something different. It is a level of love which is no longer personal or material. To serve the children is to feel one is serving the spirit of man, a spirit which has to free itself. The difference of level has truly been set not by the teacher but by the child. It is the teacher who feels she has been lifted to a height she never knew before. The child has made her grow till she is brought within his sphere (AM, p. 256).

This quote underscores Montessori's notion of the child's as a source of love, a source that motivates and elevates adults in collaborative service to others. The final chapter of one of Montessori's most mature publications, is devoted to this topic. It begins with a reference to the heterogeneity within social gatherings of Montessori students, their families and friends, among which there was never any friction:

> It is rare in the ordinary way for people so divided (each tied by loyalty to his own group) to meet together in a single conclave. Yet it never failed to happen in our courses. So strange did this seem that even the newspapers remarked on it (AM, p. 262).

Montessori leadership emerges in this study as a constant striving to align practice with lofty social, environmental and spiritual principles, based on love and mutual respect, but always with friendliness toward error. Leader E speaks of how this is in essence about what is right and good:

> …my beliefs in Montessori. I feel very good about that alignment. I've got a lot of things to learn and a long way to go, so it's not that I've reached the, the highest level of that, but I'm feeling a high sense of satisfaction about the way we interact with each other at our schools, and our, not that we have it down pat and that we're always kind, loving and respectful to one another, but when we're not, we say, wait a minute, there's something not right here, this doesn't feel, so we hold each other accountable to those principles. I feel good about that.

In a letter written in 1973, Montessori's grandson is reminded of his grandmother who:

> …told us that one day the polychrome conglomeration of the separate and dissenting nations would become united. They would be animated towards the same endeavours and feel in the same way about things. But that this unity, these feelings would be preceded by a period of misery that would affect the whole of humanity. It would be this misery that would join nations, religions, and political idealisms (Montessori, M. M., 1998, p. 106).

The letter goes on to say that Montessori deprecated that this union would be brought about by suffering and violence, when it could be attained by "common sense". In a quick-fix zeitgeist that responds to heavy regulatory demands entering from all directions, common sense in social institutions is frequently

replaced by frameworks of policy. Gadamer (2013, p. 20) refers to *sensus communis* as a leading humanistic concept, not the common sense general faculty found in all men, but "the sense that founds community". Drawing from Vico, Gadamer sees this element as present in the classical concept of wisdom. Returning to her hopeful position, Montessori writes that:

> …when you will see the gloom of dissent, witness the darkening of selfishness and greed prevail over life preservation, and see the filth of vice, breaking the dikes of social behaviour, flood out to engulf an ever greater mass of humanity – when you will see all these things, do not despair; do not think that we have failed. On the contrary, rejoice, because the time will be near, for then the epoch of the child will be about to be born (Montessori, M. M., 1998, p. 106).

The literature is full of works about leadership in times of war and peace, addressing leadership and the "peace process" through adult work (Dallek, 2010; Goldie and Murphy, 2010). But Montessori argued any true peace process must begin with very young children. This study has shown that Montessori saw leadership as a following and serving of the child. She positions this work as psychologically sustainable and therefore environmentally sustainable as it is educative and so an aid to life. Montessori also positions leadership as a catalyst, for the creation of a peaceful world through normalisation. This is a different pathway for leaders at the highest levels, one that does not merely point to the absence of war, but to the welfare of the human being and the preservation of nature. It is an active and inclusive conceptualisation:

> Society has erected walls and barriers. We must tear them down to reveal the open horizon. The new education is a revolution, but a non-violent one. It is the non-violent revolution. After that, provided it succeeds, violent revolution will no longer be possible (CSW, p. 71)

If it succeeds, we will have what Leader H called a normalised social system:

> …thinking in terms of community as the focus of everything that we do, because if you can model a microcosm of a social system that is really normalised, then, and create the conditions for the concept of peace and progress that's distinct in all facets, then it's easier for people to connect to that on a philosophical level.

The knowledge of how to support normalisation, the intrinsic motivation and commitment to serve and the capacity for human love are the foundations for human work:

> Work…must be based upon these three laws. The work of humanity that always loves more, knows more and serves more, that penetrates more and more into details in order to become more and more interested, can be translated in the three words above – love, know and serve. This is the basis upon which human work ought to be founded (CSW, p. 86)

This suggests a clear trifold guidance for Montessori leadership. By choosing to become Montessori teachers the participants in this study embarked on a pathway of lifelong learning promoted by the moment of training in which they begin their service informed by an epistemology of human development. Kahn (2015) reminds us of this knowledge when he states that peace is not a function of formal education, something to be taught in Montessori schools, but a function of human development, of an inner gift all humans have, peace being a right and an ability of children around the globe. He argues that the defining feature of peace is a total restructuring of society to achieve humanity's mission and full development of the human potential for a better future for all. The central tool to accomplish this holistic reform of society is education.

Yet the capstone of Montessori's conceptualisation of knowledge and service is the love of human beings for one another. She is inspired by this love, which she sees exquisitely expressed in the work of French physician, Jean Itard (12774-1838). Itard had taken responsibility for the education of a boy who had been raised outside of society, in nature. Montessori summarises Itard's success:

> In Itard's pages we see the final triumph of the love of man over the love of nature: the savage of the Aveyron ends by *feeling* and preferring the affection of Itard, the caresses, the tears shed over him, to the joy of immersing himself voluptuously in the snow, and of contemplating the infinite expanse of the sky on a starry night: one day after an attempted escape into the country, he returns of his own accord, humble and repentant, to find his good soup and his warm bed… we must prepare man, who is one among the living creatures and therefore belongs to nature, for social life, because social life being his own peculiar work, must also correspond to the manifestation of his natural activity (MM, p. 153).

Montessori education prepares children for social life through an integrated approach to the academic disciplines. Here practical skills and moral architecture are constantly linked back to a rigorous intellectual epistemology in which all things are interwoven and move the human being toward sustainability and peace. Leader H explains:

> I think there's an interconnectedness, and her focus on…I'm thinking of Economic Geography but also Botany and Biology and Geography. Science shows us that the world is connected in so many different ways. And that becomes a spiritual concept and there's a spiritual aspect to it. We talk about it a lot, and it goes back to the goal of education as peace. And in today's world, sustainability is a critical component of peace. If there's a shortage of clean water, it's going to be really hard to get along.

This leader brings us back to a hermeneutic whole wherein the interests of one group are understood to be intricately linked to those of another. In the previous chapter, the Montessori principle of interest was discussed. At global level, Montessori believed that if men continue to regard themselves as national groups with divergent interests they ran the risk of destroying one another (EP). Montessori preferred to speak about humans having convergent interests. She considered the mission of humanity, and although her words do not include "leadership", by implication she is thinking strategically at the highest level and seeking an inclusive direction for human beings:

> Is this mission, the predominance of one nation over another? The power of the people? Industrial or cultural progress? And what will the individual regard as his personal mission? Ensuring that he and others have the means to survive? Ensuring the possibility of securing and education? It would seem that above and beyond these goals, which have to do with the interests of specific individuals or groups, there is something that involves all mankind and perhaps even the universe itself, creation, cosmic harmony (EP 66).

This is Montessori's unifying conception of social morality. It is founded upon love as an ecological principle and "the one thing that will forge true human unity" (EP, 22). Her questions have broad and substantial implications for leaders across many fields. Yet education remains the vehicle by which she perceives the individual and society will be led to a higher stage of development. Frierson (2015) writes that virtues such as love and others that would normally be seen as

character virtues are perceived by Montessori as having an intellectual aspect that is already present even in the youngest infants. Education and experience then preserve and cultivate rather than generate. Leader D confirms that human progress toward peace unfolds this way, one individual at a time, over time, as a hermeneutic coming into being:

> It needs to be an organic thing from the ground up…through a normalised process which means for me that it's a process in sync with the universe. In a normalised process you get human beings that function with respect and dignity and all those things because that's who they are, and they understand it and it's part of the fabric and they couldn't imagine anything else, not because they were taught that in third grade at school that you just have to be nice to people, or some mystic sort of dogmatic Thou shalt act this way. There's no understanding in that, so, to me the whole Montessori approach is, is about understanding and becoming…

This leader sees Montessori's connection between supporting normalisation and feeling the reality of love. Leader A's analysis was that love is a universal but personalised force, that constitutes a key and active Montessori principle:

> I think it's really the love of the child. I mean, you know, and treating every child individually, I think that is the most magnificent thing that we do.

The participants in this study supported Montessori's perspective that love is a key aspect of all human work and beyond this, that it is a subject for study and analysis so that its power can be used for good and for cultivating peace. It is a force rather than something one can learn. The participants' responses indicated a Montessori perspective that love is not an ideal but part of the reality of the leader's life.

7.5   Language, Education, Place and Time

In Chapter 2, it was shown that leadership is part of what it is to be a social human being. In Chapter 3, it was noted that Montessori made a contribution as a social philosopher (Kahn, 2005). It was also found that Montessori's pedagogically-oriented legacy transcended the confines of individual disciplines and dealt instead with their foundations, by offering a rich perspective on human nature and human development within an environment. Montessori argued that

individuals are the building blocks of society and that the human personality develops in stages, that include spontaneous activity and that are shaped by experience. The Montessori perspective hence underscores the social value of time in all its gradations from the short-term to the long-term. Centred around pedagogical principles based upon and imbued with human universality, it must by implication be considered to have a timeless character and occupy a place of infinite horizons. Yet the Montessori perspective is also grounded in scientific observation of the here and now. Gadamer's (2013) concept of effective history echoes this reminding us that we are part of the historical continuum that we share with whatever we try to understand. He claims that hermeneutics means working out the right horizon of enquiry for the questions evoked by our encounters with tradition. Experience then becomes experience of human finitude:

> The truly experienced person is one who has taken this to heart, who knows that he is master neither of time, nor the future. The experienced man knows that all foresight is limited and all plans uncertain (Gadamer, 2013, p. 365).

Gadamer's advice that the horizon of the present is continually being formed, is seen to be reflected in Montessori's concept of adaptation to culture. Geographically and historically we are moved by different questions. This study found that different emphases emerged within leadership at different times and places. While Montessori was concerned with the universal she also argued for the intellectual and spiritual uplift of the human being in order to adapt to the "new world" (FM, p. 76). The leadership literature within this new world has addressed the issue of time. Shushok and Moore (2010) identified the short-term lifespan inherent in leadership publishing. Markham (2012) has pointed out the short-term maximisation of profits in corporations, contrasts with the long-term horizons of ancient leadership. He finds evidence of the public's current thirst for fragmented leadership ideals in "Entrepreneur of the Year". Yet there is also evidence that that value of positioning short-term leadership activity and development within a long-term strategic framework is becoming better understood (e.g. Abrell, Rowold, Weibler &Moenninghoff, 2011).

An important finding from this study is the notion that Montessori

developmental principles and practices do not exist as merely a product of a particular place and time, but remain alive for contemporary leadership through valid interpretation. The fact that Montessori's legacy does not exist in the usual discursive form within the leadership literature does not negate its effectiveness for today's leaders. Rather Montessori's insistence that her work be regarded as open science that draws from current insights in child development and education confirms the status of her legacy as current. Yet Montessori's idea of a staged ladder of social experiences has yet to be fully realised within conventional approaches to education:

> Those nations that want war have managed to recognize and give scope to the powers hidden in children and young people to further their own interests, or organise them socially, to make them an active force in society… It is a tragedy that this truth has thus far been recognized only by those powers that seek war. But the fact that a truly powerful organization of humanity cannot be impoverished overnight is a reality that has great practical value. The groundwork for such an organization must be laid in childhood, at the very roots of life. Society can be organized, in short, only if education offers man a ladder of social experiences as he passes from one period of his life to another (EP, p. 32).

Montessori's perspective on human development situates the human being within long-term timeframes. Montessori felt it was significant that "in this age of progress man has discovered within himself a sickness that goes by the name of an inferiority complex" (EP, p. 46). She argued that people go through life isolated even if they move about together, and cannot form a real society. There remains a need to:

> …tame and tap his own inner powers, become the master of himself and the ruler of his own period of history. In order to do so, the value of individuality must be released and put to use. Its power must be experienced. Man must be taught to see the world in all its grandeur, to extend the limits of his life, to make his individual personality reach out and touch those of others.

> The king of the universe, the king of heaven and earth, the king of visible objects and invisible energies – that is the sort of man who must rule! The whole earth is doubtless his domain, but his true kingdom is the one within himself (EP, p. 46).

Montessori's framework of practical activity to aid life right now, provides the balance to a long-term perspective, so that she offers something immediate

without forsaking the gradual, and her legacy remains timeless, but not static. An understanding of the paradoxical elements of time in Montessori's work was not the only way in which time emerged as a theme in this study. The leaders reported their disciplined approach to time management as a protective mechanism enabling them to continue their implementation of leadership as a human art. Sorensen, Goldsmith and DeMatthews (2016) is an example of a text aimed at harried, frustrated, exhausted principals scrambling to fit more and more in to the day, making the most of new enhanced technologies to find greater efficiency. These authors give many practical tips, but refrain from deep philosophical grappling of the link between time and the art of leadership. Gadamer (2013) makes an explicit link between time and letter writing that has relevance:

> …The time lapse between sending a letter and receiving an answer is not just an external factor, but gives this form of communication its special nature as a particular form of writing. So we note that speeding up the post has not improved this form of communication but, on the contrary, has led to a decline in the art of letter writing (Gadamer, 2013, p. 377).

In Chapter 2, it was seen that contemporary leaders have become responsible for more, often with less resources, and higher accountability. Global issues imply that our capacity to influence the environment has for some time expanded to become planetary. Yet efforts to help us become more efficient and productive in areas such as change management and organisational development may have brought a decline in leadership as an art-form. The Montessori leader who sits and observes is lingering, waiting, watching, pondering, wondering, being open to spontaneous thoughts, but advancing hermeneutic spiral thinking slowly, prolonging a scientifically-grounded engagement with human activity. This work increasingly helps the Montessori leader develop the instinct of place and time, to know "the where" and know "the when". This is different from knowing the what, why or how of leadership, which all have their importance but are not the totality. Knowing the where and when, allows leaders to position themselves in the best place right now between two cognitively dissonant positions that form the Montessori paradoxes. To know when to give more freedom, when to support with limits, when to intervene, when to stand back and observe, when to

address the short term and when to address the long term is also to address the where. The Montessori leader is constantly positioning and repositioning himself on the many paradoxical continua to support staged human development. Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) referred to this as dancing on a shifting carpet, but for Leader E, the dance ultimately brings a sense of calm:

> …my Montessori training has really grounded me in the respect for the school directors at each of our school campuses and the trust in their instincts, so when an issue comes up, like well the society's expectations are that we be able to pass this test at the end of third grade, and the school director says yes, and here's how we can do this in a Montessori way. It may take a few years before we have it all figured out, so let's start approaching, we have to be patient with this process, so that has given me a sense of calm about being able to, that we're going to make progress and do it in a way that is in alignment with our Montessori approach.

Understanding that development occurs is stages, each having its own distinct characteristics is a key Montessori principle. Montessori wrote that interpretation and understanding always emerge from returning to the origins:

> It is not always imperative to see big things, but it is of paramount importance to see the beginnings of things. At their origins there are little glimmers that can be recognized as soon as something new is developing. They become a bright light that will bring us a much better understanding of the complicated labyrinth that the social life of the adult represents (EP, p. 85).

The participants in this study confirmed that the origins of leadership lie within the very young child, who creates the individual that becomes the building block of society. Leader H explains that this can be studied scientifically:

> I think that the genius of Montessori is that it's tied to the development of children. It's scientific in its orientation and to me that is what distinguishes it from everything else. And also, what makes it dynamic, and vital to the future, because we're consistently learning more about how the human brain works and how human socialisation works and adolescent psychology and development and Montessori is poised to be responsive to that. And so that concept is really the essential distinguishing factor about Montessori.

This leader specifically mentions adolescence in relation to human socialisation. While all of the participants in this study were navigating unique contexts, some

practised leadership within schools that offered programmes to serve what Montessori referred to as the third plane of development, i.e. adolescence. This study does not focus specifically on the adolescent stage, though the particular relationship of adolescents to leadership in the affective domain, to peace, sustainability and human development may offer rich prospects for further research. Leader C comments on Montessori adolescents:

> When you sit down in the group of five or ten Montessori high school students…within a couple of minutes, you just see, it's just painfully clear, how these people in front of you are just completely prepared in a different way to enter into adult society, and I don't think our schools are working hard to make a lot of that conscious. You know they're not saying, "Oh remember you're a Montessori kid. Don't forget you've got your love of learning. Don't forget you're self-directed." But when you sit down with them, they blow you away.

As the second and final constructive plane of development, adolescence is a significant window of opportunity that is being documented by contemporary Montessori practitioners with experience in the field. The outcome of adolescence is the adult of the species. Adolescent independence is the outcome of healthy support for independence throughout earlier periods of education:

> Emerging in the older adolescent are leadership qualities due to independence – transcendentalism, morality including sexual morality, passion for humanity – mission, a civic view, patriotism, solidarity, and compassion. But the most salient outgrowth from the Montessori adolescent experience is a redefinition of work (Kahn, 2004, p. 21).

The adolescent can attain the full stature of adult human being, live out a real community life, involving production and exchange as the essence of social existence. In a carefully considered environment, adolescents can experience division of labour, which provides a linkage to all people who form society, and brings them toward economic independence. Montessori argued that:

> …for rest it is not necessary to resort to "holidays" which are a waste of time and break the continuity of life. Holidays or rest are simply a change of occupation and surroundings, and this can be provided by a variety of occupations and interests (FCTA, p. 71).

and

> That study is the response to a need of the intelligence and if based upon our psychic nature, it does not weary, but refreshens and strengthens the mind during its development.
>
> These two principles have already been demonstrated in the "Children's House" where the work and study did not result in fatigue, but in an increase of energy so marked that these indefatiguable children were found to be working at home as well as at school (FCTA, p. 71).

Montessori perceives adolescents as social newborns who form the embryo of society. Energetic working adolescents fulfilling their developmental mission then brings the adolescent programme to fulfil the nurturing of a new human being as an agent of hope. Within this new human being, leadership emerges naturally without direct teaching. However, this study also found the model of classroom leadership exemplified by the Montessori teacher has been demonstrated to have transferability to other appointed leadership roles such as those involving leading communities of adults. Leader G offers insight about the developmental mindset for leadership:

> I think what she saw in the development of the child, you can translate in the development of the adult too, meaning that we go through stages in development as people, we go through stages of development as a spouse, we go through stages of development as a parent, we go through stages of development as a teacher and we go through stages of development as a head of school…you need to have faith that that parent, who doesn't get it in the beginning and who's terrified and who's giving you a hard time, has the ability to grow in their understanding of what's going on for their child. And that they have the motivation to grow, because they're a parent and they want what's best for their children, and I think you see that in teachers too. Teachers who get to that point where they're really rigid. You have to have faith that they can move and grow.

This leader is talking about leading adults by serving them as they progress along their life journeys. Despite Montessori's conception of the four planes of development that shows the adult of the species is achieved around the age of twenty-found years, Montessori did not claim that this was the end of staged development. Leader G continues:

> …and sometimes you have to help them on their journey. It doesn't mean that the hard pieces aren't there, but sometimes saying to a teacher, this isn't right for you, or this is the wrong school for you, or saying to a parent, this is not what you want for your child. You know those are hard conversations, but I believe they are on the path to growth for those people, but you have

to have faith that they know what's best for themselves and you have to have faith that really in their core that they will grow. I really feel that what Maria Montessori saw at the core of the human person in the form of the child, was a driving force to become a fully realized human being and I don't think we lose that…I think we can have unhealthy lifestyles that just shut that spigot off and that stop that development and we know those people who are stopped in their development. But I still think it's there…

Leader G is reminding us that as the human being continues through life, the environment can be a help or hindrance and hence preparation is vital. There is a long-term preparation of the self, and the dailyness of preparing the work environment to serve the human spirit. Nevertheless, Montessori leadership has been shown to be much more than preparation, but an active ongoing application. Ultimately the adult is a leader of the self, who works as a manager of place and time, in order to serve his community. Leader C explains:

> What's the parallel with professional sports, you know like the American football team practices for six days, five days and they perform for three hours, and there's no such ratio in our work…it's not all preparation. You just don't have that sort of ratio of preparation to performance. You have to be practical, and pragmatic. It means you have to come into application immediately. You know, this has been a great retreat, and you know I'm going to take a week and I'm going to read all these books that were mentioned this weekend. There's no such thing. So, you've got to figure out, well I'm not going to read all of them, but maybe I can read two, and I can't take a week to do it. I've got to figure out how I can fit it in while all these other things are happening on the ground simultaneously.

This is not a limiting of one's horizon. Rather, the participants in this study extended the horizon of time, working to link the current and the new, with older established practical wisdom. In Montessori pedagogy, education is considered to feature long-term, even inter-generational problems and opportunities, and each short-term action is an interpretation, and ideally a contribution to the understanding of larger-scale development of the human being and the progress of society. This gives all Montessori leadership a hermeneutic direction. Gadamer (2013) writes that…

> …the clear meaning is not available everywhere at all times. The whole scripture guides the understanding of the individual passage. The whole can be reached only through the cumulative understanding of individual passages. This circular relationship between the whole and the parts is not

new (Gadamer, 2013, p. 154).

An understanding of this circular relationship enabled the participants to balance short-term actions with longer-term strategic work for the benefit of their communities. Many short-term activities provided success in terms of regulatory compliance, industrial relations, and financial or enrolment sustainability. Yet the leaders saw beyond these narrow, often publicly sanctioned indicators, to a bigger vision of independent human beings working together to make a spiritually tranquil contribution to the supernature. This management and integration of time mirrors the whole-parts-whole hermeneutic approach that is both a practical life exercise and a holistic ecology. Ultimately, the participants in this study consistently acted to bring life back to a point of balance. Leader C gives his perspective:

> The model that I've seen is where there's a very good balance in their lives professionally and personally. Certainly we hear about people who give us these riches, but certainly the leaders that I've been around absolutely put in all the hours, you know they're at every single meeting that happens on campus that happens that day, and somehow they have time to prepare things that are directly related to their work in their presentation, and they serve on one or two other school boards or something in town and they don't, and yet they know that at 5.30 or six o'clock, if it's not done, oh well, we'll do it tomorrow.

Debates on the success of educational approaches frequently draw on measurables such as PISA assessment results or the percentage of children who complete school as evidence. Short-termism has been discussed in the leadership literature as a rising contemporary issue affecting administration in corporations, politics and education (Pozen, 2015). Despite the rapid nature of social change Sjöblom (2009) argues that the temporal element is mostly neglected or geared to the past in literature on management and public policy. Fusso (2013) reviews systems thinking analytical frameworks as approaches that have potential to address short-termism. Duignan and Degenhardt's (2010) claim most theories of leadership are inadequate for reinventing our educational institutions, calling for a holistic paradigm and the need for a why, in a world where turbulence is perceived as the new norm.

Montessori argued that in Europe and the United States, the speed of civilised

life causes an ever-greater cleavage between man and nature (AM). Her systemic "why" remains based around the child as the constructor of the human bring. Montessori principles and practices can hence offer a fresh strategic priority. Bass (2008) has written that one of the best practices of the past has been leadership development aligned with corporate strategy. For Montessori, humanity can be seen to be the corporation, and we have leadership development as integral with independent human development. Leader J finds the leader can be a beacon lighting up strategic directions for those who have lost their way in the pursuit of humanity:

> I use that word "beacon" in our small group and I think it's that. It's leading the way, because I think sometimes people feel a need for direction and when that's provided and someone takes the initiative, then it provides an option for choice and I think that's what leaders do. And they help people kind of sort out those options in their minds.

The Montessori leader undertakes this sorting and figuring out process with the child in a central position, so that ultimately the child gives the direction:

> If the era in the history of human evolution that is characterized by the constant outbreak of war can be called the "adult period", then the period in which we will begin to build peace will be the "age of the child".
>
> As the law of brute force triumphed in the past, so today the laws of life must triumph. This extremely complex aspiration is best summarized by the word *education* (EP, p. 39)

This education is reality-based, an experience of seeing the limits in the unlimited, to know the whole:

> Thus experience is experience of human finitude. The truly experienced person is one who has taken this to heart, who knows that he is master neither of time nor the future. The experienced man knows that all foresight is limited and all plans uncertain (Gadamer, 2013, p. 365).

Overwhelmingly, the participants in this study acknowledged how much progress had been made over time in the field of education and for the rights of children, but how much remained to be done. The leaders gave voice to how after a century of understanding and application on a small scale, Montessori principles still faced what Leader C called "a reach issue". Leader D confirmed

that Montessori education isn't "about building schools and teaching children", but is "about social change". He recalls what Montessori's granddaughter, Renilde, once said: "We will have done our good work when Montessori education as a phrase is a redundancy". At that time, Leader D believes "Education will *be* Montessori. End of story".

The question about the extent to which Montessori's vision of the child as a resource for humanity has been realised today was introduced at the end of the interviews. As the participants pondered their answers, some seemed to feel sadness, and others the solidarity of a shared marginalisation. Yet there were hints of a sense of excitement and anticipation that the barriers to implementing Montessori approaches on a larger scale were beginning to be overcome. The participants felt deeply that in order to fulfil Montessori's legacy, what was needed was more time. Her work is spreading globally, but still far from being implemented on the scale that would be required for it to become widely known as an effective tool for contemporary society. Leader L argued:

> …certainly, we haven't come close to realising her vision what's possible for children and for humanity. I mean, I think I would agree with her that when we reach that vision, then we won't have wars anymore, right? We'll be realising a peaceful world, people get along well together, etc. So certainly, we have a long way to go and I think that it has been quite unfortunate that Montessori education hasn't been known to so many people by now. A hundred years. I think it's quite sad. We probably would have come farther along the pathway towards providing better early childhood education for everyone if people were more aware that Montessori education is a really great tool for that.

In the late 1930s, Montessori's view was that human society has not yet achieved the form of organisation needed to confront its needs (EP). She claimed society did not adequately prepare man for civic life and that people were living in a state of moral paralysis. Humans were raised as isolated individuals who satisfied their needs by competing with others and tomorrow's ally is yesterday's enemy. Technical progress had set in motion an awesome mechanism that could not help man progress. Montessori felt that laws and treaties were not enough and instead spoke of a spiritual gestation. She saw that humanity as an organism had been born and separate nations with their own borders and own exclusive rights no longer had any reason for being:

Today all men are in touch with one another; ideas circulate through the air by radio and from one end of the earth to the other, recognizing no national boundaries... (EP, p. 26).

Yet Montessori argued that humans were yet to become fully aware and worthy of their greatness:

The human personality has remained as it was in the conditions of the past: man's character and mentality have remained unchanged, and he does not understand the destiny and responsibility that he now has become of the new powers at his disposal. Man, in short, has not kept pace with the progress that has been made in his external environment; he remains timid and confused, fearful and susceptible to blind submission to authority, to a return to paganism or even barbarism, because he feels overwhelmed by the superworld in which he lives (EP, p. 27).

At this point, she makes a call to science, saying that we must turn back and make the child our principal concern as he is the course of and the key to the riddles of humanity (EP). Leader G spoke for the participants in this study underlining the social maturity yet to come and the evidence all around, of leadership amongst the youth:

It's always the young people who are driving. They were the driving force in the Civil Rights Movement, they were the driving force in the Arab Spring. They were absolutely the driving force in the changing humanity and I think that it's realized all over and over and over again. I think Montessori's contribution to that has been beautiful and wonderful. It's not widespread enough to say it's made the crowning difference. We've got a long way to go. But I think that what she said is true and that we have lots of evidence of it in our world today. I also think that the more complex the world gets in terms of technology and innovation, that maturity-wise, human beings haven't caught up and she said that back in the face of industrialism. And you can see that we're not mature as a species, as the human race. We're not mature.

Leader H felt this had ramifications for national education systems:

Well I think that leaders have not focused on the child and that's what she was suggesting. I mean in the United States we have a consistent trend toward when something can be cut from a budget, a state or a federal budget, education is one of the first things. If something needs to be cut, education is one of the first things on the chopping block, and the importance of children in that concept that Montessori was talking about, to the degree that we ignore children, we're ignoring the future adults,

therefore ignoring every future leader. Nobody is paying any attention to that.

This leader is bringing the discussion right back to independence and interdependence as a central theme in Montessori's social philosophy:

> It is necessary that the new generations realise that in this union every man is dependent on other men and each must contribute to the existence of all…An infinite number of heroes have struggled to render "knowledge" possible. All that we study today depends upon some individual discovery no matter how great or how small. There is no detail of a geographical map which is not based on the effort and heroism of explorers who for the most part remain unknown. The alphabet, writing, mathematics, printing, and everything that forms the means of our culture are due to a series of efforts of individuals whose names in the majority of cases are forgotten. It is to man, always to man that is due all that comes to enrich the mind and to facilitate life (CSW, p. 112).

Montessori was so convinced that human development and education was the responsibility of everyone, including government leaders, that she founded a Social Party of the Child in 1937 in Denmark, that was a sharp call to the public conscience (Sackett, 2010). The party provided an entirely new criterion for service to the child, asserting that activity needed to do more than care for children as a duty, but to claim a right the must be recognised in public opinion and national law. The responsibility for assisting the next generation was not the province of parents and teachers alone, but a societal obligation. The basis of integrating the child as a citizen into all spheres of social life, is valued by Montessori as the contribution of the child to human development and hence human welfare. Leader H gives an example of work yet to be done:

> …there's certain concepts in American Law, that are held above the needs of children…For example, the privacy rights and reproductive rights of adults are more important than the well-being of children, once you reach a certain level…there's laws preventing child abuse and there's laws in the United States requiring education to a certain degree and laws requiring the care of children. But it's a low, low threshold…and parents only have to provide care that is at a minimum…The rights of parents are really important, the ability to have supervision and have their relationship with their child undisturbed is very important. The rights of the children are secondary I would say in most aspects to the rights of adults. And I think that Montessori was touching on that same trend in her writings.

This leader is echoing Montessori's call to adults to recognise "the social rights of children" and to "be organised, not for themselves, but for their children" (SC, p. 214). This is not a question of pedagogy or method, but touches on the evolution of social justice through a discovery of the child. Montessori considered her work at the casa involved a discovery in infant psychology, but the explorer Peary, upon his return from the North Pole expedition claimed far more, referring to her work as "the discovery of the human soul" (AM, p. 157). Later Montessori came to see the relevance of this discovery for all human endeavour through her advocacy in politics, children's rights, education and peace. Almost a century after Montessori's seminal work in Rome, Tornar (Scocchera, 2001, p. liv) states that "unlike other educational philosophies, the judgement of the Montessori method was given by the child itself and by its new and unthought of actions". Perhaps herein lies a clue to its longevity where other philosophical and educational approaches have not stood the test of time. This study also found that time may provide the opportunity to continue to interpret Montessori's legacy for broader applications, including leadership. Montessori professionals must continue to articulate their philosophy and practice in ways that illuminate the challenge to existing leadership discourses.

This study was guided by Gadamer's (2013) authoritative voice on philosophical hermeneutics. His direction to us is to continue our dialogues to allow something to emerge, which henceforth exists. When the transformation is complete, there may no longer, beyond acknowledgement, be a need for the qualifying term "Montessori". Many leaders already understand that language helps people frame a discussion and move beyond their existing horizons:

> Framing determines if we refer to "refugees" or "queue jumpers", "academics" or "bleeding hearts", "accountability" or "playing the blame game", "security" or "rigidity", "insecurity" or "flexibility", "strategic withdrawal" or "cutting and running", "reform" or "change", "scientific consensus" or "group-think" (Jones, 2006).

Kellerman's (2004), statement that the need for leadership is demonstrable and universally shared, together with Gronn's (2010) reminder that the issues pre-occupying leaders are of a timeless and enduring nature suggest the leadership issue will remain a social priority. The participants in this study argued that the

voice of the child, as the ultimate originator of human society, must continue to be interpreted and elevated. In order to progress this work, a grand perspective may need to be taken on language, education, place and time. Fusing the day-to-day horizon of leadership with this larger perspective helped them discover what steps might need to be taken next.

7.6   Conclusion

This chapter has explored the practice of Montessori leadership. Montessori principles and practices have been shown to be paradoxical by nature, resisting easy classification, but embracing concepts that may appear cognitively dissonant. Normalisation can be said to represent a significant developmental process that can be guided by a prepared self and a prepared environment. This process is distinct to Montessori pedagogy and philosophy, there being no other equivalent terms yet conceived.

Reviewing Montessori leadership in terms of love and peace reveal Montessori's lofty telos at play in everyday leadership situations and actions. Her noteworthy developmental focus brings to the fore, issues of place and time, which unite and permeate Montessori's legacy, while suggesting further avenues for research. Uniquely, Montessori leadership embraces the child as central, as the true leader of the adult.

Chapter 8

Expanding Horizons for Understanding

Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning (Gadamer, 2013, p. 383).

8.1   Introduction

The opening chapter of this thesis described the genesis of the research as an enquiry into leadership. Montessori's leadership and legacy were introduced and positioned as having a place in contemporary social and educational contexts. Chapter 2 investigated how previous research has understood leadership theory and practice and some of the major writers and theories from the literature were highlighted. Chapter 3 reviewed the primary and secondary Montessori literature through the lens of leadership. In Chapter 4, philosophical hermeneutics as developed by Gadamer (2013) in his *Truth and Method*, was presented as a philosophical guide for the study. The approach to interviewing contemporary Montessori leaders was also explained. Chapters 5 to 7 brought the voices of the participants to the fore through the study's analysis and findings as guided by Gadamer's ideas and approaches. In this final chapter, the study is summarised, the major findings presented and contributions to the field discussed. Final questions alluding to any issues related to the research and further possibilities for future explorations, will conclude the thesis.

Through conversation with fourteen Montessori leaders, this study addressed the central research question:

<u>What perspective on leadership emerges from the principles and practices advocated by Maria Montessori (1870-1952)?</u>

Four guiding questions also shaped the study:

- Through what range of perspectives and theoretical frameworks do researchers consider leadership?

- What are the key principles and practices advocated by Maria Montessori?

- How do these principles and practices relate to leadership?

- How do these principles and practices offer a preparation for leadership?

The second of these questions was a foundation for the third and fourth guiding questions, but posed a challenge. Addressing Montessori principles was originally begun with the aim of drawing up a list. The list kept growing and new questions emerged about how best to incorporate an explication of these principles within the thesis and how to confine the principles or select those that were most relevant to leadership. The holistic nature of Montessori's philosophy and systems thinking, in which no principle can be inconsequential, demanded the thesis be limited to a broad impression of principles. The attempt to define a complete list of Montessori principles and practices proved too large a task for this study. Further work to identify and clarify Montessori principles and practices, was seen to be best tackled as a separate investigation. A brief sample of the kind of detailed evidence that could form part of a project to outline Montessori principles more clearly for researchers is included as Appendix D.

The decision to limit the study in this way, freed the research from becoming caught up in literature definitions of principles and practices, and moved the work to a more empirical base involving participant leaders. A selection of some Montessori principles and practices that emerged as themes within the interviews, then formed a framework of tools for analysis. These principles have been elaborated and discussed thematically with the interview data. The relationship of these themes to preparation for leadership, which was the fourth guiding question, has been explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

Drawing from only some of Montessori's principles and practices, and working through the voices of the participants, implied movement in the research question. This is not uncommon in qualitative research, but points to the importance of Gadamer's hermeneutic work for this thesis:

> We say that we "conduct" a conversation, but the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct (Gadamer, 2013, p. 401).

The findings of the study bring out a perspective on leadership that came from contemporary Montessori leaders. The strength of using Gadamer's (2013) writings lay in his key message that language is the medium of hermeneutics. In analysing historic texts and contemporary voices from the Montessori sector through the lens of conventional leadership, linguistic challenges arose on a regular basis. Frequently, the research required explaining Montessori concepts and terminology such as "normalisation" and "deviation" or even common terms such as "freedom" and "observation" that are understood in a particular light by Montessori professionals, in order to make connections. Hence this thesis potentially opens a new conversation about leadership. It brings to the field a fresh voice, with a nuanced language, albeit carrying an established message. Given Gadamer's (2013) notion that all understanding takes place within language and that interpretation is our mode of being in the world, there are two implications. The first is that the Montessori community must fulfil more strongly its obligation to share and clarify Montessori's original writing and vocabulary for others and recognise that this is a large, long-term and ongoing linguistic project. The Montessori movement would benefit from revitalising and expanding Montessori terminology beyond the boundaries of existing glossaries and lists of terms. Additional experienced Montessori trainers and researchers are needed for this thorough definitive and interpretive work. This bridge to understanding is necessary because Montessori scholars and practitioners are responsible for inviting conventional academics to do more than tolerate them as a minority group that primarily exists outside the global university community. Stronger collaborative efforts encouraging conventional physical and social scientists to connect with and even traverse into Montessori territory must be made in order not to lose the status of Montessori as a distinct psychologically and pedagogically orientated philosophy with its own original literature and language.

The second responsibility is that Montessori terminology must continue to be translated into conventional language for universities, governments, conventional educators and the public. Not everyone will take up the struggle to understand Montessori principles and practices as described in their original vocabulary. In order for Montessori arguments to be put forward and discussed

at tables where social policy decisions are made, contemporary Montessori publications must be more readily accessible. Montessori researchers must venture out and make proactive connections if the Montessori approach is to comprise more than a passing mention in conventional teacher preparation courses. There must be a stronger presence of translated Montessori language in current discourse. The rigor and universalism inherent in Montessori's legacy may have been temporarily eclipsed by postmodern, pluralist perspectives. Yet, this study demonstrates that as a single coherent philosophy, it has retained its relevance in spite of contemporary challenges. The increasing demand for the Montessori approach in recent years and its validation in research so far, suggests that efforts to translate and interpret Montessori's original ideas for the modern researcher and educational practitioner without formal Montessori training will be worthwhile.

8.2   Summary of the research

This study is about a Montessori perspective on leadership. It has been argued that a Montessori perspective on leadership can be inferred from Montessori's pedagogical vision of human potential. This perspective is not a theory superimposed upon Montessori's ideas, but an inherent aspect of her rhythmic and bulb-like conceptions of human nature described in Chapter 1. The thesis has not taken a critical theorist approach, but has accepted Montessori's legacy as a worthy base from which a perspective on leadership can be inferred and described.

An understanding of this perspective emerged from investigating Montessori's published works, analysing the voices of trained and experienced Montessori leaders and the insider positioning of the researcher. Through analysis and reflection, the data have been interpreted to arrive at a perspective on leadership that is distinct from other theories and models from the literature. Consequently, the findings contribute to debate and discussion about how leadership can be perceived and enacted.

This study confirms the view that leadership is a complex, but influential phenomenon that relates to the social nature of human beings. It takes forward

the current position of the field, that leadership can be developed, and that there are a number of adjectival lenses through which aspects of leadership can be examined. However, the findings indicated the Montessori perspective that leadership cannot be directly taught, because it is understood as an inherent human characteristic. It can be revealed, encouraged to develop, or hindered, warped, even almost annihilated by influences in the environment. In positions or roles where leadership is formally expected, training may offer a specialised preparation for the work. It has been demonstrated that Montessori offered a pedagogical model of leadership through her concept of the classroom teacher as a community guide, who prepares the environment and then entices others to connect with it. The findings show that in the Montessori context, the potential for leadership is an innate and universal characteristic of the individual in the social world, that emerges as a revelation associated with the person's stage of development and the environment.

Analysis of the interview data in this study indicated that the centrality of the child as a hope and promise for humanity is a distinct feature of Montessori's approach. The Montessori leaders in this study were committed to this vision and continued to refine their practice in light of their respect for children and childhood. They demonstrated the relevance of Montessori philosophy for their contemporary leadership in the field. This study also entrenched the view of writers such as Schaefer (2011) and Kahn, Dubble & Kendall (1999) who have argued that Montessori's legacy can serve school administration and leadership. Yet the investigation opened up new possibilities beyond the education sector, expanding the horizons of Montessori's legacy further into the unexplored recesses referred to in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 7, it was noted that Montessori saw her work as an open science. This study confirms it is a science responsive to community needs. The participants articulated how they perceived Montessori's ideas could be interpreted for action within their individual contexts. They saw preparation of the self and the environment as more than a technical enterprise, or an educational epistemology, but an understanding of the observed needs of human beings. Montessori's concept of normalisation was found to have implications for leadership psychology. To enact Montessori leadership is to serve the human

condition, a labour of the spiritual domain that is at once an acknowledgement of complexity and diversity, and an honouring of the universal. As a response to an evolving community, the Montessori leader is fundamentally an interpretative worker, and a critical observer, thinker and actor. The Montessori leader seeks to balance competing needs such as those of the individual and those of the group, while simultaneously holding paradoxical ideas such as work as nourishment. This is an expression of love in the loftiest sense, a vocational engagement for a peaceful telos. A Montessori perspective on leadership incorporates love as an ecological principle that forges unity and in which the child is central. Different emphases may emerge within leadership at different times and places. But the Montessori leader seeks to know the where and the when, to support a move toward an aesthetic equilibrium for human development and elevation. This is a transformation for peace.

8.3   The Main Arguments

Responding to the central research question, it is argued that Montessori's principles and practices offer a perspective on leadership that can be arrived at through analysis and reflection. The heart of this is a distinct, if not easily articulated, model of leadership, currently exemplified by the Montessori classroom teacher. The participants illuminated the Montessori teacher as approaching her work through the concept of education as an aid to life, providing support for the development of natural energies and potential. Human construction occurs in stages and innate capacities such as the capacity for leadership are revealed through interaction with the environment. This contention interweaves through the following further arguments that provide an overall response to the research questions above.

Leadership as creativity

The first main argument of this study is that Montessori principles and practices can be considered to offer a significant creative contribution to the contemporary leadership field. Montessori was a strong and exemplary leader herself who worked with and was influenced by leaders from many fields. Her legacy is unusual in having stood the test of time and remains relevant and alive.

There is evidence that her legacy is increasingly widely recognised and used. However, the participants' perceptions were that many of her insights, such as normalisation, the importance of observing life, and her distinct view of creativity, are yet to be fully grasped within the education domain or broader fields. Narrow classification of Montessori as a pedagogue, or early childhood specialist, does not negate the broader scope of her work in medicine, science, social philosophy and systems thinking. This study is another contribution toward the wider understanding and application of Montessori principles and practices.

Montessori does not reduce the complex picture of the human being into a single theory. The participants did not offer a clearly and simply-defined leadership blueprint or template, but an invitation to consider the universal biological base of human nature and its creative development through life stages. As such the Montessori perspective appears to incorporate many of the adjectivally expressed ideas from leadership theorists in the literature, such as transformational, charismatic, adaptive, servant, spiritual, authentic, distributed, ethical and sustainable. Yet, the participants in this study spoke extensively about how they adapted Montessori principles for their unique contexts. This confirmed the perspective that Montessori leadership is more a creative synthesis of existing models and not a convergence to a universal theory that has no cultural relevance.

Montessori's coherent perspective on society is expressed in narrative throughout her literature and incorporates what we might, hesitantly or prudently, call a model of leadership. Yet the participants reinforced that this model emerges from the psychological characteristics of the community members in their stages of development. As such Montessori leadership could be considered a "psycho-leadership" model that is respectful of place and time. Stories offered by the participants of leadership in the field, were frequently related to where a person or community was at, in his or her life journey. They depicted appointed leadership that supports the development and revelation of appointed or non-appointed leadership within their community.

A key finding from the interviews is that the Montessori perspective outlines both what it is to be a mature human being as well as the means to realise this

creative conception within contemporary cultures. Montessori's writings lack the bullet-point crispness of contemporary leadership writers and it is necessary to mine her work for the overall treasures she offers and for relevant individual nuggets. Yet drawing from their training, the participants in the study found a place for leadership as an innate personal potential and for formal leadership responsibility that comes from cultivating professional skills associated with an appointment. Using their experience, the participants interpreted, questioned, illuminated facts and shed light on relationships. This presented Montessori principles as neither abstract, limited, nor arbitrarily imposed, but empirically derived and pedagogically-oriented. Ultimately the participants demonstrated their creative capacity to bring their interest, training and experience together in a dynamic adaptation to contemporary leadership culture.

Leadership as following the child

The second main argument was that the paradoxical call to follow the child, must underpin a Montessori perspective on leadership. The participants in this study confirmed the field's view that leaders and followers are in relationship. However, by casting the child as leader, the participants elevated the child to a more central and powerful position, underscoring the distinctive character of the Montessori perspective. Montessori claimed we are blind to the child, who is a forgotten citizen. The participants in this study shone the spotlight on the origins and foundations of leadership which lie naturally within the child and which are not yet well recognised and investigated. Montessori defined these for us in her study of normal (meaning optimal, not average) development. She explained the greatness of the human spirit, the cultural adaptability of man and how these natural characteristics are manifested in the child. The participants in this study saw that the child could offer stability in times of great and constant change. This study demonstrated the benefit of studying the child in order to see how we might improve leadership within the adult world. This offers the possibility of new illumination for the leadership field.

Leadership as preparing the self

The third main argument is that preparation is an essential component of a Montessori perspective on leadership and this includes, perhaps even starts with,

preparation of the self. In Chapter 5, it was shown that this may be direct or indirect and is linked to Montessori concepts such as consciousness, interest, service and humility. The participants voiced that Montessori leadership is not primarily a role in which to be stuck, but an innate quality of the person, which can be revealed through preparation. It forms part of the ecological self, a dynamic human in totality, who is in constant lifelong development through real experiences. The Montessori perspective is that preparation of the self begins early and is complex and constructive, with sensitivities and interests naturally preparing the mind for something in the future. Both conscious and unconscious elements have input to this preparation. The participants in this study were united in considering that their later formal Montessori training offered a comprehensive moment of self-preparation for leadership, through its thorough grounding in Montessori principles and practices. They articulated that preparation of the self is a spiritual preparation oriented to service. Each prepared self can make a meaningful contribution to society, building commitment through observation, knowledge and growing understanding. Faith in the grandeur and universal applicability of natural laws interweaves with practices of self-reflection that carry the Montessori self through the inevitable challenges of day-to-day work. While there may be specific and ongoing professional skills that are also required for appointed leadership positions, the participants showed this is leadership with freedom that is balanced by responsibility, derived from moral thinking. Montessori classroom leadership is hence a transferable model of leadership, though support may be needed to facilitate the transfer.

Leadership as preparing the environment

Following on from the third argument, this study contends a fourth main argument that a Montessori perspective on leadership includes preparation of the environment. The environment is considered a secondary, non-constructive influence on human development within the Montessori perspective. In Chapter 6, the participants argued that a trusting and engaging environment can be prepared that encourages leadership potential to be revealed and educated. Successive levels of interest are incorporated in the design of the environment. Yet the prepared environment contains only what is essential and nothing superfluous, ideally characterised by simplicity, beauty and order. The participants spoke about how they prepared their schools as developmental environments by removing obstacles to development. This was not

always easy for the participants to describe, but they were united in confirming that optimal development cannot be assumed, and that the Montessori perspective is to bring intentionality to preparation of the environment. The participants emphasised that above all the Montessori leader prepares an environment that is centred around the child as a regenerative force for society. This is practical life work with a grace and courtesy considered integral to the distinct strength of Montessori environments.

<u>Leadership as part of a single scientific and philosophical framework</u>

Finally, the fifth argument developed in this study asserts that Montessori principles and practices form a unified scientific and philosophical framework that has its own rich language and that incorporates an understanding of leadership. As an insider researcher, it became apparent that understanding Montessori's language and conceptual foundations, may be the best way to understand a Montessori perspective on leadership. The participants in this study shared a common vocabulary and terminology that enabled them to access, but also move beyond conventional language currently used within the leadership literature. They envisaged the Montessori perspective as holistic and coherent, incorporating the principle of isolation of the difficulty, but simultaneously resisting permanent fragmentation into disconnected parts. The participants described their Montessori training as actively working with a set of named philosophical references that are defined, elucidated, probed deeply and then woven back into the integrated Montessori tapestry. Yet they also accessed professional development from outside the Montessori sector, cognitively translating concepts where necessary, to find how best to embed these into their existing philosophical framework. In order for the exchange of knowledge to be mutually beneficial, Montessori language must be more fully explicated for the leadership field. A key finding is that keeping Montessori relevant in contemporary contexts will require a more substantial hermeneutic and linguistic effort from the Montessori community.

8.4   Contributions to Knowledge and Implications for Further Study

This investigation of a Montessori perspective on leadership, informed by Gadamer's (2013) hermeneutics, and generating the main arguments above,

brings into unity the study of humans, and their nature and development as social beings in relationship with their environment. Accordingly, it necessarily touches multiple disciplines, including pedagogy, human biology, ecology, history, psychology, philosophy and peace studies. Seldom have existing leadership theorists spanned such a broad spectrum in developing their approach to leadership. This multi-disciplinary span has made several key conceptual and practical contributions to the leadership field.

The first major contribution made by this study is to begin to scope Montessori leadership as a new field for academic study. It is a field based on an existing coherent philosophical paradigm that incorporates open science and long practiced traditions. This study offers an impressionistic portrait. It has not attempted to defend Montessori pedagogy or leadership, nor to offer more than a few beginning details that were interesting for the researcher. For example, no analysis or discussion has been undertaken about what might constitute Montessori leadership "materials" or about how existing Montessori materials might contribute to leadership. No investigation has been made of what specific Practical Life skills may be needed at different leadership stages or for different leadership roles. Practical Life, which includes elements such as movement, grace and courtesy, care of the self and care of the environment suggests a myriad of lines of investigation for researchers that may have links to areas such as leadership executive functioning. No detailed investigation of aspects of the prepared environment for leadership has been made. New questions arise about how to prepare an environment for leaders, or for the leader's community, that reflects community standards of safety, comfort, aesthetics and progressive interest. How do we think about prepared environment at global scale? What do Montessori's ideas about nature and supernature offer leaders? Given Montessori's background in psychiatry, how might her notion of the prepared environment contribute to lowering stress and supporting mental health for leaders and their communities? More abstract aspects of Montessori leadership, such as its inclusion of spiritual development, could form the basis for future work in view of the leadership field seeing potential in the spiritual. The distinction and common ground between Montessori leadership and faith-based leadership is a possible area for research.

Novel conversations and research projects are likely to emerge if Montessori's important and original contribution to leadership enquiry becomes recognised. This study was limited to a small sample of leaders working in the United States. Future research suggested by this study therefore includes explorations of Montessori leadership in other parts of the world, in different sizes or types of schools, or in non-school educational environments. A valuable extension of this study may also be to investigate Montessori leadership at classroom, school management or governance level. As the application of Montessori principles extends beyond the domain of education, investigating Montessori leadership more broadly will become possible. Given Montessori's mature work in the domain of peace, the application of Montessori leadership to conflict situations may be of interest. Montessori's critique of the gap between technological advancement and moral progress in human life may contribute to scientific or philosophical debates, or the development of social policy by leaders. Leader B's comment on trained versus untrained Montessori leaders could be picked up as another interesting conversation. The training itself could also be clarified for prospective trainees. Not all Montessori training opportunities around the world appear to incorporate the rigor and comprehensive quality control offered by AMI-affiliated institutions. Researching how quality in Montessori training might be best understood may help counter any market-driven proliferation of poorly conceived training courses.

Contemporary data in this investigation was limited to that collected via interviews and further research involving observation would be helpful to consolidate and generalise findings, and identify where there may be gaps between Montessori leadership potential and practice. A study focussing on Montessori founders may prove enlightening as a special case of leadership. Such a study may help refine support processes for Montessori pioneers, especially those who are bringing the approach to novel situations.

In order to further explore the foundations for a Montessori perspective on leadership, a more detailed identification and explication of the principles and practices advocated by Montessori would be fruitful. Gadamer's (2013) understanding that language is the medium of hermeneutics underscores the necessity for further articulation of Montessori vocabulary and terminology in

order to make scholarly understanding of Montessori's legacy more accessible. Montessori doctorates remain rare in spite of the daily research of Montessori professionals through observation, the century of global Montessori practice and the increasing number of Montessori schools and centres.

The need for an understanding of Montessori's language and literature as a foundation for quality Montessori research gives rise to questions relating to insider perspectives and bias. The researcher's insider status as both a Montessori professional and a leader, was outlined in Chapter 4, drawing on Gadamer's (2013) notions of prejudices and horizons. The constant tension of heeding Montessori's call to aim to eliminate prejudice, while accepting Gadamer's wisdom that prejudices are inevitable, shaped the interpretations made. The researcher's interest was revealed to be a factor in how the data were analysed and what themes were selected for focussed attention. Further investigation of the insider researcher in relation to Montessori ideas such as the notion of independence may provide helpful insight on Montessori research validity.

A second major contribution of this study emerges from the universal nature of Montessori principles and practices. Montessori leadership does not appear limited to school or other environments firmly within the education sector, but has potential for application within any type of organisation or human endeavour. Due to the limitations of this study, Montessori's comments on aspects of law, economics, politics, life sciences and other disciplines have not been well explored, but indicate potential focus areas for future consideration. The current spread of Montessori practice into areas such as aged care and dementia suggests there may already be current interest from the field in a Montessori leadership perspective beyond education.

Contrary to writers such as Eacott (2013a), this study found that leadership from the Montessori perspective is not rare, but a natural capacity of each person that can be revealed under appropriate environmental conditions. The participants in this study perceived leadership as an inner potential that develops under its own energies and is therefore universal. This perception was more helpful to them than a vision of leadership as unusual or the commodified product of a thriving industry. The recent proliferation of leadership texts, not all of which are

academic in nature, is an indication of the importance given to the leadership field. Leadership is perceived by many to be an important component of finding solutions to major complex and large-scale problems. This study linked leadership to a longstanding perspective on human nature and development and as such may offer elusive cross-sectoral stability in a time of rapid change. In this study, Montessori texts were used as a significant and valuable reference for the research. The extent to which leaders use Montessori's primary literature, as distinct operational documents in the field, could be investigated. It may also be helpful to have some further insight into what use Montessori leaders make of conventional leadership resources within their work and how they continue to maintain authentic practice where there is pressure or a requirement to abandon their principles.

A third contribution of this study is the connection of leadership to the child. This is a distinct aspect of a Montessori perspective that challenges existing theory. By demonstrating a perspective that germinates in early childhood, the appointed Montessori leader has responsibilities for human potential that go beyond defined position descriptions. This may expand future possibilities for application of Montessori principles for social reform, upon which the original Casa dei Bambini was based. Understanding that the origins of leadership begin in childhood is possible if leadership includes a view of early childhood. Montessori claimed she obtained this view by being a "nobody" (EP, 85), which contrasts with the perception held by those who heard her speak, that she was charismatic.

This study has not addressed how leadership is revealed in the human personality in the early stages of life. Further research of leadership associated with each of the four planes of development, as articulated in Montessori's constructive vision, is likely to be beneficial for Montessori school leaders, teachers and parents. This study indicated that the foundations of leadership form in early childhood and a study of aspects of preliminary leadership in very young children may be helpful. The older child from six to twelve years naturally tends toward interest in the social group and studies of how these children choose and respond to leaders and followers, and the implications of their activity for leadership might prove a useful investigation. Leadership in adolescents holds promise as Montessori's third plane of development is seen to be particularly constructive. Leadership in young adults, like that for

adolescents, is an area already being explored in the wider leadership field, but is yet to be undertaken in any substantial way through a Montessori lens.

The results of this study indicate more substantial exploration of hallmark themes that emerged through the analysis phase, would enhance understanding of the Montessori perspective. Suggested studies might include exploration of how leadership is connected with Montessori concepts such as: work, independence, freedom, limits, morality, humility, movement, interest, consciousness, isolation of the difficulty, friendliness with error and peace. One of the most interesting themes for the researcher is that of love, which is not a common theme in the leadership literature. Further work to seek common ground with existing researchers such as Maatta and Uusiutti (2014) and Parry and Kampster (2014) who have begun to link leadership and love may be helpful. Other themes from Montessori's literature, such as concentration, false fatigue, points of interest, spontaneity, sensitive periods and three-hour work cycle, that were not central in the data from this study and which remain underexplored, may also shed further light on a Montessori perspective on leadership. Montessori's connection to historic, political, scientific or other leaders, that feature in some of her published works, has barely begun to be detailed.

This study included interviews with Montessori leaders who had attended Montessori schools themselves. The review of Montessori literature found that much of the research effort in Montessori studies has gone into demonstrating the effectiveness of the pedagogy. However longitudinal studies of Montessori-trained leaders would enrich discussion about Montessori leadership in view of its focus on human development over time. Studies of second generation Montessori professionals in leadership positions may also offer fertile ground to explore Montessori outcomes further. Whether Montessori graduates are under or over-represented in formal leadership positions, or even the creative elite, as has been suggested (Sims, 2011), has not been investigated in this study, but remains a question for the future. Few studies of individual leaders who have made strong contributions to the Montessori movement have been undertaken and work to further this documentation would have historic value.

This study is relevant to leadership training and professional development. However, the investigation did not attempt to define how best to support the future growth of appointed or aspiring Montessori leaders. As the study of Montessori leadership

develops, fresh understanding can support work within Montessori leadership training. Specifically, it might be useful to investigate the extent to which existing leadership training is based on Montessori principles and practices and whether it provides a helpful stepping stone for teachers who aim to leap from the classroom, to school or educational administration. As this comment is based on the researcher's understanding of the difficulties in filling Montessori school leadership positions, a study that analyses this problem in terms of leadership perception or succession planning may also be worthwhile.

Kellerman's (2012) claim that there is no leadership program anywhere that educates great generalists was interesting for the researcher. In view of the universal nature and potential application of Montessori principles, the question of whether Montessori has something to offer the development of generalists is also an area for future exploration. This study found that a Montessori perspective on leadership is complex, paradoxical, universal and draws on many disciplines. The leaders in this study used techniques such as observation and reflection to develop their movement over time between cognitively dissonant positions, such as when to give more freedom and when to support with limits. The issues of place and time within a Montessori leadership perspective hold promise for further exploration: Which parts of our local or global community environments might need further preparation? To what extent does a Montessori perspective on leadership address short-termism within the leadership industry? How can a Montessori perspective on leadership support harried and exhausted principals? How long do we wait in an environment for leadership to be revealed? What can Montessori leadership contribute to special events in time such as founding a new community, or supporting a community through a crisis? How does a Montessori leader know "the where" and "the when"? The leadership literature includes publications that elaborate cases where things have gone wrong. The question of leadership mistakes holds intrigue in view of Montessori's concepts of friendliness with error and of deviations. This study began with a central question, but has spawned so many more.

8.5   Conclusion

This investigation aimed at further understanding of leadership in a Montessori context. The researcher no longer works as a school principal, but has

maintained involvement in leadership work in a range of schooling, educational and broader contexts. Thinking about leadership has helped shape this work and given rise to new lines of enquiry for future study.

Montessori leadership takes its place in the global expansion of Montessori practice. As a new field for researchers it offers another invitation for the Montessori community to also expand its research effort. There is much to recommend the Montessori perspective, but it remains little understood by policy writers and decision-makers. Montessori leadership has an ongoing role in ensuring Montessori's legacy is kept relevant for contemporary contexts. Further probing of Montessori literature and studying of Montessori leadership in practice will not necessarily find definitive answers to questions raised in this study, but promises to elucidate and contribute to education as an aid to life. This promise has a spiritual character and is led by a sacred vision of the child as a regenerative force for society that has the ultimate goal of peace. In order to lead human beings, it is best if we have insight into who they are and who they might become. A century on, from her initial discoveries at the Casa dei Bambini, this study paves the way for Montessori to be re-read by a new generation through the lens of leadership.

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1. Primary Sources with Abbreviations

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FC	Montessori, M. (1951). *The forgotten citizen*. Amsterdam: Association Montessori Internationale.
MM	Montessori, M. (1964). *The Montessori method.* New York: Schocken Books. First published in English in 1912. Translated by Anne E. George.
SC	Montessori, M. (1966). *The secret of childhood*. New York: Ballantine Books.
DC	Montessori, M. (1967). *The discovery of the child*. New York: Ballantine Books. Translated by M. Joseph Costelloe. First published 1948.
SAE	Montessori, M. (1971). *Spontaneous activity in education*. Cambridge, MA: Robert Bentley.
ENW	Montessori, M. (1989). *Education for a new world*. Oxford: Clio Press. First published 1946.
AMMI	Montessori, M. (1991). *The advanced Montessori method: Scientific pedagogy as applied to the education of children from seven to eleven years*. Volume I: Spontaneous activity in education. Oxford: Clio Press. First published in 1918. Translated from the Italian by Florence Simmonds and Lily Hutchinson.
FCTA	Montessori, M. (1994). *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Oxford: Clio Press. First published in 1948.
BI	Montessori, M. (1997). *Basic ideas of Montessori's educational theory: Extracts from Maria Montessori's writings and*

	teachings. Oxford: Clio Press. First published in German 1967. Translated by Lawrence Salmon.
CDC	Montessori, M. (2004). *The creative development in the child: The Montessori approach, vol. 1*. Madras: Kalakshetra Press. Translated by Mario Montessori. Edited by R. Ramachandran.
TEHP	Montessori, M. (2007). *To educate the human potential*. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. First published in 1948.
AMMII	Montessori, M. (2007). *The advanced Montessori method: Scientific pedagogy as applied to the education of children from seven to eleven years*. Volume II: The Montessori elementary material. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. First published in Italian in 1916. Translated from the Italian by Arthur Livingston.
EP	Montessori, M. (2007). *Education and Peace*. Oxford: Clio Press. First published in Italy as *Educazione e Pace* in 1949. Translated by Helen R. Lane.
AM	Montessori, M. (2007). *The Absorbent Mind.* Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. First published in 1949. Translated by Claude A. Claremont.
FM	Montessori, M. (2007). *The Formation of Man.* Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. First published 1955. Translated by A. M. Joosten.
CSW	Montessori, M. (2008). The child, society and the world: Unpublished speeches and writings. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. Translated where necessary, from the original manuscript by Caroline Juler and Heather Yesson, and with introductory texts by Günter Schulz-Benesch.

PSG	Montessori, M. (2011). Psychogeometry. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. Original Italian manuscript edited by Benedetto Scuppola.
1946	Montessori, M. (2012). *The 1946 London lectures*. Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company. Edited by Dr. Annette Haines.
PR	Montessori, M. (n. d.). The permanent relevance of Maria Montessori's plea. Amsterdam: Association Montessori internationale.
TwoNat	Montessori, M. (1961). *The two natures of the child & The meaning of adaptation*. Edited lecture notes taken from courses of Dr. Montessori. Amsterdam: Association Montessori Internationale.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**16 May 2012**
Project Number:	**CF12/0650 – 2012000267**
Project Title:	**The Montessori Leader**
Chief Investigator:	**Assoc Prof Len Cairns**
Approved:	**From: 16 May 2012** **To: 16 May 2017**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Mrs Karen Bennetts

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

QUESTIONS:

A. <u>Background Questions:</u>

1. What is your current position?

2. How long have you been in this position?

3. What other Montessori leadership positions or roles have you experienced?

4. What other leadership roles have you experienced outside the Montessori sector?

5. What formal qualifications do you have?

6. What is your age band? 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80-89 Gender?

7. How did you become a Montessori leader?

B. <u>Montessori Leadership Questions:</u>

8. What does the concept of leadership mean to you?

9. What function do you think leadership fulfils?

10. Can you describe an ideal Montessori leader?

11. In what ways, is a Montessori leader different from a non-Montessori leader?

12. What are the key Montessori principles that you bring to your leadership?

13. What Montessori practices do you incorporate into your leadership?

14. How do you prepare an environment for the community you lead?

15. How have you prepared yourself for the work of being a leader?

16. How does your view of the child inform your leadership practice?

17. Maria Montessori once said that "Anyone who wants to follow my method must understand that he should not honour me but follow the child as his leader." What does this mean to you?

18. In Montessori teacher training, observation is given a high priority. Do you use observation in your leadership work? If so how?

19. Montessori spoke about the human spirit. In what ways, if any, is your leadership spiritual?

20. Describe any ways in which being a Montessori leader has been transformative?

21. "Leadership is a practical life exercise." Please comment on this idea.

22. How much congruency have you achieved between your Montessori beliefs and your leadership actions?

23. How have you adapted your initial training, which largely related to working with children, to your work with adults?

24. Describe any time when your Montessori training has been particularly beneficial in helping resolve a leadership dilemma.

25. Describe any time when your Montessori training has been a hindrance in your leadership work.

26. What keeps you motivated during difficult times?

27. How has your leadership developed over time?

28. How does a Montessori leader know if he/she is succeeding in his/her work?

29. How do you model Montessori principles and practices to staff and parents?

30. To what extent, do you think Montessori's vision of the child as a resource for humanity has been realized today?

31. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix C: Data Analysis Tables

First Pass (Align data with leadership theories):

Form table of leadership theories, with major theorists, characteristics, and evidence of alignment with these in the transcripts.

Leadership Theory	Major Theorists	Characteristics	Quotes
Leadership Theory 1	Theorist 1 Theorist 2 Theorist 3	Characteristic 1 Characteristic 2 Characteristic 3	Response Leader A Response Leader B Response Leader C etc.
Leadership Theory 2	Theorist 1 Theorist 2 Theorist 3	Characteristic 1 Characteristic 2 Characteristic 3	Response Leader A Response Leader B Response Leader C etc.

Second Pass (adapted from Wengraf, 2001):

- Take Transcript 1 and chunk transcript into units of meaning to form Transcript 2 (lose interviewer, gain separated meanings for leaders);
- Take Transcript 2 and summarise chunks of meaning into dot points to form Transcript 3 (lose quotes, gain simplification for table summaries);
- Take Transcript 3 and insert dot points into Table 1 to compare responses between leaders (lose interview sequence, gain leader comparison);
- Take Table 1 and draw out themes for each leader into Table 2 (lose dot points, gain themes for coding);
- Take Tables 1 and 2 and unite for Table 3 (Gain themes matched to dot point responses).

120728 Leader A – Transcription 1

KB: Question 1 [Verbatim]

Leader A: Response [Verbatim]

KB: Question 2 [Verbatim]

Leader A: Response [Verbatim]

Etc.

120728 Leader A – Transcription 2

1	Question 1	Response Meaning Chunk [verbatim]
2		Response Meaning Chunk [verbatim]
3		Response Meaning Chunk [verbatim]
4	Question 2	Response Meaning Chunk [verbatim]
5		Response Meaning Chunk [verbatim]
6		Response Meaning Chunk [verbatim]
7	Etc.	

Etc.

120728 Leader A – Transcription 3

1	Question 1	Response Meaning Chunk [summary]
2		Response Meaning Chunk [summary]
3		Response Meaning Chunk [summary]
4	Question 2	Response Meaning Chunk [summary]
5		Response Meaning Chunk [summary]
6		Response Meaning Chunk [summary]
7	Etc.	

Etc.

TABLE 1: Comparison of Leaders

Qn	LA	LB	LC	LD	Notes
1		Etc.			
2					
3					

Etc.

TABLE 2: Emergence of Themes

Themes	LA	LB	LC	LD	Notes
1	Theme 1	Etc.			
2	Theme 2				
3	Theme 3				

Etc.

TABLE 3: CODING – Common Themes related back to dot points

Code	LA	LB	LC	LD	LE	
C1 Training	Dot points					
C2 etc.	Etc.					
C3						
C4						
C5						

Etc.

TABLE 4: FINAL CODING – Themes related back to raw data

Code	LA	LB	LC	LD	LE	
C1	Quotes					
C2	Etc.					
C3						
C4						
C5						

Appendix D: Montessori Principles

Freedom/Liberty

A selection of evidence from the primary literature:

MM, p.15
The "free, natural manifestations of the child" must be permitted. This is "the essential reform."

MM, p. 15
…the true concept of liberty is practically unknown to educators. They often have the same concept of liberty which animates a people in the hour of rebellion from slavery, or perhaps, the conception of *social liberty*, which although it is a more elevated idea is still invariably restricted. "Social liberty" signifies always one more round of Jacob's ladder. In other words it signifies a partial liberation, the liberation of a country, of a class, or of thought.

That concept of liberty which must inspire pedagogy is, instead, universal. The biological sciences of the nineteenth century have shown it to us when they have offered us the means for studying life. If, therefore, the old-time pedagogy foresaw or vaguely expressed the principle of studying the pupil before educating him, and of leaving him free in his spontaneous manifestations, such an intuition, indefinite and barely expressed, was made possible of practical attainment only after the contribution of the experimental sciences during the last century. This is not a case for sophistry or discussion, it is enough that we state our point. He who would say that the principle of liberty informs the pedagogy of to-day, would make us smile as at a child who, before the box of mounted butterflies, should insist that they were alive and could fly. The principle of slavery still pervades pedagogy, and, therefore, the same principle pervades the school.

MM, p. 21
The jockey offers a piece of sugar to his horse before jumping into the saddle, the coachman beats his horse that he may respond to the signs given by the reins; and, yet, neither of these runs so superbly as the free horse of the plains.

MM, p. 28
The fundamental principle of scientific pedagogy must be, indeed, the *liberty of the pupil;*– such liberty as shall permit a development of individual, spontaneous manifestations of the child's nature. If a new and scientific pedagogy is to arise from the *study of the individual,* such study must occupy itself with the observation of *free* children.

MM, p. 83
Our little tables and our various types of chairs are all light and easily transported, and we permit the child to *select* the position which he finds most comfortable. He can *make himself comfortable* as well as seat himself *[Page 84]* in his own place. And this freedom is not only an external sign of liberty, but a means of education.

MM, p. 86
The pedagogical method of *observation* has for its base the *liberty* of the child; and *liberty is activity.*

Discipline must come through liberty. Here is a great principle which is difficult for the followers of common-school methods to understand. How shall one obtain *discipline* in a class of free children? Certainly in our system, we have a concept of discipline very different from that commonly accepted. If discipline is founded upon liberty, the discipline itself must necessarily be *active.* We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. He is an individual *annihilated*, not *disciplined.*

MM, p. 83
The liberty of the child should have as its *limit* the collective interest; as its *form*, what we universally consider good breeding. We must, therefore, check in the child whatever offends or annoys others, or whatever tends toward rough or ill-bred acts. But all the rest, – every manifestation having a useful scope,–whatever it be, and under whatever form it expresses itself, must not only be permitted, but must be *observed* by the teacher.

AM, p. 78
So man develops by stages, and the freedom he enjoys comes from these steps toward independence taken in turn. It is not just a case of deciding to "set him free" or of wanting him to be free; his independence is a physiological state, a change wrought by the processes of growth. Today it is nature which affords the child the opportunity to grow; it is nature which bestows independence upon him and guides him to success in achieving his freedom.

AM, p. 81
When we say the child's freedom must be *complete*, that his independence and normal functioning must be *guaranteed* by society, we are not using the language of vague idealism. These are truths revealed by positive observations made upon life and nature. Only through freedom and environmental experience is it practically possible for human development to occur.

AM, p. 82
All the same, we must not project into the world of children the same ideas of independence and freedom that we hold to be ideal in the world of adults. If adults were asked to examine themselves, and to give a definition of freedom and independence, they could nor succeed with any accuracy, for their idea of

freedom is a very sorry one. They lack the breadth of nature's infinite horizons. Only in the child do we see reflected the majesty of nature which in giving freedom and independence gives life itself. And she gives it while following unchanging rules concerning the age and needs of the individual. She makes of freedom a law of life: be free or you die!

AM, p. 83
We must clearly understand that when we give the child freedom and independence, we are giving freedom to a worker already braced for action, who cannot live without working and being active. This he has in common with all other forms of life, and to curb it makes him degenerate.

FM, p. 28
I remember how a Minister of State, without bothering much about the feature of spontaneity, once said to me, "You have solved a great problem, you have succeeded in fusing together discipline and freedom – this is not a problem which concerns the government of schools only, it concerns the government of nations."

FM, p. 32
In order to give this type of freedom, it was precisely necessary that nobody interfere to obstruct the constructive spontaneous activity of the children in an environment prepared so that their need for development can find satisfaction

FM, p. 44
The children themselves revealed them and we did nothing but respect them in the atmosphere of the freedom of our schools.

FM, p. 48
The greatest difficulty in the way of an attempt to give freedom to the child and to bring its powers to light does not lie in finding a form of education which realizes these aims. It lies rather in overcoming the prejudices which the adult has formed in his regard.

EP, p. 13
…the fact that morals are less strict today is taken to be a form of modern freedom, a fight against age-old moral restrictions that had remained unchanged since the days when leading a healthy life was regarded as the greatest of sacrifices.

EP, p. 31
We have seen children totally change as they acquire a love for things and as their sense of order, discipline and self-control develops within them as a manifestation of their total freedom. We have seen them labour steadily, drawing on their own energies and developing them as they work…It has been our experience that if the child and the adolescent do not have a chance to engage in a true social life, they do not develop a sense of discipline and morality. These gifts in their case become end products of coercion rather than manifestations of freedom.

The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.

EP, p. 55
When the child is given freedom to move about in a world of objects, he is naturally inclined to perform the task necessary for his development entirely on his own. Let us say it straight out – the child wants to do everything all by himself… It is a commonplace that the child must be free. But what kind of freedom has he been given? The only true freedom for an individual is to have the opportunity to act independently. That is the condition sine qua non of individuality. There is no such thing as an individual until a person can act by himself.