

The Sage Handbook of Educational Leadership, Second Edition

The Development of Leadership Thought and Practice in the United States

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Leadership is one of the most discussed, examined, and yet elusive ideas in the social sciences in general and educational leadership in particular (Bennis & Nanus, 1986). In spite of the innumerable definitions of leadership and claims made about it, we continue to seek greater understanding in both theory and practice. The history of leadership thought is itself a complicated and treacherous journey that has implications not only for how we understand the meaning of leadership but also for what definitions and claims about leadership are regarded as appropriate, valued, and honored.

In this chapter, we call into question the traditional ways the history of leadership thought and practice has been formulated and expressed, and we seek to broaden and enrich perspectives on leadership history. We begin with a critique of these traditional accounts of the history of leadership. Our purpose is neither to present these accounts—they are well known to any leadership student—nor to provide an exhaustive report of the development of leadership thought. Rather, we will present some of the features of these historical accounts and identify some weaknesses. Following this critique, we will identify several sources of leadership thought and practice that have been ignored in the traditional accounts and explore their value for understanding and practicing leadership. A comprehensive discussion of all those sources that have been ignored would be impossible. However, by offering a few examples of some of these sources, we hope to stimulate discussion of how leadership thought could benefit from other sources. We end the chapter with a discussion of the implications for changing the way we describe the history of leadership theory for research, practice, and preparation.

A Critique of the History of Leadership Thought

Probably every student of educational leadership can recite the traditional account of the development of leadership thought. Although these stories vary slightly, they tend to reflect the same progression. Beginning with trait theory, they move to behavioral theory and contingency theory, then continue with excellence and transformational theories, and more recently focus on leadership as an organizational quality. This history is influenced by another account originating in the industrial psychology and management literature, namely, scientific management, human relations, and social science theories (Getzels, 1977).

These traditional accounts have several features. First, as we mentioned previously, they are influenced strongly by the industrial psychology and management literature. In addition, sociology, political science, and other social sciences have contributed to leadership thought. The humanities, including arts, literature, and philosophy, have played a very minor role, if any, in these accounts. Because of this, aspects of leadership such as aesthetic and ethical and social justice dimensions have been largely ignored in the traditional U.S. history of leadership thought. Second, the traditional accounts are chronicled in a way that suggests linear progression toward clarity and greater conceptual inclusiveness. For example, we are told that the original trait theories were discredited because of research that found that leadership behaviors differed among leaders. Moreover, the accounts tell us that the original task-versus-relationship behavior theories were improved through the identification of various situational factors that influenced leader effectiveness. These renditions of the history of leadership thought tend to ignore detours and obstacles on the historical journey and assume a steady

progression toward greater precision. The accounts also assume conceptual inclusiveness but tend to ignore feminist, critical theory, spirituality, and postmodernist perspectives, among others, that have made and can make major contributions to leadership thought and practice. Third, these accounts have become the sacred texts or metanarratives of the field. They are taught to students, reflected in the literature reviews of research reports, and used to argue for what the next stage of leadership investigations should be. Rost (1991) states that

These summaries of leadership theory movements are ritualistically repeated by author after author, especially textbook writers. As with other things that are repeated over and over, people begin to accept them as facts. These movements are part of the folklore of leadership studies and, like other folktales and myths, they are believed because leadership high priests have told us they are true. (p. 17)

These features suggest weaknesses in the traditional account that are important to acknowledge. In so doing, we wish to strengthen the discussion of leadership thought and practice by looking outside its traditional sources. Our critique is organized in three areas: how the traditional accounts are found wanting in terms of their own claims, how these accounts use a narrow slice of thought and disciplines to develop their ideas, and how the narratives of leadership thought do not reflect the context of a postmodern world.

Critique Based on Their Own Claims

Rost (1991) argues that the traditional leadership narratives suggest that the theories are separate and distinct, but in fact, they all are based on a structural-functionalist view. As he puts it, "All leadership theories [presented in the narratives] have a structural-functionalist frame of reference in the hierarchical, linear, pragmatic, Newtonian background assumptions of what makes the world go around" (p. 27).

Rost's (1991) critique of the leadership theories is based on five characteristics of these theories. The leadership theories are

1. oriented toward goal-achievement;
2. focused on face-to-face, dyadic relationships rather than larger organizational and societal relationships;
3. representative of male, even macho, heroic images;
4. "utilitarian, short-term, and materialistic in their ethical base" (p. 27); and
5. "excessively rationalistic, technocratic, quantitative, and scientific in their background assumptions" (p. 27).

Rost's critique may be attacked for ignoring more recent leadership theories, including leadership as an organizational quality, spirituality in leadership, feminist approaches, and critical theories. However, his critique seems appropriate in that little mention is made of these more recent theories in most traditional accounts of leadership thought, which still dominate many of the conversations about leadership practice.

Rost (1991) also criticizes the leadership narratives as assuming that the theories had distinct beginnings and endings.

A much more accurate interpretation of these theories as a saga of popular movements is that there were periods of heightened popularity for certain theories, but when that popularity waned, the theories remained in the minds and hearts of scholars and practitioners alike because they appealed to the structural-functionalist frame within which most researchers operated and to the managerial psyche of most practitioners. (p. 29)

Rost's third critique is that the leadership narratives maintain that progress has been made in leadership thought. However, even traditional leadership theorists from various epistemological camps themselves suggest that leadership continues to be an elusive concept (Grint, 2005; Sheive & Schoenheit, 1987). An argument could be made that the leadership theories have contributed to identifying new questions for debate. However, to suggest that the theories have progressed to greater explanatory or predictive power is to overstate the

case. Zaccaro and Horn (2003) reinforce this lack of progress in leadership thought especially in terms of the degree of integration of theory and practice. The “limited set of explanatory concepts,” they argue, has been a major limitation, especially in the ability of leadership theory to influence practice. One example is the tendency to focus on the interpersonal and dyadic level of leadership to the exclusion of more cultural, systemic, and institutional factors of leadership that influence such organizational practices as equity and social justice.

Critique Based on a Narrow Set of Disciplines

As mentioned previously, researchers and theorists in two fields of inquiry, namely industrial psychology and managerial science, have essentially written the history of leadership thought. Given these sources, it is not surprising that one of the critiques of the larger field of educational leadership is that it has been overly influenced by corporate models (Callahan, 1962; English, 1992, 2003).

The assumption behind these traditional leadership narratives is that no alternative work in leadership has occurred. Yet leadership has been a frequent topic in biography (Preskill, 1992), literature, theater, philosophy, religion, and art—Western and non-Western. These areas, however, have not influenced the traditional U.S. narratives and, therefore, the accepted ways of understanding and describing, perhaps even explaining, leadership behavior. English (1997) asserts that the scientific management movement kidnapped the study of leadership found in the liberal arts. In doing so, the result was that “it debunked narratives embedded in history, theatre, and biography as ‘unscientific,’ and hence untrustworthy sources to become an educational leader” (p. 7). In the second section of this chapter, we will provide examples of how some of these areas could benefit our understanding and practice of leadership.

In addition to a restricted use of disciplines, the history of leadership thought in the United States and some other Western countries has ignored contributions from other countries. One dramatic example of this lack of awareness of leadership thought in other societal contexts lies in the U.S. emphasis on the status of cultural heroes and the rational economic actor assumption. The heroic image attributed by this society to corporate leaders such as Chrysler's Lee Iacocca or military leaders such as Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf is rarely seen in non-Western narratives of leadership. Blunt and Jones (1997) point out that the status that U.S. leadership thought gives to cultural heroes is not enjoyed by people in most other countries, even industrialized nations such as Germany and Japan. Furthermore, Blunt and Jones argue that the rational economic actor assumption in Western views of leadership contradicts

important values held by people in 80 percent of the countries of the world and by an even higher percentage of people in developing countries. Most non-Western cultures do not place high value on overt individual and group competition; they are collectivist in nature, that is, they value the group over the individual. (pp. 4–5)

As has been pointed out, we are skeptical of the claim that the traditional leadership narratives on leadership thought have developed toward greater precision and clarity. However, in suggesting that other fields of inquiry beyond industrial psychology and managerial science and views of leadership from other countries would benefit our understanding and practice of leadership, we are not implying that considering these fields and cultural differences will provide greater precision in our thinking and examining of leadership. Rather, we argue that recognizing these alternatives will enrich our understanding of leadership. In other words, instead of narrowing leadership study so that we achieve more exactness, opening the narratives of leadership thought to include leadership accounts provided by other fields and cultures broadens our viewpoints to consider larger leadership images and perspectives. Such breadth will enable us to conceive of and practice leadership differently from the ways our traditional accounts suggest and thus to achieve more equitable results.

Critique Based on Relevance

Another critique of the traditional accounts of leadership thought relates to the policy and practical relevance of these understandings of leadership. One aspect of the elusive quality of leadership, identified by various

researchers, is the argument that leadership theory and research have not provided the type of understanding, explanation, and direction we would expect from such focused accounts (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003). Zaccaro and Horn criticize several aspects of leadership practice that should be considered in examining the relevance of leadership thought. First, leadership practice has tended to focus on "short temporal horizons." The search for the quick fix is apparent in contemporary educational reform and limits the ability of leaders to understand the long-term quality of change. Second, these authors argue that leadership practice has a parochial focus, that is, the tendency to focus on the local and concrete rather than larger institutional and global issues that influence the local. Third, leadership practice emphasizes fad-driven thinking. The development of third-party consultants who bring the latest package of change to meet the short-term and parochial needs of leaders ignores the complexity of change in organizations such as schools. Finally, Zaccaro and Horn identify practitioners' mistrust of the theorist or researcher. Even though the use of data and action research are currently receiving attention from educators, leadership theorizing and academic research are not trusted by many leaders.

These features of leadership practice reflect a tendency to avoid the complexity of leadership in organizations, which the traditional leadership accounts have done little to temper. These accounts, as we have noted, have ignored more conceptual inclusiveness that could enrich the complexity of leadership thought and practice, especially in a postmodern world.

Critique Based on a Postmodern World

Narratives of any type, far from being value free, are attempts to define what is accepted, appropriate, and even sacred (English, 2003). In the case of leadership narratives, these traditional accounts intentionally or unintentionally are used to define the knowledge base of the field. As Peter Gronn (2003) and others have argued, these attempts restrict the understanding and practice of leadership to what could be called "designer leadership." Several have complained that recent accountability attempts, such as the almost religious adoption of ISLLC standards, reflect corporate models clothed with educational jargon. In educational leadership, these attempts have recently been called into serious question (English, 1997, 2003). The homogenizing effects of traditional leadership thought can be seen as fostering national standardization policies that contradict the nature of education and leadership in a postmodern world (Grogan, 2004). The theories used in the traditional narratives of leadership thought are based on causal relationships, views of a single reality, and other features of positivism that have been critiqued in regard to their value for understanding leadership in a postmodern world. Educational leadership in a postmodern world, where there are multiple realities, shifting perspectives, a rejection of absolute cause-effect relationships, and a broadening of inquiry methods beyond the scientific, technical, and rational, calls into question the confident, seemingly coherent narrative of leadership we have inherited. Of particular note is the burgeoning literature on women's ways of leading (see for example Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007). The debate on leadership needs to be broadened and enriched with alternative perspectives (Furman, 2003).

This postmodern context shuns the absolutism and singularity of traditional accounts of leadership theories and rejects the sacredness with which theorists, writers, and researchers have held them. Such a critique, far from being damaging to the understanding of leadership, provides exciting prospects for our understanding, examining, and practicing of leadership in schools. In the next section, we hope to contribute to that process by identifying and discussing several ways that accounts of leadership can be expanded.

Nontraditional Sources For Leadership Thought

In this section, we will identify two major sources for leadership thought that have traditionally been ignored in the history of leadership. Our purpose in this section is not to identify all the sources of leadership thought but rather to give two examples, Western classical literature and non-Western political thought, which we believe are valuable sources and which exemplify how nontraditional sources may be useful in broadening our understanding of leadership. We do not put forward a detailed and exhaustive discussion of Western classical

literature or non-Western political thought, but we provide both specific literature and broad outlines that exemplify these alternative and enriching sources.

Leadership Themes From Western Classical Literature

By looking closely at some ancient plays, some medieval writings, and some of Shakespeare's history plays and tragedies, we gain broader and deeper perspectives on leadership. The dramatist's art, in particular, allows us to read (or better yet watch) the prince, king, elected ruler, or usurper navigate his ¹ way through the minefields of political intrigue and constraints of personal limitations. The hero's success or failure and the successes or failures of the major characters who serve as his foils or his supporters help us to understand the human side of leadership. Through literature, we are informed intellectually and emotionally. By tapping into any of the arts, we understand a subject like leadership more fully because our emotions are engaged. This dimension of understanding is entirely lost in theorizing and in learning from theories.

To get a glimpse of some famous characters and their contexts, this section of the chapter draws on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *King John*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Sophocles's *Oedipus the King* are referenced. Some of Aristotle's ideas from *The Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* are also included. Brief mention is made of Chaucer as well. Along with our own interpretation of the texts mentioned, we have also drawn on the ideas of a number of literary critics to support the points made. Because we have gleaned ideas about leadership only from the primary works and the secondary commentaries about them, we do not attempt to deal fully in the literary sense with any of the plays or essays.

Leadership is rarely mentioned by name in these works. Rather, the business of leading or ruling is their subject. Common themes found in them, as in many other works of their times, include: (a) the road to tyranny and the right of lawful resistance to or overthrow of the tyrant, (b) the moral obligation of kings to rule with the common good in mind, (c) the practical art of ruling versus the moral ideals of leadership, and (d) the value of knowledge of self and others for a ruler. Traditional leadership thought has been concerned with some of these themes—the right to lead (or who should lead) and the survival of the leader; the practical art of leading—and, to some extent, the idea of the common good has been translated into the achievement of common goals. However, we find little in the traditional U.S. theories of leadership about the moral and ethical dimensions of leadership (except for Burns's 1979 notion of transforming leadership) ² and very little on the value of knowledge of self and others beyond learning how to manipulate others. So to get a better idea of how classical Western writers dealt with their leadership issues, we delved into the works themselves. In this endeavor, we hope to whet the appetites of others interested in expanding the knowledge base on leadership. The following discussion reveals but a tiny tip of the great iceberg of Western classical literature, and it does not begin to take account of any modern literature. We are aware, therefore, that in this literature section, we are still writing about White male notions of leadership.

Tyrant Versus Good King

Although Shakespeare set many of his plays in the ancient world or in premodern times, his views on kingship and governance were strongly influenced by the prevailing theories of Elizabethan England. Shakespeare's plays were most likely written between 1585 and 1611 (Staunton, 1979). Two main theories of kingship were popular in England at that time: the contractual or resistance theory and the providentialist theory (Carroll, 2003).

The latter theory was the most popular and is known more familiarly as the “divine right” of kingship.

At the heart of the providential theory of kingship is the concept of the monarch ruling as the chosen vice-regent of God, independent of the consent of the commons, unfettered by ecclesiastical authority, outside of and prior to the laws of the kingdom. (Carroll, 2003, p. 127)

The resistance theory was not yet as clearly formulated but had grown out of experiences with the excesses of rulers such as Catholic Queen Mary. Although resistance was contemplated, the legitimate overthrow of an

unpopular king was considered a counter discourse in Shakespeare's time.

The radical concepts of royal limitation ... were rarely if ever heard during Queen Elizabeth's reign; articulating the logic of deposing a lawful king was one thing during Queen Mary's reign, but not at all relevant or permissible [in Elizabethan England]. (Carroll, 2003, p. 134)

Thus, Shakespeare crafted his plots carefully, making sure his tales of the deposition of a ruler or regicide (e.g., *King John*, *Richard II*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*) revolved around tyrants or showed the negative consequences of such violence.³ For instance, after killing the rightful ruler Duncan, Macbeth's guilty conscience renders him virtually incapable of carrying out his plans. At the end of *King John*, which is set in medieval England, there is a call for unity, for a contract between king and subjects that echoes England's concern in the 1590s with the need for legitimate succession after the Virgin Queen. Unlike some of the other tragedies or history plays, there is no sense of victory at the conclusion. Instead, there is a practical call for a limited monarchy in the body of the young Henry III. Those left standing will "accept the king's legitimacy and subscribe to his 'just and lineal descent,' and he will build a functioning government on their acceptance of his claim" (Vaughan, 2003, p. 392). Vaughan argues that Shakespeare underscores the idea that "legitimacy is conferred by the people's assent" (p. 393). The people agree to accept the notion of a body politic ruled by a leader whose individual values and emotional needs give him (or her) the right to rule. The people will accept rule from a human being who has gained their trust rather than from an ideology such as the divine right of kings.

Even in medieval times, there was a strong belief that a lord or ruler was given power for the good of the people. "Some writers even went so far as to state explicitly: the right of lordship is based on the consent of the governed. It is subordinate to the laws, to which legitimate rulers are themselves subject" (Schlauch, 1945, p. 134).⁴ Chaucer made clear that the purpose of lordship must be the welfare of all classes. Tyranny occurs when a leader neglects that duty out of self-indulgence and ambition. For Chaucer, the ideal king should cultivate "mercy, peace, observance of law and just severity against rebels" (Schlauch, 1945, p. 136). He admonished Richard II for arbitrary rule and exhorted him to greater steadfastness. Chaucer believed regard for the law and attention to justice were the hallmarks of a good ruler. "Pity, benignity, mercy, accessibility to petitioners are among the royal virtues listed in the [*Prologue to the Legend of Good Women*]" (Schlauch, 1945, p. 152). In looking out for the common good, or the *bonum commune*, the king must exercise those powers rooted in the law to ensure equity for all his subjects.

Meron (1998) makes the point that by refusing to account for their acts, arrogant rulers abuse power. To illustrate, he quotes Lady Macbeth, who urges her husband to evil with the taunt: "Fie, my lord, fie, a soldier and afeard? What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?" (*Macbeth*, 4.1.34–36, in Meron, 1998, p. 2). In another example is Goneril, who claims absolute rule with her haughty assurance: "Say if I do, the laws are mine, not thine. / Who can arraign me for't?" (*King Lear*, 5.3.149, in Meron, 1998, p. 2). By using these words and the beliefs they illuminate, Shakespeare shows that the social compact between subject and king has been shattered.

When Richard II seizes Bolingbroke's lands and prevents him from receiving his hereditary rights, he too descends into the murky realm of the ruler who believes he is not beholden to the laws. That excess along with his unjust taxation and his own political incompetence demonstrates that Richard is not fit to be king. But is rebellion and overthrow (and in the end assassination) justified? Meron (1998) argues that, in *Richard II*, the question remains unanswered. Others believe that since the blood of Richard is on the hands of his successor, Bolingbroke, soon to be Henry IV, the evil will be perpetuated. Henry IV is doomed to rule in Richard's tyrannous image (Roe, 2002, p. 60).

By contrast, Shakespeare does approve of the rebellion against and removal from office of such despots as Richard III and Macbeth. "[Richard's] ascent to the throne and reign are ruthless and devoid of ethical standards, his power, survival and security the only goals. Anyone who is, or could be, a threat must be

eliminated" (Meron, 1998, p. 36). Both Richard III's and Macbeth's murderous acts and their usurpation of the crown made them legitimate targets for elimination. In many plays, rebellion leads to disorder and instability, which for Shakespeare is exactly the opposite of a desirable state of affairs. Therefore, to justify any kind of uprising, the character of the ruler or king had to sink to a level of evil that, in the case of Richard III, for instance, seems to have been inspired by the archetype of scheming and amorality: Machiavelli's Prince (Meron, 1998, p. 37).

Leadership for the Common Good

Concern for the welfare of their subjects is one of the strongest attributes of good leaders. This duty exists alongside the other Aristotelian virtues of physical bravery, frankness in speech, and pioneering initiative (Lindsay, 2000). Both the character and the capacities of a ruler are important. King Oedipus, for instance, a noble, brave, and forthright ruler, is especially beloved by his people for ridding Thebes of the Sphinx and bringing safety and stability to the citystate. The Priest praises him and tells him that the people "judg[e] him as the first of men / in all the chances of this life" (lines 32–33 in Grene & Lattimore, 1960, p. 112). As the play opens, the people entreat Oedipus, as someone who has their best interests at heart, to help them out of their current misfortunes just as he did in the past. He acknowledges how he feels for them.

Your several sorrows each have single scope and touch but one of you. My spirit groans for city and myself and you at once. You have not roused me like a man from sleep; know that I have given many tears to this ...

(lines 62–66 in Grene & Lattimore, 1960, p. 113)

From the literature of ancient Greece and Rome through medieval tales to Shakespeare, we see the same emphasis on care for those governed.

Respect for the common weal as the objective of a true king appears in several of Chaucer's passages (Schlauch, 1945). The notion that discord and unrest were enemies of the well-being of the people is clear in his work. The king should wisely bring rest and ease to his subjects. Thus, peace was always sought, even in eras of conquest and continual strife that have characterized much of history. Julius Caesar's personal ambition suggesting a return to absolute rule threatens the fledgling Republic of 45 b.c. Brutus takes part in the conspiracy to murder Caesar because he is afraid that Caesar will no longer be good for his people. At the end, Antony says of Brutus:

This was the noblest Roman of them all: All the conspirators save only he Did that they did in envy of great Caesar. He only, in a general honest thought And common good to all, made one of them.

(*Julius Caesar*, 5.5, 68–72; in Staunton, 1979)

Brutus represents the most "noble" of them all because he, somewhat naively, acted out of the belief that he was serving the best interests of the Romans. He wanted also to preserve the Republic, which his actions ironically helped to destroy. But friend and loyal soldier to Caesar, he would never have committed murder had he not considered Caesar's growing power as threatening the liberty of the people. An honest man, he kills Caesar openly and puts himself before the people for their judgment. Brutus wanted to safeguard the people's freedom, but Roe (2002) argues that this play "posits notions of freedom while expressing reserve over the prospect of its being truly exercised" (p. 154).

This helps us to understand that the concept of ruling for the common good or leading with the best interests of the people in mind is a very contextual one, and one that necessarily depends on the skill of the ruler as well as his or her moral consistency. Much blood has been shed in the name of the common good. Wars are fought for the purpose of bringing about a more stable social order in *King John*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, to mention but a few of the plays on this theme.

Aristotle's virtues of warrior courage and the ruler's duty to look after his subjects as a father looks after his family do not always happily coexist. Aristotle acknowledges that the "manly daring" he so values also places a people at risk. Violence and warfare harm both subjects and leader alike. Lindsay (2000) argues that although Aristotle admired the kind of spiritedness that defines a leader, through his story of the 4th-century tyrant Jason, he illustrates the personal dangers of such behavior. Like *Julius Caesar*, this story shows that "while insatiable ambition is doubtless a threat to political life, it is no less, and perhaps more a threat to the ambitious. Jason, as all Aristotle's audience knew, was assassinated by his own men" (Lindsay, 2000, p. 439). Therefore, even if the arrogant ruler disregards the common welfare, he ought to desist for his own good at least.

The Practical Art of Ruling Versus the Moral Ideals of Leadership

In many of the plays discussed in this section, Shakespeare frequently juxtaposes the moral with the amoral—often in quite subtle and ambiguous ways. There are distinct Machiavellian themes and characters. Machiavelli lived and wrote in Florence from the late 15th to mid-16th centuries. He is described as articulating a shockingly pragmatic view of ruling and rulers that had not been voiced until then, although others might have thought it.

[His] view is that the world in its operations is amoral, that none of the laws held to be essential for the governing of ethical behavior exists in fact, and that the sole effective determinant in human affairs is the ability to exercise power. (Roe, 2002, p. ix)

Shakespeare had ample opportunity to see Machiavellian ideas brought to life in the theater of his time and possibly to read Machiavelli's works. Machiavelli's cynicism has been widely debated. He advocates dissembling and deceit. The following excerpt gives a flavor of his beliefs.

A prudent prince neither can nor ought to keep his word when to keep it is hurtful to him and the causes which led him to pledge it are removed. If all men were good, this would not be good advice, but since they are dishonest and do not keep faith with you, you, in return, need not keep faith with them. (Machiavelli, 1513/1992, p. 60)

Throughout *The Prince*, he offers practical advice to rulers based on his observations and experience as a public official for a time during the various struggles associated with the Medici family's quest for power in Florence. Shakespeare demonstrates the deleterious effects of many of these ideas through several of his characters' actions and words. The obvious villains in the plays under discussion here, such as King Richard III, Claudius (from *Hamlet*), and Edmund (from *King Lear*), are clear examples. But apart from illustrating that evil ultimately does not pay, these characters are not as interesting as those who have some Machiavellian inclinations but who are not really evil men because they are capable of reflection and moral reasoning. King Richard II, Hamlet, and King John are examples of the latter.

Richard II reveals his political scheming early on in the play by "the giving of 'blank charters' to his ministers to appropriate money from the wealthy ... and by his callous reaction to the grave illness of ... his uncle John of Gaunt" (Grady, 2002, p. 72). Then, upon John of Gaunt's death, Richard appropriates Bolingbroke's inheritance: "The lining of his coffers shall make coats / To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars (*Richard II*, 1.4.60–61 in Staunton, 1979).

Crafty though these acts are, they would not have met with the approval of Machiavelli. Richard "is a poor Machiavellian who needs to study the details of his *Prince* much more closely" (Grady, 2002, p. 73). Richard has not understood the Machiavellian principle that rulers should give the appearance of virtue and honesty. In revealing his stratagems this way, he loses all support. Carried along through most of the play by his (ultimately disastrous) scheming, Richard displays little sense of reflection until he is imprisoned after his abdication.

Hamlet, by contrast, spends most of his time contemplating the murder of his father, King Hamlet, and his

possible courses of action in response. He questions his own beliefs and values and comes to believe that traditional moral and ethical principles are no longer revered in the modern world. But despite his tortured soul, his capacity for princely cunning surfaces on several occasions. For example, in place of the decree for his own execution, he substitutes orders for the killing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and he plans and carries out the performance of the play within the play, revealing the regicide committed by his uncle Claudius, who then married Hamlet's mother and became king. "Despite the metaphysical bewilderment for which he is celebrated, Hamlet shows an astuteness that would have won the praise of Cesare Borgia⁵ himself in his successful reversal of the plot against him involving his treacherous old school friends" (Roe, 2002, p. 21).

Clearly both *Hamlet* and *Richard II* offer opportunities for the protagonists and their characters to illustrate the tension between accepting a ruler's ruthless action—understood, if not excused, for political reasons—and fearing possible moral consequences in an essentially Christian England. The same can be said of *King John*, especially regarding the king's complicity in the killing of the young Prince Arthur, whom John viewed as a threat to his throne. Indeed, when it is known that Arthur is dead, "The nobles, whose silent presence propped up John's claim to the throne [earlier],... question the monarch's actions and integrity, and rush off to spark rebellion" (Vaughan, 2003, p. 389). John realizes that he has lost the consent of the governed. But despite his Machiavellian capacity to plot and scheme, John has a conscience, although it does him little good. He knows his deeds were wrong and ponders his moral responsibility. "Although they attribute Arthur's possibly accidental death to John, the barons understand that John is not made of wholly immoral fabric... . His struggles pit his conscience against his political ambition" (Meron, 1998, p. 24). Thus, powers of reflection and a conscience are highly valued in a leader although they are not always predictive of a successful rule. Shakespeare seems to regard a ruler's well-developed moral capacity as a necessary but not sufficient condition for survival.

The Value of a Leader's Knowledge of Self and Others

King Lear, Richard II, and King Oedipus are good examples of leaders who are brought to better knowledge of themselves and others through extreme adversity. The message is that their leadership, while appearing to be virtuous at times, is built on false premises. It is clear that in all three cases (and also in the parallel case of the Duke of Gloucester in *King Lear*), the leaders' suffering is intense. It is not only mental anguish: Lear and Gloucester are thrust outdoors in the freezing wilderness, and Gloucester and Oedipus lose their eyes violently. It is suggested that these leaders, like Lear, "hath ever but slenderly known [themselves]" (*King Lear*, 1.1.297; in Staunton, 1979). As kings and noblemen, they have passed judgment on their subjects, made decisions deeply affecting others' lives, influenced the course of events in their own realms, and managed their own affairs—all in ignorance of who they are and who many others are, as well.

Richard II makes the serious mistake of trusting in lords who do not have his best interests at heart. Instead of advisers, they are flatterers who abandon him as his ambition leads him to miscalculation and as Bolingbroke grows in strength. Roe (2002) makes the point that Shakespeare demonstrates a Machiavellian concept by highlighting Richard's ineptitude. Sound knowledge of others is key to the prince's success. "A prince's wisdom does not come from having good policies recommended to him; on the contrary, good policy, whoever suggests it comes from the wisdom of the prince" (Machiavelli, quoted in Roe, 2002, p. 47). The key is to know whether to value the opinions of those giving advice or not. Oedipus, Lear, and Gloucester all fall into similar traps.

In his arrogance, Oedipus misses the importance of the blind seer, Teiresias, who tells him, "You have your eyes but see not where you are / In sin" (*King Oedipus* in Grene & Lattimore, 1960, pp. 413–414). Lear rejects his beloved daughter Cordelia, falling prey to the shallow flattery of his other daughters, Regan and Goneril. And, blind Gloucester, having been betrayed by Edmund, at the height of his misery echoes Sophocles's imagery of sight: "I have no way, and therefore want no eyes; / I stumbled when I saw" (*King Lear*, 4.1.23–24 in Staunton, 1979). Gloucester's evil son Edmund has arranged for his father's eyes to be put out and for his brother Edgar's banishment.

Whereas Richard II and Gloucester are both somewhat flawed characters from the outset, Lear and Oedipus are depicted as having been good kings. Not only are they characterized as honest and just rulers, but we are told they have brought peace and stability to their kingdoms as the plays open. It is important to understand through these plays that self-knowledge and knowledge of others exist independently of other virtues. But we cannot help imagining that they would have been better rulers had they had such knowledge in the first place. According to Machiavelli, such leaders would have survived longer, but in Shakespeare, those governed would have been better off. Although the characters themselves would surely have benefited, most important, the instability and violence that accompanied their downfall could possibly have been avoided.

Shakespeare, in particular, clearly depicts the value of the inner self, which can see better or understand the human condition more fully once the political persona is cast off. In losing their public place in the world, Lear, Gloucester, and Richard all come to understand moral and social issues in much greater depth. There is a suggestion in these plays (and others) that "the qualities that make for a successful king ... are the qualities that detract from the values of humanity" (Grady, 2002, p. 90). Grady (2002) highlights the quality of self-reflection associated with the capacities to suffer and to dream, which all the characters learn to value in these plays. Grady points out "the 'inner man' is of fundamentally greater moral importance than the mere external man of action" (p. 90).

A related point is that all these characters also learn the value of their emotions once they have been stripped, physically and metaphorically, of their titles and prestige. Lear is perhaps the best example of this, as he learns pity for Poor Tom, for Gloucester, and for those whose offenses he should have pardoned while he was king. Shakespeare suggests here and elsewhere that he does not accept the traditional male heroic conventions uncritically (Wells, 2000). By showing the feminine side of princes and kings such as Lear, Hamlet, and Richard II, he creates characters whose human qualities render leadership a much more complicated endeavor than fighting wars and subduing rebellion suggests. "Charismatic heroes are dangerous because they are capable of causing us to suspend rational judgment and revert to the values of heroic society where the honour (*sic*) code is a substitute for the rule of law" (Wells, 2000, p. 206). Thus, in following the development of self-understanding and understanding of others in these plays, we gain sympathy for the manly king, the warrior or statesman whose masculinity is softened by compassion. Learning to identify with their fellow sufferers, Richard and Lear both explore the experience of nothingness, which serves as a direct contrast to their having been "something" as king. The worth of decisive action and political scheming disappears as both men grasp for spiritual understanding.

Leadership Themes in Non-Western Political Thought

Although few of the above themes have found their way into the history of leadership thought in quite the way illustrated by the literature, the leadership accounts are strongly influenced by Western concepts, especially from United Kingdom and U.S. industrial psychology and management science. However, the idea of leadership did not originate in the West, and to assume that only Western theorists have been discussing leadership is arrogant and narrow. In this section, we will look at two non-Western contexts for leadership, Africa and East Asia, in particular China, to examine non-Western examples of leadership thought. Our intent is not to present an extensive review and discussion of leadership thought in these two contexts but to identify some key ideas that highlight differences with traditional Western leadership thought and the history that has been traditionally expressed. It is important to acknowledge that although we present general themes of leadership in these two contexts, there are important variations and differences within the African and East Asian contexts. A more in-depth discussion would need to recognize the important differences within and among African and East Asian nations, regions and cultures, as well as the larger contextual factors that influence how leadership is viewed and practiced (Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008). We are also not suggesting that non-Western leadership themes can be projected onto U.S. leadership thought and practice any more than Western themes can be forced into non-Western leadership practices and thought (Begley, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2003; Walker, 2003;

Walker & Dimmock, 2002).

Leadership in African Contexts

The African context is important for reminding us that leadership is not an exclusively Western concept. The early history of leadership thought in Africa includes the emphasis placed in early Egyptian culture on organization and administration; famous philosophers from Benin and Ife in Nigeria and other African empires such as Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Oyo; and the powerful Obas ruling class, which “applied management as a hierarchical, largescale organization” (Nzelibe, 1986, p. 8). Early African models and principles of leadership, such as the emphasis on harmony and communalism, are rarely included in the traditional U.S. history of leadership thought.

Nzelibe (1986) points to the intrusion of Western forms of leadership and management during the colonial period in Africa, which had consequences for the subsequent independence era. During the colonial period, these earlier models of communalism and traditionalism were devalued. Moreover, indigenous people were ignored for corporate management positions, with the result that few Africans had managerial experience at the beginning of the independence era. In addition, Western forms of leadership—many of which remained during the independence era—conflict with African management thought. “Whereas, Western management thought advocates Eurocentrism, individualism, and modernity, African management thought emphasizes ethnocentrism, traditionalism, communalism, and cooperative teamwork” (Nzelibe, 1986, p. 11).

Although a discussion of African leadership thought could identify many elements, we will focus on three that seem to distinguish it from traditional Western leadership narratives. First, African leadership thought includes the guiding principle of a “quest for equilibrium with other human beings and with the supernatural” (Blunt & Jones, 1997, p. 9). Rather than a focus on constant change and reform, African leadership thought seeks to engender stability and harmony among individuals. Blunt and Jones (1997) argue that “the preferred type of leader who emerges ... is more likely to be seen as offering a degree of assurance and security than would the thrusting, demanding, driven creature of the Western model” (p. 12).

Second, the connection with the supernatural promotes a spiritual focus, which until recently has been all but ignored in U.S. leadership thought. Nzelibe (1986) emphasizes the importance of the family as the primary socializing force that “encourages the belief in the relation to Nature and supernatural beings and important connections between the individual and his ancestors” (pp. 11–12). The African ethos of spirituality is present in communal gatherings, celebrations, and day-to-day decision making. In her experience as codirector of a preschool in Mpeasem, Ghana, Cynthia Dillard (2006) writes of the concept of *akwanbo*, clearing the way. “Our words, divinely inspired and heartfelt, can indeed clear a way to a different kind of relationship with one another, a different way of being in community: This is how spirit works” (p. 92). This connection with the past and with the supernatural is all but excluded in Western corporate models of leadership and in the traditional history of leadership thought.

Third, in contrast to the Western emphasis on individual achievements, African leadership thought places importance on interpersonal loyalty and communalism. “In many circumstances, ceremony, ritual, interpersonal relations, reciprocity, and the distribution of scant resources to clan and ethnic affiliates are therefore natural responsibilities of leadership in Africa” (Blunt & Jones, 1997, p. 10). In light of this, traditionalism becomes an element of African leadership that involves the “adherence to accepted customs, beliefs, and practices that determine accepted behavior, morality, and the desired characteristics of the individual in African society” (Nzelibe, 1986, p. 11). Blunt and Jones (1997) argue that African leadership contrasts “a leader who is kindly, considerate, and understanding to one who is too dynamic and productive and, possibly, too demanding” (p. 11).

The three elements are reflected in the African notion of *ubuntu* that Bolden and Kirk (2009; using Louw, 2002 definition) define as “a highly humanistic concept of interdependence that ‘dictates that, if we [are] to be

human, we need to recognize the genuine otherness of our fellow citizens'" (Louw, 2002, p. 8, as cited in Bolden & Kirk, 2009, p. 81). This notion holds in balance the self and community. Bolden and Kirk note the use of the concept in integrating spiritual beliefs while acknowledging a diversity of religious practices, found in the work of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

These three elements of stability based on connections with others, importance of the human connection to the supernatural, and communalism point to leadership concepts that have received less emphasis in U.S. leadership thought. Although these concepts have certainly found their way into some U.S. discussions of leadership, for example, spirituality perspectives (Curry, 2000; Dantley, 2005; Dillard, 2006; Sanders-Lawson, Smith-Campbell, & Benham, 2006), they are secondary to ideas such as competition, achievement, and vision except in accounts of women's leadership. In the United States and elsewhere, women principals, superintendents, and others are emphasizing the value of relationships and community in their leadership practice (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2009).

Leadership in East Asian Contexts

Like the history of African leadership thought, leadership narratives in East Asian contexts have been significant and long term. Blunt and Jones (1997) identified two general characteristics of leadership in East Asian contexts. First, in line with higher levels of power distance (Hofstede, 1991),⁶ leadership in East Asia is "contingent on non-utilitarian qualities of leader[s]" (Blunt & Jones, 1997, p. 8) rather than dependent on the level of support from followers. East Asian leaders maintain their position through structures that are internal and external to the organization and may have deep historical roots. Such leadership focuses on larger purposes and values rather than on immediate follower satisfaction.

Second, Blunt and Jones (1997) argue that East Asian thought focuses on the responsibility of the leader to maintain harmony. Similar to African leadership, East Asian leadership focuses on collectivism and interpersonal harmony rather than the elements of Western functionalism that emphasize "autonomy, competition between individuals and groups, performance and self-assertion" (p. 9). The current emphasis, in the United States and other countries, on organizational change, improvement, and reform has eclipsed the important role of the leader in establishing and maintaining harmony.

These two elements are especially obvious in the particular case of Chinese leadership. In the remainder of this section, we will identify elements of Chinese leadership that emerge from the history of Chinese leadership thought. In our discussion, we draw heavily from the work of Guo (2002), who provides a historical perspective to understand the personalities of ideal Chinese political leaders.

According to Guo (2002), the history of Chinese political leadership thought includes three traditions: Confucian *junzi* (nobleman), Daoist *shengren* (sage) and *zhenren* (authentic person), and Legalist *mingjun* (enlightened leader). Different leadership ideals emerge from these traditions. In the case of Confucianism, leaders are expected to exemplify three concepts: humaneness, which involves sympathy and empathy; ritualism, where the leader is expected "to comply with established social norms and to set himself as a model for the populace" (p. x); and moralism, where the leader is expected to provide a role model for establishing moral order. In the Confucian ideal, morality and politics are inseparable.

In the Daoist tradition, the ideals of sage and authentic person are emphasized. The leader as sage exemplifies the belief that "political order and social harmony can be achieved and maintained by following Nature" (Guo, 2002, p. xi). At times, this tradition encourages the doctrine of inaction, which discourages intervention. Inaction is a leadership strategy ignored in the traditional heroic imagery of Western thought. Also in the Daoist tradition, leaders are expected to be authentic persons. This expectation involves shunning glory and wealth in order to keep the spirit free. By diminishing reliance on position, fame, fortune, and so on, the leader is able to reach a purer and clearer focus for followers.

The Legalism tradition, like all Chinese political thought, emphasizes wisdom but combines this with cunning. Based on the assumption that individuals are evil and that human interactions are focused on exchange relationships, the Legalist tradition expects leaders to use political technique, political authority, and penal law to maintain control. However, Chinese political thought “does not favor an institutionalized political system to control bureaucracy, but rather relies on a ruler's personal qualities to master officialdom” (Guo, 2002, p. xiii).

These three traditions and the ideals they emphasize suggest, according to Guo (2002), five characteristics of ideal Chinese political leadership. First, this leadership emphasizes Confucian humaneness (*ren*). “The ideal political personality in Confucianism is a heroic figure motivated by a sense of historic mission, socially intuitive knowledge, and a desire to uphold the Way to change the world and manifest humanness” (p. 232). In contrast to many Western conceptions, the heroic orientation is focused not on personal achievement nor on specific organizational improvement but on commitment and valiant efforts for the benefit of the larger society.

Second, Chinese leadership promotes a strong tendency toward ritual (*li*). “Compared with the Christian concept of law, *li* is more inclusive and relates to personal conduct, social relations, and political organizations” (Guo, 2002, p. 233). This tendency toward ritual means that leaders are more likely to depend on social norms and ceremonies than on fear to establish social control.

Third, these traditions emphasize a strong moral obligation of leaders. This moral obligation is interpreted differently by the different traditions. The Confucian *junzi* (nobleman) is seen as a sage emphasizing humanness, altruism, sympathy, and so on. As Guo (2002) points out, however, this moral obligation is not individualistic but rather seeks to promote social harmony and cohesion. For the Daoist, this social harmony is achieved through union with Nature. A recent study of Chinese educational leaders found that leader effectiveness was conceptualized differently in China than in the West. Cheng and Wong (1996) found that leader effectiveness focused more on the moral dimension, including the role of the leader in moral education.

Fourth, Chinese political leadership possesses a transcendent attitude toward political pursuits. The ideal leader is not dependent on political authority, office, glory, and possessions and in fact must remain free of these in order to provide leadership.

Fifth, the ideal leader is a strategist. “The ideal Daoist sages ... were those who could employ traits such as softness, darkness, receptivity, tranquility, and weakness to overcome hardness, lightness, exclusiveness, agitation, and dominance to protect themselves and pursue an advantage” (Guo, 2002, p. 237).

These characteristics of the ideal Chinese political leader suggest a picture of leadership that includes moral obligation, humanness, wisdom, cunning, freedom from distracting glory, and even the ability to lead by inaction. Many of these characteristics and traits are very different from those found in the traditional Western leadership models. While acknowledging the importance of culture, these non-Western leadership characteristics can be useful in identifying features of leadership that may provide alternative approaches (Walker & Dimmock, 2002).

Implications of a Critical History of Leadership Thought

By critiquing the traditional history of leadership thought and identifying some alternative sources, we seek not only to contribute to the academic conversation but also to say something that can benefit practice. In this final section, we identify several implications of this discussion for the practice of school administration. Also, we will present implications for both leadership research and the improvement of leader preparation programs that can promote creative leadership practice.

Implications for Practice

Broadening and enriching the understanding of the development of leadership thought beyond the traditional

U.S. accounts offers school and district leaders the opportunity to create images of leadership that are not limited to a corporate model. Instead of viewing leadership exclusively as a series of activities to achieve organizational goals, some of the sources we have identified suggest the value of seeing leadership, for example, in moral terms and in societal terms. Interestingly, several authors (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Tyack & Hansot, 1982) have identified historical eras in the history of U.S. school leadership in which a more societal view of the leader's role was promoted. For example, during World War II, schools and their leaders were urged to contribute to the efforts to create a more democratic society. Whether or not one agrees with the reasons for this endeavor, it is important to realize that school leaders were seen as having societal responsibilities beyond their school buildings. In contemporary society, school leaders can make an important contribution by viewing their leadership responsibilities as including contributing to a larger global vision (Furman & Starratt, 2002). One way school leaders can accomplish this is to encourage the recognition, value, and use of diverse ideas and to place importance on increasing student and faculty diversity in order to promote not only a sense of global awareness but also an appreciation for different perspectives.

The moral qualities of leadership that we identified in classical Western literature, that is, tyrant versus good king, and non-Western political thought, that is, the Confucian nobleman image, suggest that school leaders should expand their view of leadership to include a sense of moral obligation. For example, instead of viewing their commitment to the learning of all children as an accountability motto, school leaders should see it as a moral obligation that pervades school goals and actions.

In addition to helping school leaders expand their leadership conceptions, these alternative sources also provide a way for principals and other school leaders to examine the assumptions of reform plans. In an era of obsessive focus on reform often translated as change for the sake of change, being a critical observer and skeptic can be a very practical and useful leadership function. For example, suggesting that inaction and maintaining stability are, at times, appropriate leadership responses would probably be considered by many as taboo. But in some contexts, these leadership functions may create an environment in which not only harmony but also creativity and moral purpose can flourish. The current incessant reform mentality burns out teachers and administrators, discourages students, and creates more harm than good. However, maintaining stability without acknowledging moral purpose only preserves a status quo that damages underserved populations in our schools. One of a leader's first moral responsibilities is to provide equity of access to rigorous education, of opportunity to learn, and of resources that influence authentic learning outcomes.

The alternative leadership approaches that focus more on communal action than on individual action also encourage leaders to pay attention to identifying common goals among diverse perspectives. The value of hearing dissent instead of squelching it comes to us from the African and indigenous practice of inviting others to participate in shaping decision making.

In a similar vein, expanding the notion of the development of leadership thought permits school leaders to be self-reflective about their roles, commitments, passions, anxieties, and disappointments. Just as Oedipus missed the value of the blind seer, Teiresias, who told him, "You have your eyes but see not where you are / In sin" (*King Oedipus* in Grene & Lattimore, 1960, pp. 413–414), school leaders caught up in the maddening pace created by accountability pressures may be blinded to those aspects of students' lives that are not reflected in test scores. When school leaders lose the ability or opportunity to be self-reflective, they cease to be leaders and become blind followers.

Implications for Research

Broadening our understanding of leadership beyond the traditional account suggests at least three implications for research. First, many of the themes we have identified move us beyond the simple, causal, and positivistic examinations of leadership research. For example, variables such as connecting with the past and the spirituality of leadership are not likely candidates for causal analysis. Yet these non-Western and Western

literary sources suggest the power of these factors. Moreover, the inherent necessity in some positivistic and structural-functionalist examinations of leadership to narrow the variables to a manageable number makes a more holistic analysis of leadership impossible.

Second, in a similar holistic manner, the methods we use to research leadership need to be broadened to look at the entire person of the leader and the larger context of leadership rather than a few behaviors. We have begun to look carefully at how women in the United States and abroad enact leadership with and through others. Further research is needed to understand the value of the nonheroic, connective approaches to leadership that are often preferred by women (Lipman-Blumen, 1996). African leadership thought emphasizes the communal nature of leadership and the importance of the family or community. The authenticity stressed in Daoist thought argues for cultural methods to examine leadership in a holistic way. And the Shakespearean plays remind us that those on the receiving end of leadership (a very different notion from the idea of followers) must be part of any research on leadership.

Fitzgerald (2003) adds another dimension of this need for a more wholistic view in her research on indigenous educational leadership among Maori women. She notes, as we have found, that

Western views of leadership have placed primacy on the role of individuals, the organization, and notions of excellence and individual success. Ways in which women exercise leadership and the interplay of gender and ethnicity have not been fully considered. In the case of Aotearoa/New Zealand ways in which Maori women have experienced and acted as leaders have been subject to constraints of gender, ethnicity, and colonization. (p. 4)

She further emphasizes that instead of a single indigenous view of leadership, there may be layers in which both the indigenous community worldview and the interaction between indigenous and nonindigenous perspectives are recognized.

Third, both Western literary and non-Western political thought identify themes involving the emotions, the interpersonal, and other features of leaders that are ignored in much of Western educational leadership research. More attention should be paid to leaders' human capacity for empathy and unqualified respect for others unlike themselves. A growing number of theorists and researchers are beginning to focus on such issues as trust, integrity, and emotional development (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hargreaves, 2001); we hope this trend will continue.

Several authors have maintained that using cultural perspectives from other societies contributes to research on a variety of educational problems confronting U.S. schools. Heck (2002) identifies research problems such as implementation of educational standards, comparison of educational progress, and the decentralization of educational decision making as three issues in which research could benefit from an international and comparative focus. Limiting our research to Western countries prohibits the use of conceptions and frameworks from non-Western cultures that may provide insight into our own national educational problems.

International and global research on leadership development has recently gained attention in the West (Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008). Although there are critical cautions in doing cross-cultural comparisons (see Lumby & Foskett, 2008), these studies may acknowledge variables that have been overlooked in traditional U.S. research on leadership development. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD; Pont, 2008) recently completed a useful set of cases of educational leadership and development across several national contexts that has the potential for broadening our research perspectives on leadership thought and practice.

Implications for Leader Preparation

Critiquing the traditional history of leadership thought and practice and using alternative sources to broaden our understanding of leadership is vital for school leader preparation. Several of the implications we previously

presented connect to preparation. By using these nontraditional sources and others, including biography, drama, and art, we encourage aspiring school leaders to expand their conceptions of leadership, for example, to include societal responsibilities and the importance of viewing leadership in terms of the common good defined broadly enough to encompass all young people regardless of color, race, religion, gender, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. Also, using these sources can help aspiring leaders to develop the skills of self-reflection and self-knowledge. Moreover, several of the literary examples we have presented could be used to provide opportunities for students to struggle with the many ethical dilemmas that face school leaders daily.

Recognition of the limitations of traditional accounts of leadership history and the use of alternative sources also helps to move us beyond “designer leadership” models of preparation (Gronn, 2003). In part, these alternative sources emphasize the contextual nature of leadership but also the importance of recognizing the variety in leadership practice and potential. Instead of trying to narrow leadership to the least common denominator, preparation programs can open up the conceptions of leadership available to these aspiring candidates in a way that will encourage creativity rather than conformity. By exposing aspirants to leadership narratives drawn from women's lives as well as from those immersed in diverse cultural settings, options for changing organizational policies and practices emerge. Without options, preparation programs are likely to reinforce the status quo that has continued to fail many in our schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have provided a critical examination of the traditional history of leadership thought. In no way are we arguing that the many contributions that make up these traditional accounts are without value. Rather, we argue for expanding our understanding of the history of leadership thought in such a way that these traditional perspectives are enriched by other, frequently ignored perspectives. Perhaps such a critical reflection on the history of leadership thought and practice can help facilitate conversations that acknowledge that the elusive nature of leadership can be valuable instead of regrettable.

Notes

1. The heroes of the classical literature mentioned here were all men. Where women played a part, even a royal part, they were rarely illustrating important, positive lessons on leadership.
2. In the alternative or emerging narratives of leadership, there is a greater emphasis on the moral and ethical underpinnings of leadership (see, e.g.,
3. However, some of Shakespeare's plays *did* create the conditions under which the overthrow of a leader would be desirable. None of our modern theories ever attend to this possibility. To read a theory versus a play underscores a curious focal difference between the two: The former is developed to aid the leader's access to and maintenance of power, whereas the latter shows the followers how power can be abused and gives them ideas of what they can do about it. (See Jean Lipman-Blumen, 2006, for a modern take on toxic leadership.)
4. As an interesting aside, it is noteworthy that no mention is made in this article, published in 1945, of any contemporary absolute rulers such as Hitler or Mussolini—not even in the notes. This points to the fact that it is far safer and more palatable to make points about excesses of leadership if the comments refer to a different age.
5. One of Machiavelli's “heroes” described in *The Prince*.
6. Power distance is one of the dimensions of Hofstede's (1991) categorization of national or societal cultures. *Power distance* refers to the degree of equality or inequality of power in a culture. A high power distance means that there is high inequality within a culture.

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Zaccaro, S. J. , & and Horn, Z. N. J. *Leadership theory and practice: Fostering an effective symbiosis*. *Leadership Quarterly* vol. 14 (6), p. 769-806. (2003).

Entry Citation:

CRO, GARY M., and Margaret Grogan. "The Development of Leadership Thought and Practice in the United States." *The Sage Handbook of Educational Leadership, 2nd ed.*. Ed. Fenwick W. English. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2011. 256-73. *SAGE Reference Online*. Web. 30 Jan. 2012.

Chapter DOI: 10.4135/978-1-4129-8003-6.n15



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