




The Drama of Leadership

**"... a fascinating search for
the 'truth' about power and
its manifestations in
organizations."**

**— Abraham Zaleznik
Harvard Business School**



**Artists, Craftsmen, and Technocrats
and the Power Struggle That
Shapes Organizations and Societies**

P A T R I C I A P I T C H E R

Foreword by Henry Mintzberg

The Drama of Leadership

PATRICIA PITCHER



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

New York • Chichester • Brisbane • Toronto • Singapore • Weinheim

This text is printed on acid-free paper.

Copyright © 1997 by Patricia C. Pitcher

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

All rights reserved. Published simultaneously in Canada.

Reproduction or translation of any part of this work beyond that permitted by Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act without the permission of the copyright owner is unlawful. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

Auden extract from *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems*, by W. H. Auden, edited by Edward Mendelson. Copyright © 1936 and renewed 1964 by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

Yeats extract reprinted with the permission of Simon & Schuster from *The Poems of W. B. Yeats: A New Edition*, edited by Richard J. Finneran. Copyright 1924 by Macmillan Publishing Company, renewed 1952 by Bertha Georgie Yeats.

Marc Chagall, *I and the Village*, 1911, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, reprinted with permission.

Salvador Dali, *The Beach of Sète*, from *Poemes Secrets* by Guillaume Apollinaire, reprinted with permission by Philippe Du Noyer, GPL Promotions, Ltd., exclusive representative of Editions Argillet, Paris.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Pitcher, Patricia C.

The drama of leadership / Patricia C. Pitcher.

p. cm.

Originally presented as author's thesis (doctoral)—McGill University.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-471-14843-1 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Leadership. I. Title.

HD57.7.P57 1996

658.4'092—dc20

96-26887

CIP

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Foreword

.....
I had the pleasure of supervising this work in its original form as a doctoral thesis. So I am perfectly biased. I know it is a critically important piece of work, tackled with a sophistication and elegance that is rare in the management literature. If the message of this book can be taken to heart by people in important places, our organizations will become entirely different and, in my opinion, much more effective places.

A leader has to be one of two things: He either has to be a brilliant visionary himself, a truly creative strategist, in which case he can do what he likes and get away with it; or else she has to be a true empowerer, who can bring out the best in others. Managers who are neither can be deadly in organizations that need energy and change. In this book, Pat calls the first *Artists* and the second *Craftsmen*, the third *Technocrats*. She shows in a pointed, deep study of a large financial institution how the Technocrats killed what the Artists built and the Craftsmen protected.

We have to understand these different management styles and what each can do to organizations. If you care about what's happening to business and other organizations in the Western world, this is a book you will want to read and cherish.

Henry Mintzberg
McGill University
Montreal

.....

The Drama of Leadership

Contents

.....	
Foreword by Henry Mintzberg	ix
Introduction: About Sows' Ears and Silk Purses	1
1 The Players and the Plot	11
1 The Artist	13
Behavior	17
Thought Processes	17
Temperament	22
Inner Life	24
2 The Craftsman	31
Behavior	35
Thought Processes	36
Temperament	40
Inner Life	41
3 The Technocrat	45
Behavior	48
Thought Processes	49
Temperament	53
Inner Life	54
4 Behind the Scenes	63
2 The Play	73
5 The Dreams of the Playwright	75
The Early Years	76
The Man, the Organizational Climate, the Strategy	79

6	<i>The Harsh Realities of the Stage</i>	85
	Changes: 1985 to 1990	87
	The Team: 1986	88
	Strategy and Style	91
	Developments	93
	Centralization/Decentralization	93
	Management Style	96
7	<i>Climax: The Triumph of Technocratic Illusions</i>	99
	Profits: The New "Strategy"	100
	A New Hand on the Helm	108
	Strategy	109
	The New "Team"	111
8	<i>Dénouement: The Collapse of Vision</i>	113
	The Technocratic Triumph	117
	About That Nasty Word, <i>Power</i>	119
3	The Moral of the Story	125
9	<i>Leadership Revisited</i>	127
	Leadership According to Abraham Zaleznik	128
	And Warren Bennis	129
	Technocrats	141
	Artists	143
	Craftsmen	144
10	<i>Where There's Smoke, There's Apt to Be Fire</i>	147
	On the Corporate Landscape	147
11	<i>About Teams</i>	159
	Efficacy: On Doing the Right Thing	160
	Expertise: On Getting Better and Better at What We Do	166
	Efficiency: On Control	169

12	<i>The Scope of the Problem</i>	177
	General Population	178
	In Big Business	179
	Other Countries, Other Cultures	179
	The Public Sector	181
	In Small Business	181
	Women in Power	182
	Truth or Consequences	183
13	<i>Partial Solutions</i>	189
	Technocrats and the Phineas Gage Syndrome	190
	Technocratic Parallels: In Cold Blood	193
	A Footnote on Education	195
	<i>Conclusion</i>	203
	<i>Appendix A: What Kind of Leader Are You?</i>	205
	What to Do with the Results	206
	You're Looking for Patterns	207
	<i>Appendix B: Why Art?</i>	211
	The Nature of Art	217
	The Artist Ideal Type	225
	The Technocrat Ideal Type	225
	The Craftsman Ideal Type	227
	Multiple Methods	230
	<i>Appendix C: Technical Material</i>	233
	Analysis	233
	Discussion	237
	<i>Notes</i>	245
	<i>Index</i>	255

Introduction

About Sows' Ears and Silk Purses

Still more do I regret the failure to convey the sense of organization, the dramatic and aesthetic feeling that surpasses the possibilities of exposition, which derives from the intimate, habitual interested experience. It is evident that many lack an interest in the science of organizing, not perceiving the significant elements. They miss the structure of the symphony, the art of its composition, and the skill of its execution, because they cannot hear the tones.

Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*¹

This book, and the 8-year study on which it is based, is the product, as are all such works, of a personal odyssey. After a 15-year career in the private sector, I had decided to do a doctorate in management and, like most practitioners, really hadn't the faintest idea what the academics said about managing. Being exposed to this academic viewpoint for the first time, in 1986, was a shock. It sure missed the tone of organization. With rare but welcome exceptions, there were no real people in most of the management literature. There were recipes. There were theories galore. Systems. Functions. Roles. There was no passion, no joy, no triumph, no envy, no lust, no hate, no greed and avarice, cowardice, or dreams. Like the little old lady in the Wendy's commercial, I cried, "Where's the beef?" This stuff did not in any way conform to what

I had seen and lived “out there.” It seemed to reduce leadership to a task anyone could be taught and management to a kind of paint-by-numbers art—stay within the lines (of reengineering or of participative management, for example) and you will have a pretty picture. Tell that to Picasso and Van Gogh, I thought. Tell that to Proust, or Dostoevsky, or Mark Twain. Tell it to George Washington, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Charles de Gaulle. By extension, tell it to Lee Iacocca, Ted Turner, Stephen Jobs, and Bill Gates. It won’t wash. It’s not true. Paint-by-numbers became my guiding metaphor as I began a long search for the golden fleece of real art and real artists in management. Like most people, in the beginning I was caught in the established stereotypes: There are “leaders” (the good guys) and there are “managers” (the bad guys).

However, when you take a trip, you see things along the way. The study of art, and the search for artists in management, helped me to see the real *Artists* all right, but it also gave me an intellectual lens through which I saw their fellow travelers, the *Craftsmen*. That discovery would prove critical, as you will see later. In addition, the lens helped me to see the real paint-by-numbers managers, the enemies of both art and craft—the *Technocrats*, those for whom “the technical side of an issue takes precedence over the social and human consequences.”² I use that word *enemies* deliberately. A lot of people lament the absence of great leaders today. Many of us cast a nostalgic eye on the Churchills, the de Gaulles, the Lincolns. Great leaders have always been, and always will be, rare—the cream that rose to the top before milk and men were homogenized. But, as I hope to show here, they are more numerous than it first appears, and cream is not the only substance that has a tendency to rise to the surface of things. Leaders have powerful enemies. There’s a war going on out there, and it is not for the faint of heart. The good guys do not always win.

It’s exceedingly important to understand this war. Ever since the “discipline” of management muscled its way into universities,

much to the consternation of many scholars past and present (Thorstein Veblen for one; Allan Bloom for another), it has gained more and more respectability. If management is a *science*, then it stands to reason that everywhere there is a need for management there is a need for the science. So much has this become the prevailing view that a recent French prime minister could say with a straight face, “*On ne gère jamais assez*”—We can never manage too much.³ In North America at least (for reasons we will explore later, I think that Europe and Japan are partly inoculated), we have brought the so-called science of management to government and to social institutions like hospitals and schools. Now, it's true that some disciplines within management—finance, accounting, even marketing—do have more of the character of a formal science, but general management is not one of them. To take what we have allegedly proved in general management and graft it onto the public life is to commit a cardinal sin. To imagine, as some do, that modern management techniques eliminate the need for inspiration, intuition, judgment, and the careful selection of the best people is not just dangerous for corporations, national competitiveness, and economic prosperity, it is very dangerous for our societies as a whole. We need to recover some truth.

Of course there are all kinds of truths—literary truth, spiritual and religious truth, scientific truth, sociological truth—and no one can pretend to capture Truth with a capital *T*. The truth I describe in this book is a small truth, a partial truth, one which emerged as the result of studying, up close, 15 living, breathing, CEOs over the 15-year life-span of a global financial corporation. I had this extraordinarily privileged insider's view of the international corporate world because, as a woman who knew something about the economy, I had been invited to serve on a number of boards of directors (at the time that it became politically correct to have at least one on your board). So, while for reasons of confidentiality I am unable to reveal the names, this story is not fiction and the characters you will meet here are not composites but real people,

although, as in *Dragnet*, the names have been changed to protect the innocent. I describe and analyze this cast of characters, people who interacted on an organizational stage, and I describe their interactions as the working out of the different character types which I measured but did not invent: the *Artist*, the *Craftsman*, and the *Technocrat*. These three archetypes (real people diverge, of course, from ideal categories, and you will see the nuances later) are described by their peers, immediate subordinates, and members of their boards of directors as follows.

Artist	Craftsman	Technocrat
Unpredictable	Well-balanced	Cerebral
Funny	Helpful	Difficult
Imaginative	Honest	Uncompromising
Daring	Sensible	Stiff
Intuitive	Responsible	Intense
Exciting	Trustworthy	Detail-oriented
Emotional	Realistic	Determined
Visionary	Steady	Fastidious
Entrepreneurial	Reasonable	Hardheaded
Inspiring	Predictable	No-nonsense

These are the signposts, the characterological underpinnings of behavior. I found out early on that "management" seemed to wish to do away with character. It seemed to wish to carve people up into their various pieces: the eyes that see, the hand that executes, the head that thinks (conveniently forgetting the heart that feels). Having done so, management went on to develop recipes to address the parts: Teach people how to see better, teach them how to think better, teach them how to behave and to feel, and to be nice. Even teach them how to have vision. Right now in America, literally billions of dollars are being spent every year in the misguided attempt to turn *managers* into *leaders*. Well, the hand, the head, and the heart come in packages, and the package is called

character. It's unrealistic to think that you can teach a stone-hearted person to be nice and to have vision. At least not quickly, and certainly not in a management-training course. If today we want managers who are open-minded, we have to select those who are; this was once self-evident.

We want, so it is alleged, managers who are visionary and who listen, who create "learning organizations" and who love to work in teams. In my experience, and in my research, the only real barrier to teamwork is the technocratic mentality that we have put in power. For 300 years or so we have been taught that emotion interferes with good decision making, with objectivity. So, we have put in power those men and women who seem to be the most objective, the most coldly calculating, the least emotional—the Technocrats. The trouble is, we were wrong about our assumption: Science is now beginning to prove that, while it is true that emotion can impair judgment, its absence also impairs judgment. So, we have had people in power who are highly intellectual, analytically brilliant, and cerebral, but who have demonstrably bad judgment. No small wonder, then, that we have lost our way. Led by the judgmentally blind, we have stumbled.

So, this book hopes to explode three interrelated myths. The first myth is that we need one kind of leader—the charismatic visionary. The second, and much more pernicious, myth is that anybody can become one. The third is that if you tell leaders what they should do, they will all do it.

Myth 1. Was George Washington a charismatic visionary, or was he "just" a wise and honest man and the leader America needed at that moment? Winston Churchill *was* a charismatic visionary, and he was perhaps the only leader who could have saved Great Britain during the war. He was also moody, autocratic, stubborn, and sometimes dead wrong. Leading is all about the interaction of a leader with timing and context.

Myth 2. If we had sent the prudent man George Washington to leadership seminars or to the Harvard Business School, could he

have become a visionary? What about if we had taught him how to think “laterally,” would that have worked? Would it have been possible for Winston Churchill to learn to become calm and wise instead of impulsive and dictatorial? Even if we could train people to be what they are not, for the life of me I can’t figure out why anyone would *want* to transform a wise leader into a visionary one or vice versa. Leading is all about wise people and visionary people working together.

Myth 3. We claim that we want only leaders who *listen* to their employees. If Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle and Franklin Roosevelt had “listened,” the Allies would have lost the war. Leaders who listen are not usually the same leaders who inspire. In many ways they inspire because they *don’t* listen. They follow their dreams. You probably could have gotten Churchill to admit that he ought to listen to other people, but that doesn’t mean he could have done it. You can teach people the vocabulary of leadership, but vocabulary is no guarantee that when the chips are down they’ll be able to follow the words with the actions. They can’t walk the talk. There is a group of leaders out there—Technocrats—who have all the vocabulary of imagination and listening, but no seminars on earth could make them into visionary people or wise people. They’re rigid and dogmatic and cold and calculating, and they don’t listen to anybody. *Leading* is about putting them in their place.

This book is about real people, *leaders*. Some who build and some who destroy. If you need a dream, get a dreamer. If you need realism, get a wise man. If you’ve got an ugly job to be done, get a calculator. If you need all three, build a team and keep each one in the right place. And stop throwing good money after bad trying to transform lead into gold, sows’ ears into silk purses.

Part 1, “The Players and the Plot,” is descriptive. In Chapter 1 we find the Artist, the “administrative genius.” He’s imaginative, intuitive, funny, inspiring, exciting, and emotionally volatile. He’s visionary. He can be moody, sometimes solitary. People as seem-

.....

ingly diverse as Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill and Ted Turner and Walt Disney give some idea of what my Artist might look like. Most of the Artists you will meet in these pages would be dismissed and discounted and run out of town on the grounds that they were “unprofessional,” “dreamers,” or “fools.”

Chapter 2 describes the organizational Craftsman: dedicated, trustworthy, honest, stable, realistic, and wise. We will see that these qualities are very much in disrepute, in part because modernity cannot suffer authority, discipline, and tradition—the craft virtues.

Chapter 3 portrays the Technocrat. Cerebral, stiff, uncompromising, intense, determined, hardheaded, meticulous, often brilliant, he or she pretends to want *reason* to dominate *emotion*, but this is a lie. All sane people want reason to be in the driver's seat; the Technocrat wants, passionately, for reason to crush passion.

Chapter 4 puts all three characters into perspective, in relation to one another. It shows what they think of one another and foreshadows the kinds of conflicts that will emerge.

Part 2, “The Play,” begins by describing how these three character types worked together and against one another over the 15-year life of a multi-billion-dollar, multinational financial organization. It shows how one bad succession decision (small business beware!) led to a downward spiral of events that saw the Technocrats triumph and caused the ultimate demise of the organization. It was killed in cold blood, or, more precisely, it died because of cold-blooded “objectivity” and “professional” management.

In Chapter 6 I try to explain the reasons for the technocratic victory and spell out its organizational consequences. I argue that the Technocrat manages to hijack the organization with our support and complicity, and that the pseudoscience of futurism must now bear part of the blame.

Part 3, “The Moral of the Story,” spells out some of the consequences for the rest of us. Chapter 9 revisits current theories of leadership, argues that they have become the cure that is worse

than the disease, and ends with a description of the nine types that emerged in my research. Chapter 10, "Where There's Smoke There's Apt to Be Fire," is destined to help the reader see these types more clearly in other organizations, like CNN, Marriott, and Wal-Mart. It shows that there are some great American institutions—for example, 3M—still firmly (thank Heavens) in the hands of Craft leadership. Chapter 11, "About Teams," disputes current naive notions of building teamwork and argues that the only barrier to teamwork is Technocrats. For obvious reasons, then, Chapter 12, "The Scope of the Problem," is forced to speculate about the numbers of Technocrats in power in the private (large and small business) and public sectors. A final chapter, "Partial Solutions," offers a diagnosis of the origins of the technocratic triumph and, as the title implies, some hesitant solutions.

My conclusion is brief, because I don't have any magic potions to offer. So, what you will not find here are any new formulae for managing: no appeals to "flat structures," no "reengineering," no "participative management," no instant just-add-water leadership recipes. You *will* find description and analysis. Management scholars have been too hasty in their prescriptions; It's all very well and good to tell managers what they should be doing, but what if the people out there are simply incapable of following the recipe? This book is deliberately and consciously descriptive because description is the best ally of healthy change. Accurate, compelling description can change the world. Accurate description can help people to better understand their world, to recognize that it is they, not us, who are best placed to judge what to do with it.

I've used more imagery and metaphors than technical language, because technical language, though it seems impressive, often does little to enlighten. Pseudoscientific language is not more objective than poetic language, and "we delude ourselves if we think that philosophical or critical language for these matters is somehow more hard-edged and more free from personal index than that of poets or novelists."⁴ Further, the tone of this book is pas-

sionate. I believe that passion, caring about something, increases our ability to see clearly. If we care, we look more *carefully*. We are more, not less, scientific. This, too, is now a sacrilege.

People interested in testing what kind of leader they are can use Appendix A. Those who are interested in intellectual travelogues can learn about why I came to use art as a guidepost in Appendix B, and about my methods, in Appendix C. Everybody else, follow me. Let's have a look at what I found on my trip.