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**TRANSITIONAL WARS: A STUDY OF POWER, CONTROL AND CONFLICT IN  
EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION - THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION**

**by**

**MATTHEW JOHN MEYER**

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This is dedicated to my first teachers and known artists, my mother Golde Minchenberg Meyer,  
and my late father Herbert B. Meyer

## ABSTRACT

The study of promotion or executive succession has been of interest to educators since the beginning of schools. Who should be a school's principal? The purpose of this study was twofold. First, to investigate executive succession within large, urban Canadian schools boards, and second, to use a dramatic work - a play - to represent the major findings. Theatre is used to present society and its workings, it is a method of data representation that permits human emotion, care, conflict and tension to become palpable, to provoke an audience. The two purposes of this study merged to provide insight unto the "reality" of school principals' promotions from the perspective of practitioners.

Data on promotion was collected from thirteen seasoned school administrators through extended interviews. Respondents were encouraged to relate stories of individual promotions, as they understood them. The data was transcribed and analyzed using the constant comparison approach. This method yielded multiple levels of analysis including areas of reference, spheres of infra-influence (highly related concepts), and rules of inclusion (subsuming large amounts of data).

It was clear that promotion was a "political act" where several stakeholders fought for their interests. Then followed transcendence - the movement from the naturalistically collected and analyzed data to the play - the movement from science to art form. The rules of inclusion inspired the foundations of the novella; the novella led to the play; characters, scenes and actions were developed. A group of actors rehearsed and prepared a staged reading. The play was presented to a group of educators who were asked to respond to it at two levels - the work as a provocation device for preparing educational administrators and the work as the "reality" of promotion.

Clearly, the theatrical work stimulated the audience and indicated there is a valid place in administrator preparation programs for dramatic works. As well, the notion of promotion as

“seeking the best possible candidate” was challenged as stakeholders’ interests dictated both promotion procedures and candidate succession. The title, *Transitional Wars*, seemed to capture the essence of the work.

## RÉSUMÉ

L’étude de la promotion des cadres exécutifs dans le milieu de l’éducation suscite l’intérêt des éducateurs depuis le début de l’existence de l’école. Qui devrait occuper le poste de direction d’école – voilà le cœur de nos propos. Ainsi, l’objectif de cette étude est double; premièrement, il s’agit d’investiguer le mode de succession aux postes de cadres au sein de grandes commissions scolaires urbaines au Canada, le deuxième volet use d’un moyen original, soit d’une pièce de théâtre qui permet de faire connaître les résultats des recherches terrains de cette recherche.

Le théâtre devient ici un medium pour présenter un aspect de la société et ses structures. Cette méthode reprend l’information objective et la colore d’émotions humaines, de considérations multiples, de conflits et de tensions palpables dont l’objectif est de provoquer des réactions chez les spectateurs. Les deux objectifs de cette étude se regroupent jettant une nouvelle lumière sur la réalité de la sélection des directeurs d’école du point de vue des praticiens.

L’information a été recueillie auprès de treize “administrateurs d’école” à partir d’entrevues approfondies au sujet de l’histoire de leur promotion individuelle dans le milieu scolaire telle que vécue. Cette information a été transcrite et analysée avec une approche comparative. La méthode usait à la fois de multiples niveaux d’analyse à partir de champs de référence des sphères d’infra-influence (concepts étroitement corrélés) et des règles d’inclusion (et qui relie une quantité énorme de données).

Il est apparu que la promotion était un *geste politique* où les personnes mises en cause défendent leurs intérêts. La transcendance inhérente au processus est la suivante: mouvement de

la collecte, analyse des données qui ont donné suite à la pièce de théâtre, soit le passage de la science à l'art. Les règles d'inclusion ont inspiré les fondements du récit menant à l'évolution de la pièce, ses personnages, scènes et actions. Un groupe d'acteurs a préparé et tenu une lecture de la pièce sur scène. Cette lecture a été présentée à un groupe d'enseignants. Ces derniers ont répondu à deux niveaux de questionnement: le premier approche la pièce comme un outil de provocation en vue de préparer les administrateurs dans le milieu de l'éducation et la seconde interrogation porte sur la pièce comme reflet de la réalité de l'ascension des cadres.

Assurément, l'oeuvre théâtrale a provoqué un effet stimulant sur le public, Ses réactions indiquent et valident l'utilité de ce domaine théâtral en guise de préparation à l'accession aux postes exécutifs administratifs scolaires ainsi qu'au développement professionnel d'administrateurs établis. Aussi, dans ce sens, l'idée de la promotion "recherchant le meilleur candidat" a été défié en quelque sorte car les intéressés mis en cause dictent à la fois les procédures et agissent sur la sélection des candidatures leur succédant. Voilà tout le sens du titre *Transitional Wars* au coeur même de ce travail.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

In 1992, I completed my master's degree with a monograph. This had been my first venture into the study of educational administration. Unlike most studies of the time, the monograph was a one-act play - which sought to capture *executive succession*<sup>1</sup> - the hiring of a principal within an independent school setting. I had been involved with one such independent school since 1976. It was going through yet another senior administrator succession. The monograph began:

Principals of schools. The literature of academics tells us they are leaders or managers, problem solvers, supporters of instructional development, change agents, and on and on. The principals we know rarely use these terms. Principals are a heterogeneous lot, some large, some small, some male and some female. A few act like Don Quixote, others as Attila the Hun; most would not "charge" at anything. They appear a decent lot guided by a service ethic. Most are committed to an altruistic motif of supporting others. A few seek promotion, many never leave the school parking lot - except for a transfer. As the years go by the thrill of "change" is replaced by visions of early retirement ... maybe a golden handshake.

The monograph-dramatic piece concluded with the principal selection committee of my fictional independent school coming to a realization unknown in the literature of "human resources management - or personnel." *The selection committee did not want the best qualified candidate; they wanted a candidate they could control.* The play<sup>2</sup> ended with the following scene.

BERT (secondary school representative): So you see, from where I sit, *you don't want too strong a "leader"* as you claim either. You folks just simply won't admit it.

MARYANNE (elementary school representative): We're told the Board wants this, or ... the Board represents the owners, or the Board's going to question policy ... it certainly sounds to me that you don't want a strong principal. I've been a faculty rep on a few Boards. It's rare that I've seen a Principal stand his ground strongly to you folks regardless of which Board it is. Some of your individual or collective hidden agendas are pretty bizarre .... We each want a principal to

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<sup>1</sup>Richard O. Carlson, *School Superintendents: Careers and Performance*, (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1972), chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Meyer, The "Marginalization of the Principal" (Unpublished Masters Degree Monograph, McGill University, 1992), 2.

get us the tools we need to do our jobs effectively without demanding too much in return. Whether it's through fear or intimidation we all want some sort of control over him.

*(Pause- a few moments of silence: Finestome is deep in thought. then gets very serious)*

**FINESTOME** (Board member- finance): Do you all grasp these implications? If most of us, even for a moment agree with Bert and Maryanne, then we all want a *hook* into our new principal.

**NATCH** (Board member- nominating committee): The most successful applicant truly has to be the one who could sustain the status quo most prosperously.

**BUTTERGROUND** (Board member- physical plant): The candidate must, at the least, look like a role model to satisfy the Board, follow the academic norms required by the post secondary institutions to satisfy parents, be fatherly enough to keep the students in line to pacify the faculty, and seem interested enough in student activities and welfare to conciliate the students.

**PRESIDENT** (of the Board): It seems our first choice is becoming clearer. If we must choose one who satisfies these ... demands, than it would appear that in ... most probability ... the eldest candidate with the least administrative experience would serve us best.

**NATCH**: In that way, the new person couldn't make any important decisions without consensus from. minimally the majority of several groups, or at the least, without the consensus of the most affected group on any specific issue.

**FINESTOME**: I assume therefore that *Eden is eliminated*.

*(GROUP SILENTLY NODS IN AGREEMENT)*

**BERT**: From this agreement, we all must understand what is understood.

**EDWARDS**: Wait! We're saying that the school requires an unconscious inside person to be utilized either as a scapegoat, spy or best yet an insurrector. Who else but the weakest link of them then all ... current Vice-Principal and High School Director Paul Eden.

**PRESIDENT**: It's decided. It's in the best interest of the school to retain Eden as High School Director to ... ease ... in the transition into the new administration. If Eden doesn't feel comfortable, he has the option to seek other employment.

**MARYANNE**: It appears then that Mr. Sturgeons, the candidate with the strongest "personality" and "hands on" approach is eliminated due to his "obvious egocentric manner," and candidate Farridge is eliminated due to his strong 'vision for the twenty - first century' and aggressiveness - his desire to be the CEO.

**FINESTOME**: Not so fast. Candidate Downs, it must be agreed, is our first choice. He's in his late forties with little administrative experience as a low-end assistant principal in our "conservative" rival independent school - yes, the perfect choice. He'll serve us all very well! No one really knows him - no enemies, no friends.

*(A CALM SETTLES OVER THE ROOM)*

**NARRATOR:** Paper ballots with the four candidates' names were distributed. Each of the seven members made their choice. The President collected the ballots, tallied them, and announced the vote. The vote was 6 to 1 ... <sup>3</sup>

This fictional work grew from my workings with many educators and from innumerable contacts with parents who had served on boards of directors of some private schools. Many Montreal area anglophone independent schools during much of the late 1980s and 1990s were involved in major physical plant expansions, enrollment crises (due to the volatile provincial political situation) and for some, major fiscal difficulties. In short, all independent schools have confronted many crises. However, the play (or dramatic piece), was simply *grounded in my own experience*, relived in conversation after conversation in and from the school halls, staff room, over coffee and lunches, and so forth.

Did the monograph reflect the "reality" of practice elsewhere - with other boards, public as well as independent ones, with rural and urban school systems? Would the practice be the same in public unionized settings? How could such an investigation be carried out?

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

I wanted to continue my study of executive succession but in a larger domain - the public school system. Would control, so evident in the independent school setting, be a dominant theme in public education? Would the practice of school administration and the policy development of school board members (also called school commissioners) come into conflict? Would there be a conspiracy between board - appointed administrators (sometimes referred to as board or commission officers)? Just what were the dynamics of school administrator promotion?

The purpose of this study was to investigate executive succession in large urban unionized school boards or commissions, in a major Canadian city. This aim was to be achieved by turning to people who were actively involved in the promotion of educators to the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 56-58.

principalship. These people, some active administrators and board members and some recently retired, would be asked to look back on their careers and "tell stories," narrate how "people got promoted around here." The narratives thus created would then be analyzed to uncover common promotional practices.

A second purpose of the study, as important as the first, was to create a play that would represent the data, or a major part therein, to provoke educators to study the "practice of promotion" as it now exists in some urban school boards in Canada. (The play would later be named *Transitional Wars*). Theatre has been and will continue to be a way of studying society and its workings. Unlike a science-based method, it is a method that permits human emotion, care, conflict and tension to become palpable, to provoke an audience. To achieve this purpose there would have to be transcendence - a movement from scientifically collected and analyzed data to a fictional piece that would represent that data.

To test the validity of the entire study, the play was produced as a staged reading for an audience of educators. The audience was then asked to ponder the play, write individually about what they had witnessed then join focus groups to discuss the production. The audience included some of the original people who had provided stories as part of the data base, as well as other educators from a variety of educational settings. The following research questions were asked of the audience:

**RQ1:** We invite you to take a few moments to write down your thoughts about the play you have just seen. Please indicate any and all reactions to the work.

**RQ2:** Should the humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - be used in the preparing educators for administrative posts?

**RQ3:** Should the humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - be used in the professional development of established administrators?

**RQ4:** In your academic studies in preparation for work as an educator, were the humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - *part of your preparation?*

RQ5: Should the humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - be used in preparing lay parents for roles on parents' committees and school commissions?

RQ6: Would theatrical works help in preparing non-administrators for administrative ranks?

RQ7: Would the play this evening, *Transitional Wars* help in preparing practicing administrators for improved practice?

RQ8: Did the play this evening, *Transitional Wars*, provoke thinking about administrative practices?

RQ9: Did the play this evening, *Transitional Wars*, present issues about administrative practice that are rarely discussed in in-service or other preparation programs?

RQ10: From your experience, does *Transitional Wars* reflect the "reality" of administrative practice?

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The data was collected from a few public anglophone school systems in Quebec, specifically in the greater Montreal area. There is no guarantee that the findings of the study can be generalized to other Canadian urban school systems.

The creation of a play as representing the findings of the study is limited in two ways. First, not all the data collected is represented in the play. Other plays could be written from the data; other forms of analysis could be made from the data. Second, while I analyzed the data as fairly as possible, my personal biases may have entered into its interpretation and representation in *Transitional Wars*. In many respects, what was earlier observed in my monograph was found again in a new setting - the immense concern for power and control from certain constituent groups within the formal school system structure.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is presented in the following way. *Chapter 2 - Foundational literature: theatre as representation* introduces the project's *raison d'être*, critical conventions and definitions which were inspired from my readings in educational administration, sociology,

qualitative research methodology, human resource management and drama/theatre. Several directional concepts, research design and other substantive elements are introduced, the most essential being that of *theatre as representation (TAR)*, and its presence as an emerging method of inquiry in the field of educational administration research. It presents *TAR'S* philosophical and artistic (field) foundations in light of several key definitions, and a look at postmodernism's influence in challenging existing research methodologies.

*Chapter 3 – Structural pillars of the dissertation*, introduces the dissertation design and its transformational goals. The manipulation of data collection scheme, in terms of its interpretation and thematic (story lines) direction including character foundations, are included. Much of this section was inspired by Norman Denzin's (1989) concepts regarding "the interpretive process."<sup>4</sup> The term - *artistic aesthetic methodology* is introduced. It represents the venture into qualitative research areas that, I believe, strongly demonstrate the fusion of science with art [in this case theatre.] The discussion evolves into an

*action → reaction → decision → consequence paradigm.*

This goes on to include a discussion of how theatre works as a 'life mirror-like' human representation. A dissertation design paradigm is revealed at the end of the chapter.

*Chapter 4 - Data collection and analysis* presents the data collection scheme and its analysis journey. A data agenda is presented which sets out the path for data selection. The employed *naturalistic-inquiry-based* interview protocol is also shown. Within the data analysis protocol, such concepts as *areas of reference*, their reduction into *spheres of infra-influence*, and an adaptation of the *rules of inclusion* technique of data reduction, which formulated the data grounding, are shown in great detail.

*Chapter 5 - The Findings* concerns itself with two central issues: data trustworthiness and internal data validity. Aspects of the interview experience and process are discussed to reveal the

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<sup>4</sup>Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Interactionism*, (Newbury Park, Sage, 1989), chapter 3.

outcomes of the adaptation of the data analysis techniques set forth in the previous chapter. The findings are distilled and presented. They are grouped through the *spheres of infra-influence*. Here, specific references are made to those rules of inclusion that were precise and particular to an individual finding. There are also five cross-case summative findings as well. The chapter concludes with several 'transition' thoughts that link the findings to the dramatic piece.

*Chapter 6 – Notions of scriptwriting* is the first of two chapters that concern themselves with the transition from the hard data to the creative act. This chapter introduces the use of drama and theatre-like activities as innate communication. Some basic playwriting mechanics are introduced. The purpose here is to provide a brief drama and theatre background to those readers who may not be familiar with the aesthetic and artistic writing techniques of three-dimensional stage writing. The important 'human interaction' phenomenon that occurs between participant and viewer is explained. A discussion of 'theme' is discussed with several key playwrights' ideas on various aspects of playwriting.

*Chapter 7 – Transcendence*, is concerned with the questions and issues of the journey from the collected data to creative act end - the play. The use of the Buddhist term 'ku' is used as the 'continuity platform' to begin the discussion. A detailed examination ensues which describes the sequential steps and elements that ultimately led to the evolution and creation of *Transitional Wars*. Included in this gestation chain are the first idea images, the novella, the script development, the "cold read" and the eventual staged presentation of the work itself. The chapter ends with a discussion regarding the fusion between all the human interaction elements of the process.

The dramatic piece, *Transitional Wars* is *Chapter 8*. This is the dramatic piece inspired by the data research and findings of this project. The theme and characters descriptions are given and then the piece itself.

*Chapter 9 - The public performance and viewer reactions* chronicles the public performance of the October 19<sup>th</sup> performance of *Transitional Wars*. The results of the viewer-

response surveys are discussed. Some directional statements regarding future presentation showings follow this.

*Chapter 10 - Conclusions and Future Directions* offers several summative statements and introduces some future post-dissertation research possibilities.



## CHAPTER TWO - FOUNDATIONAL LITERATURE; THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the project's overall scholarly goals, foundations and beliefs. The concept of *theatre as representation (TAR)*, is introduced in terms of its holistic directions, foundational underpinnings and motivations inspired from some bodies of the humanities and social science literature. The new vehicle of *action provocation*, within the field of educational administration, is brought forward along with several important definitions. This opens the discussion to consider non-conventional uses of drama and theatre in the field of educational administration.

This is expanded in a discussion, which brings TAR into the qualitative research realm, citing several key researchers within the field. The chapter concludes with a short background into the postmodern movement that, in many ways, lends its concepts to partially validating this new use of theatre into the field of educational administration.

To begin with, the following serves as the basis of this discussion.

**THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION** (in this project) is a research methodology that leads to the creation of a dramatic work. This dramatic work's *raison d'être* is first, to be viewed in a live presentational format performed by actors; second, to be presented to working field administrators in a passive non-threatening venue setting; third, to serve as a provocation vehicle for each viewer to question, compare and contrast his or her beliefs, protocols and the like as viewed with the contents of the dramatic work. As a research vehicle, **THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION** falls into the qualitative research genre within the post-positivist paradigm.

### THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION: ACTION PROVOCATION, AS LEARNING TOOL

Artists believe that the need to express is innate. Whether it be for simple communication, survival or artistic expression, a person can not reveal a complete world view without both the need and the desire to communicate. This has been a working dictum for artists

probably since the beginning of time. The means to express these needs to others are vast. To those few, to whom we refer as artists, we permit truth to stretch, imagination to have no bounds and structure and discipline to expand. This creative license is critical for the artistic and aesthetic success of both the artist and his or her work. It is also critical for the educational administrator who, in many ways, is similar to the performing artist.

An administrator creates and sustains a "role." An educational administrator has knowledge and study from established sources and programs coupled with real-life experiences. The role of Principal, Vice-Principal, Director General, and Department Head to name a few, are defined in a number of ways: job description, the history of the position in the specific institution, expectation, experimentation and ego. The role is also defined in terms of function, as dictated by the personnel of the organization as well as the secondary school (in our case) or school board corporate and practicing culture and subculture (institutional and/or human). The administrator who has taken on the role continually manipulates this "role."

An actor interprets a role as well. The actor's function is not to live out the role in "real life," it is to represent and transform the role into a temporary reality. Artists (actors in this case) and administrators in role-playing are similar in that a persona (true or created) is presented to others. This similarity becomes one critical link for *theatre as representation*. Further, let us also assume, that when an administrator is viewing a theatrical piece which depicts administrators in crisis, an immediate corroborative similarity or association is shaped between the administrator's experiences and the actions of the actor's role creation. It is this silent bond (my words) that becomes another link between the two "role" interpreters.

Using *theatre as representation* is the foundation of this project's goal in providing a vehicle for action provocation for educational administrators be they practitioners or professors. Since the beginning of time, theatre has served as a reflection of humanity of its particular era. From its earliest associations, as a means to help answer spiritual and cosmic questions, theatre practices have been used as training and learning devices for both the participant and the viewer.

Therefore theatre, by its nature, is a provocation device. That is, it can force both the actor and audience to reflect, consider and take a position, so to speak, concerning conflicts and dilemmas of the work - text and/or production of the text. (The "taking a position" is critical for the actor in order for him/her to project the required persona of the character. "The taking of a position" for the audience is the hope of every production - that is to provoke the audience members to question [agree or disagree] the view of the production within the context of their own perspectives and beliefs). A theatre presentation, as provocation device, has one major advantage over many other such provocation devices. It is usually less threatening to the observer in that the boundaries between reality and fantasy are considerably more defined. The audience member is not being evaluated.

Dramatic presentation can enable its viewers to become armchair critics or dilettantes in areas of life they would not normally experience. Sociologists such as Berger and Luckmann, Hare, and Goffman<sup>5</sup> use theatre terminology to aid in the explanation of human behavior. Similarly, education and training experts such as Corsini et al (1961), Maier et al (1975) and Towers (1974)<sup>6</sup> use theatre-like techniques to instruct both workers and managers to become better leaders in their respective levels of the corporate class system. In everyday life, many people use such expressions as "don't be so dramatic," or "stop the act" to reflect a certain evaluation of a conflict either presented to them or one in which they are involved in directly. The military, political pundits and historians use the term "theatre" to represent battlegrounds as part of their working vocabulary.

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<sup>5</sup>Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. (Garden City, Anchor Books, 1959); Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (New York: Doubleday, 1966); Paul Hare, *Social Interaction: Applications from Conflict Resolutions*. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985).

<sup>6</sup>R.J. Corsini, M.E. Shaw, R.R. Blake, *Roleplaying in Business and Industry*. (New York: MacMillan, 1961); M.R. Maier, A.R. Solem, Maier, A. A. *The Role-Play Handbook for Management and Leadership Practise*, (LaJolla: University Associates, 1975); J.M. Towers, *Role-Playing for Managers*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1974).

In sum, theatre has been used widely within the humanities to present truthful human and historical episodes and provoke people. Herein, it will be used in a similar vein to view educational administration.

### DRAMA AND THEATRE - DEFINITIONS AND CONVENTIONS

*Theatre as representation* uses dramatic imagined acts as driving organic forces of reality in a presentational medium of live representation. For *theatre as method* to succeed as a research methodology, it must clearly and successfully manipulate both drama and theatre techniques to a high degree of performance execution.

It is important to understand the distinction between the terms *drama* and *theatre* in order to avoid confusion when using the *theatre as representation* approach. I use Bernard Beckerman's <sup>7</sup> definitions:

Theatre occurs when one or more human beings *isolated in time and space* present themselves to another or others.<sup>8</sup>

Drama occurs when one or more human beings isolated in time and space present themselves in **imagined acts** to another or others.<sup>9</sup>

According to Beckerman, drama is a sub-form of theatre. In a theatre presentation, the participants and viewers must be isolated from each other in some fashion. The function of each and every person present in a theatrical performance is inherently defined. The second difference lies in the words 'imagined acts' within the drama definition. An imagined act is the contrived act "to make a concept realistic." In other words *to make believe*. A theatre act is the spectacle itself and does not require a script or rehearsal. A child having a temper tantrum is a theatrical act; an actor in a role contemplating suicide, is presenting an imagined act within a theatrical context because the audience realizes that the actor is not actually committing the suicide act but interpreting the "dramatic" act of suicide.

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<sup>7</sup> Bernard Beckerman, *Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Method of Analysis*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 20.

Eric Bentley takes this further:

Events are not dramatic in themselves. Drama requires the eye of the beholder to see drama in something is both *to perceive elements of conflict* and *to respond emotionally to these elements of conflict*. This emotional response consists in being thrilled, in being struck with wonder at the conflict. Even conflict is not dramatic in itself. Should we all perish in a nuclear war, there will continue to be conflict - in the realm of physics and chemistry. That is not a drama, but a process. If drama is a thing one sees, there has to be *one* to see. Drama is human.<sup>10</sup>

Perception becomes the catalyst for the viewer to formulate responses on individual psychological, intellectual and professional levels. The "conflict" is not confined to a confrontation of ideas, however; it should also be placed in a temporal context. Quoting Langer, Gavin Bolton states that time never stands still. It either looks backward or forward in the theatrical context. "It is this sense of time, that does not rest in the present but is continually looking backwards and forwards that carries a *tension* of commitments and consequences."<sup>11</sup> Human responses occur almost simultaneously while viewing a theatrical piece. The human visual and/or oral experience of live theatre intrinsically places the viewer into the persona of an adjudicator without putting him or herself at risk.

The use of theatre, either in the *observer* role or in the more active *participant* role, can aid in the praxis evolution in educational administration. We participate and observe drama presentations every day of our lives (Goffman, 1959). The designed or programmed ones are those we experience through the media: television, cinema, live theatre and the like. The non-programmed ones are those in our daily life at home, the workplace or at other locales.

This is an important aspect of *theatre as representation*. Part of its *raison d'être* is for the observer to be empathetic with the aesthetic theatre experience itself. A familiarity with such presentational formats is critical for the success of this application. Whether conscious or unconscious, viewers inherently use judgmental and intellectual protocols. These create a sense of security of sorts, to sit and pass judgment on the presentation without fear of personal reprisal or

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<sup>10</sup>Eric Bentley, *The Life Of The Drama*, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1964), 4.

<sup>11</sup>Gavin Bolton, *Toward a theory of drama in education*, (London: Longman, 1979), 76.

loss of face before another viewer, peer or superior. Whether or not the viewer is so moved to make a true change in his or her personal belief (in view of the content of the presentation) is not open to scrutiny by anyone other than him/herself. This freedom to form a self-designed impression is critical to the change process because it creates within the viewer this sense of *empowerment*.

Consequently, educational administrators and educators in general, after viewing a *provocative theatre piece*, can be more open to discussing a specific problem's resolve. The success of *theatre as representation* is grounded on both the above assumptions and the traditional theatre dictum that "live theatre" is magical and simultaneously provocative. This magic is governed by the precept that real people many times, before a viewer's eyes and mind, present and create temporary alter personas for the viewer. The viewer can silently (perhaps passively) assume the persona of a character on stage and, in his/her mind, live out the moment as the perceived character. Providing both the theme and its technical vehicle (writing style) are relevant to the viewer, the viewer can respond to the work as if they themselves are its characters, or if required, as armchair dilettante critics.

The design methodology's result is an enhanced piece of creative non-fiction writing. It is based in reality and presented in a three-dimensional performance vehicle.

### **A NON-CONVENTIONAL USE OF THEATRE**

In this research method application, theatre applications and practices are not utilized in their conventional forms as part of the educator's teaching bag of tricks and teaching styles. Traditionally, such developmental drama conventions as role-playing, theatre gaming and improvisation exercises can be employed within the teacher/administrator's training curriculum. Simulations, within the more structured role-playing training constructions, are the medium for virtually all in-house teaching practices (Davis and Hancock).<sup>12</sup> These are very active exercises

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<sup>12</sup>G. Davis and R. Hancock, "Drama as a Learning Medium," *Management Development Review*, 6, 1993, 11-12.

for the participants. The drawback to these exercises is that they put the participant at risk of embarrassment or humiliation from their colleagues. This is especially true as teachers and administrators age. (Here, it is assumed that as teachers become more adept and experienced, they tend to solidify their teaching and administrative protocols. They view change as only an emergency or a "must-do" employable action when absolutely forced to).

Presumptuous as this appears, probably more often than not, observers feel more safe in the "armchair" perspective. For the moment, let us assume this concept as a given. Let us also assume the following: when one is given the opportunity to observe such a dramatic or theatre piece, then asked to reflect upon it, s/he is perceived as having *empowerment*. Within this empowerment concept lies the premise that *conflict resolution* is seen almost solely in a view of an issue's *causal* parameters not its "Band-Aid - what do I do now ..." resolution strategy.

It is the intention of this dissertation to create a theatrical piece to serve as a *training provocation instrument* (henceforth referred to as *the piece*) and to become, after its viewing by an audience of administrators, a *discussion instrument*. The uses for such an instrument could be as follows. First, in administration training programs to provide potential school leaders with confrontation scenarios for practice; second, for lay educators (parents, board commissioners and the like) to obtain an insight into the political and procedural possibilities, and perhaps actualities, of "real life" at the board level; and third, for active administrators to have a non-combatant, passive few moments to compare and contrast their own individual management and leadership styles against the backdrop of a staged piece. Such drama permits a viewer to watch, absorb, associate and judge. It is only in this "theatre of reality" that viewers can mentally and intellectually transform from passive voyeurs to active decision-makers without the fear of judgment from their peers or superiors.

Such terms and usage of notions of "role-playing," the symbolism in language, presentation, "actor" and the like which are actively used in teacher training, classroom pedagogy and administrative posturing as well in many of the social sciences are not in question or conflict.

This is also to say that all educators are presenters, animators, revealers, leaders and actors to their respective audiences. *Theatre as representation* never loses sight of such "role" parameters of both its actors (in the presentational sense) and of its designated viewers if provocation and viewer empowerment are to occur.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: REVISITED

The purpose of this study is to determine if *theatre as representation* can be used to enhance the study of a salient educational administration issue. As will be seen, the issue is the *use of power* in the administration of a large urban school system. A scripted dramatic presentation is created founded on the collected recollections of established field administrators. This dramatic work inspires and then captures the essence of a specific conflict in educational administration. This conflict, after presentation, provokes thought and discussion from the viewers. These may create for the viewer a new protocol in executing more improved decision strategies in their own real-life work.

We begin by first establishing a qualitative research perspective. Within the last several years, there have been a number of social scientists who have conceived of alternative research techniques. A predominant number have been in anthropology, based in the works of Bateson, Geertz, Clifford and Marcus.<sup>13</sup> A number in sociology have come from Berger, Luckmann and Goffman.<sup>14</sup> Those in education have come from Dewey, English, Eisner and Greenfield<sup>15</sup> to mention a few.

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<sup>13</sup>Mary Catherine Bateson, *Peripheral Visions, Learning Along the Way*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1994); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973); and James Clifford and George Marcus, editors, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>14</sup>See footnote 2.

<sup>15</sup>John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, (New York: Macmillan, 1938, 1963); Fenwick English, *School Organization and Management*, (Worthington: Charles A. Jones, 1975); Elliot Eisner, *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*, (New York: Macmillan, 1991); and Thomas Greenfield and Peter Ribbins, editors, *Greenfield on Educational Administration*, (London: Routledge, 1993).



Among social scientists who have paved the way for descriptive research is William Foote Whyte, with his now classic work, *Street Corner Society*.<sup>16</sup> This is a critical piece for our discussion. It describes not only the daily lives, hopes and failures of the observed "subjects," it also presents such organizational aspects of the slum locale which prepares the reader for an almost theatrical observation of the subject matter. Whyte does not evaluate his subjects in terms of value systems. He leaves that to the reader. He remains the independent and non-judgmental observer and reporter. The social and moral issues that come into view are subtly present. His descriptive narrative method fulfilled his needs as a researcher. It undoubtedly provoked thought, but not necessarily action on the part of the reader. The reader was not actually witnessing the events as if they were being presented in a "live" production.

This is primarily due to its "two-dimensional" descriptive orientation which is typical and expected of most qualitative research. Proposing to take such research a step further, into theatre orientation, with its three-dimensional live presentational format, can only bring about an immediate viewer (almost instant reaction to action) response. For *theatre as representation*, it is important to realize that its design nature is not merely descriptive or antiseptically analytical as in a case study. It is "three dimensional" because of its immediate "live nature." In its "live" representation format, there is no time for the viewer to be dormant-like and patient in conclusion making. The viewer reacts instantly. A viewer's first reactions to live action are from the "gut" before it is intellectualized and rationalized. In other words, emotional theatre appeals to one's personal emotions.

### **POSTMODERNISM: A FOUNDATION FOR "THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION"**

There has been a recent movement from within some philosophical spheres which claims that the traditional research approaches (more quantitative than qualitative) have come to an impasse. The "postmodern" perspective implies that the scientific deductive/inductive method of

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<sup>16</sup>William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1943, 1955).

defining the world as we know it (modernism) can never truly be bias-free (Derrida, Lyotard, and Jameson<sup>17</sup>) and consequently cannot be held as the only form of true belief. It is not so much that modernity has come to an end as some postmodernists have proclaimed, it is more that the "elitist European fathers of philosophy" view is not the only view to employ in understanding the world. Postmodernism is a view that challenges established forms of thinking (primarily of a philosophical orientation). This includes all arts and sciences, their creative and research perspectives and practices, communication, language theory, and ultimately education and its pedagogical practices.

Seen in this light, modernity has lost its position as the foremost learning, teaching and research leader. Greenfield, beginning in the 1970's, stated brutally in many of his publications that positivism, as a working paradigm, was dead as a useful and applicable research methodology within the educational administration field.<sup>18</sup>

Since then, the debate regarding the paradigmatic shift in research methodologies has been strengthening. This crack in viewpoint opened the floodgates for new approaches such as *theatre as representation*. With the trend towards more decentralization in educational administration practice, incorporating such concepts as site-based management and individual schools as independent school boards, it became more crucial that administrators have devices for *reflection* to study actual administration issues. *Theatre as representation* promises a vehicle for such immediate reflection.

Postmodernism has also found its way into the field of organizational theory. There is a

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<sup>17</sup>Jacques Derrida, "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing," in Lawrence Cahoon, editor, *From Modernism to Postmodernism, An Anthology*, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 336-359; Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge*, trans. Bennington and Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979, 1984); and Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Hal Foster, ed., (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 111-125.

<sup>18</sup>The earliest statements from Greenfield regarding this position appeared in his papers, "Theory about Organization (1975) and "Research in Educational Administration in the United States and Canada (1979). see Thomas Greenfield and Peter Ribbins, editors, *Greenfield on Educational Administration*, (London: Routledge, 1993).

strong movement to look at alternative ways of measuring an organization's growth (or lack), maintenance and structures (Clegg, Cooper and Burrell<sup>19</sup>). In the field of educational research, there is now room for alternative research methodologies, if for no other reason, than much of today's current research is too narrow in focus in today's rapidly changing world of the working administrator. The inconstant economic and social situations have challenged the "basic factory-based" administrative foundations in educational administration. Many secondary schools have remained in the mode of (sometimes successfully, sometimes not) vocational and academic training camps feeding labor markets. This applies to much of today's secondary education pedagogy. It began during the post World War II and "cold-war" periods and still exists in many school boards. Many schools have now become social-service dispensaries with meal programs. Some are breeding grounds for crime and substance abuse and are incarceration-like enclaves with security guards armed with metal detectors. These phenomena have altered the *raison d'être* of schooling at the expense of many schools' mission statements. The changing realities of "real" school life have also brought to the surface the actuality that each school is a micro-entity, perhaps attached to other schools or school systems by organizational links, but in effect an independent social entity.

Let us assume for our purposes, therefore, that the "conventional" administration practices are not easily measured and that typical positivistic research methodologies have only limited use. Positivists acknowledge that phenomena exist and they do not need to prove its existence. In other words, "it's out there and we know it." The in-school administrator re-defines the phenomena everyday. Conventional trends have their roots in modernity. For the most part, historical patterns of educational administrative behavior have their roots in positivistic research

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<sup>19</sup>Stewart R. Clegg, *Modern Organizations: Organization Studies in the Postmodern World*, (London: Sage, 1990); Robert Cooper and Gibson Burrell, "Modernism, Postmodernism and/organizational Analysis: An Introduction," *Organization Studies*, 1988, 9/1: 91-112.

methodology. An example of this is Hoy and Miskel's classic text<sup>20</sup> in which each chapter describes with clarity an evolving historical (within a genetic framework of sorts) position and benchmarks of administration organization and practice. In many positivistic frameworks, statistics, charts, analysis and the like can substantiate almost any given pretext; what is not present is much of today's administrative realities, horrors and dilemmas which face the working administrator.

Several postmodern ideas serve the purpose of assisting in the clarification of some realities of the field as well as provide possible directions in research methodology.

Postmodernism, as a philosophical genre, is fairly disjointed with many "internal" almost dysfunctional arguments. However, for purposes here, the following four working concepts by Mike Featherstone<sup>21</sup> will serve our discussion purposes.

First, a movement away from the universalistic ambitions of master-narratives where the emphasis is upon totality, system and unity towards an emphasis upon local knowledge, fragmentation, syncretism, 'otherness' and 'difference' Second, dissolution of symbolic hierarchies which entail canonical judgments of taste and value, towards a populist collapse of the distinction between high and popular culture. Third, a tendency towards the aestheticization of everyday life which gained momentum both from efforts within the arts to collapse the boundary between art and life (pop art, Dada, surrealism, and so on) and the alleged movement towards a simulational consumer culture in which an endlessly reduplicated hallucinatory veil of images effaces the distinction between appearance and reality. Fourth, a decentring of the subject, whose sense of identity and biographical continuity give way to fragmentation and superficial play with images, sensations and 'multi-phenic intensities.'

From an educational administration framework, we can interpret this to mean the following. First, that our curricular attitude in the exclusive belief that the great works and ideas of western culture (traditional classical and European viewpoints to the rise of western civilization) and ideas is the only way to teach is not necessarily true. Second, that such cultural

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<sup>20</sup>Wayne K. Hoy and Cecil G. Miskel, *Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice*, (New York, Random House, 1995, 1987, 1982, 1978)

<sup>21</sup>Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity*, (London: Sage, 1995), 43-44.

values as “good” and “bad” taste cannot be taught. Third, that the arts themselves and their created images can have a fake sense of reality for the viewer or receiver of the art. True originality is rare. Fourth, the marginalization of the individual works with the belief that the needs of a consumer society outweigh the needs of an individual.

Schooling, in the modernity belief, is a political tool to create one vision of the political and economic elite. Democracy (in this schooling sense) has as its goal to create a work force that is minimally literate and follows the established political social order (good patriotic citizens): to follow the status quo. Teachers and administrators, it has been implied,<sup>22</sup> are not seen as intellectuals but as instructor-technicians of curricular and administrative canons, policies and directives. Consequently, prescribed administrative problem-solving strategies cannot be perceived on the macroscopic dimension (as is a Ministry of Education curricular objective) because in truth each school in itself is a microcosm in itself.

Postmodernism more than modernism recognizes cultural, ethnic and gender phenomena on equal terms with all things. In effect, it is a truer reflection of today’s changing world. Modernism was not prepared for the technical miracles of mass media and the results which mass communication has brought as it constantly ruptures the intellectual and social barriers that the educational system has quietly sustained for so many years. Lyotard,<sup>23</sup> postmodernism’s point man, believes that within the last several decades all sciences have become more concerned with their communications’ mechanisms of language translations, storage and data banks, and consequent inherent problems. Knowledge (in the quantitative sense) has become so abundant that it cannot be ever ‘pure’. It can only be diluted for the masses. Knowledge in its purest form will, by default, become a political power-base tool. Madan Sarup further explains, “Lyotard

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<sup>22</sup>Such theorists as Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A Giroux, *Postmodern Education: Politics, Culture, and Social Criticism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); and Thomas Sergiovanni, *Value Added Leadership: How to Get Extraordinary Performance in Schools*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1990) have implied this possibility in different ways.

<sup>23</sup>See footnote 4.

also argues that art, morality and science (the beautiful, the good and the true) have become separated and autonomous."<sup>24</sup> This "fragmentation" argument supports the postmodern notion that virtually all knowledge is segmented and that knowledge, in its modernistic framework, cannot be filtered clearly from higher echelons (intellectual, psychological or ethnocentric) to lower ones without being highly diluted and/or misinterpreted. It is not a case of recalcitrant thinking, it is more an instance of a traditional accepted belief that "true intellectuals" (from political, liturgical or university type think-tank or "ivory tower" orientation) know more than a grassroots person.

If we accept the pre-condition that postmodernism rejects this belief, we can make the argument that: first, traditional working educational administration practices follow more the modernity paradigm than not (with success in many areas being questionable; note the 30-35% drop-out rate in secondary education throughout North America). Second, with the unforeseen growth and expansion of communications technology and information systems, the gap between the intellectual and social classes has further diminished. Third, with growing multi-cultural, ethnic, feminist and gender-related phenomena fracturing even further such barriers between such parties, then it can only be assumed that normative research methodologies can also be questioned, re-defined and re-directed within a postmodern parameter.

By employing the belief that theatre is a tool for social change, in the performance framework, we can place theatrical or plastic arts (film and video), and playwriting, into the qualitative research genre. This framework implicitly requires the "fabrication of realities" creation scheme. The "created reality" is derived from a true reality of an educational administrative dilemma. Such stories and reflections are collected from working field administrators.

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<sup>24</sup>Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism*, 2d. ed., (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 145.

The philosophical aspects of much of the postmodern paradigm open the door, so to speak, for *theatre as representation* to become a legitimate research methodology in problem solving. It enhances qualitative approaches by providing *reflection through live representation* as its delivery medium of data.

## CHAPTER THREE - STRUCTURAL PILLARS OF THE DISSERTATION

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the founding directions or parameters of the study. The naturalistic inquiry method of interviewing is the working format for data collection. The collection protocols are presented. This project falls under a type of playwriting entitled *artistic-aesthetic*. This is explained in a paradigmatic approach. Much of this is inspired by Norman Denzin's work. Several examples of what may be considered *theatre as representation* are brought forward. This leads to the design paradigm and an introduction to the working presentation format.

In this project, the selected data collection vehicle is a naturalistic inquiry method of interviewing such individuals who would be probably most affected by the research itself. The direction of the process and parameters for dealing with the data are based on Denzin's *Interpretive Interactionism*.<sup>25</sup> The historical immediacy of Denzin's beliefs also clearly fall in place with those of the postmodern traditions.

The subjects to be interviewed for data collection (henceforth referred to as respondents) are those working administrators and school board officers who affect policy and who are most affected by the principal-selection decisions. They are also the targeted audience for the eventual theatre representation. This is the decision-maker group. These individuals carry the responsibility and are held accountable to the community for the decisions regarding senior personnel appointments. One group of respondents on the Board or Commission level - the Director General, Personnel Directors, board level department heads and subject consultants - for the most part, had all been principals themselves and have an inside view of the position. School Board members are the elected responsables for their community (more specifically their individual wards). In a perfect world, school board members create the selection criteria from the

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<sup>25</sup>See footnote 1.



community's viewpoint. In a not-so-perfect world, many times there are clashes between the working organization (the school commission officers) and the Board (elected Commissioners who create its policies and goals) over such policies

Working secondary school principals make up the second group of interviewees. Once again, it is their individual and collective experiences that create highly subjective and penetrating insights into the school community administrative decision-making culture. Their reflections corroborate, counter, create or reveal to the various shades of gray (in terms of policy interpretation) of interpretations of both the school commission and The Board of Commissioners (school board members).

It is critical that the closest and most real reflections of true field experiences be documented in order to create the most affecting scenario for this project. Since the target audience is these administrators and board members, the scenario must reflect enough truth to both seize the moment and become the hook that links the viewer with the on-stage performance artist. This kinship between the piece, the created characters and the viewer of the piece must be immediate. Therefore the synthesis of the collected stories from the interviewees provide the foundations for a dramatic "piece"<sup>26</sup> creation.

An open-probing questioning technique,<sup>27</sup> along with such other interviewing techniques as suggested by Douglas,<sup>28</sup> others from previously mentioned social anthropologists,<sup>29</sup> and from such human resource management sources as Eder and Ferris<sup>30</sup> and Gatewood and Feild<sup>31</sup> have

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<sup>26</sup>The theatrical term "piece" refers always to the dramatic work in question, progress or production.

<sup>27</sup>I.E. Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991), chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup>Jack D. Douglas, *Creative Interviewing*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985).

<sup>29</sup>See footnote 1.

<sup>30</sup>R. Eder, and G. Ferris, *The Employment Interview: Theory, Research, and Practice*, (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989).

<sup>31</sup>R.D. Gatewood and H. S. Feild, *Human Resource Selection*, 3d ed., (Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

been collectively adapted in the creation of the interviewing questionnaire (see Chapter 4). Clear written consent was required for each interview (see Appendix 1). The interview questionnaire and protocol were designed to reveal the interviewees' thoughts and feelings from their personal experiences as working administrators. These descriptions served as the data base set where normal "coding" and coding procedures were adapted to serve more as transformative devices rather than quantitative recurring representational mechanisms.<sup>32</sup>

This transformational concept has two underlying rationales. Firstly, the scenario content and nature must seem of concern, real, and serve as an immediate vehicle for the viewer to be reflexive. Second, the scenario must have the theatrical elements (context, motive and action) for the actors to create the theatrical reality of the representation.

Here the coding and rules of inclusion were used in a very different light. In effect, the results of the data analysis formed the foundation for the salient themes of the piece itself. The data came from the realities of the interviewees and led to the subsequent theatrical scenario directions. These directions and themes underscored and provided the insight into a number of conditions and the tensions and conflicts of the decision-making process. These procedures resulted in a vehicle and provocation medium of value - the piece.

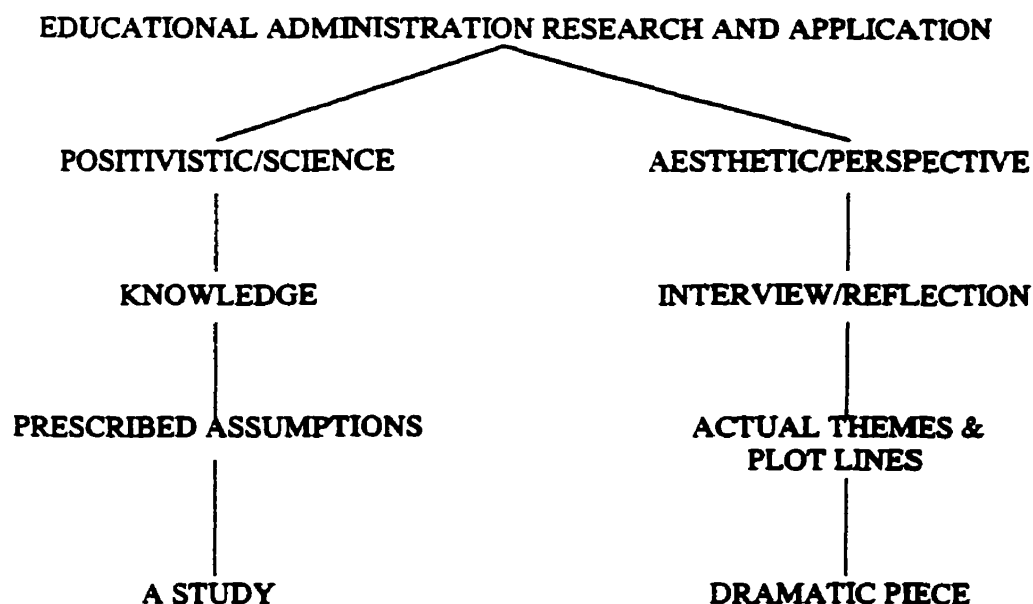
For the moment, this use of qualitative research, using the above postmodern points, in the medium of dramatic performance playwriting will be referred as an *artistic-aesthetic methodology* (my term). Administration, by its nature, is not a completely "rational" process. The human element alone underscores this reality. As previously stated, the postmodern view clearly supports this position. In most cases, true administration dilemmas do not fall within the "scientifically rational world." In the volatile real world of working educational administration, administrators must actively wear many different hats from that of a curriculum leader to

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<sup>32</sup>For traditional coding procedures, see Anselm L. Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, chap. 3, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

emotional-behavior-modification strong heavyweight to fiscal manager to cultural arbitrator to philosophical visionary and public relations expert. Being a successful and dynamic administrator requires more than mere scientific management practices.

The following flow chart outlines the paradigmatic contrast between the standard "rational" approach methodology (left) and the artistic-aesthetic methodology (right):



The following is a brief contrast between these two methods. In a typical piece of positivistic science-based research, a clear deductive assertion is made by the researcher. Research questions are derived from established knowledge and databases. New knowledge must be comparable or similar to past studies in some way. Quantifiable data is collected, correlated and evaluated so that its findings, for the most part, have significant potential to be successfully manipulated to sustain the assertions and claims of the original research question. The end results of such research is a study that is most applicable to the research model itself or in some very generalized fashion to other related issues.

The aesthetic perspective methodology has what Eisner would probably refer to as an "expressive learning objective."<sup>33</sup> In this type of research, the main focus is not so much on the actual knowledge gained, but more on the experiential encounter itself. The learning experience becomes not only unique it becomes very personal. The personal nature of the experience is anything but objective. Consequently, aesthetics, by its nature, coerces viewers (in our case - subjects) to be subjective as they take a moral or political position on the presented material (the piece). The viewer cannot be neutral.

### **DATA ANALYSIS IN THE ARTISTIC-AESTHETIC RESEARCH MODE**

In the artistic-aesthetic perspective, an inductive supposition, based upon a demonstrated human abstract value that has been portrayed in a specific actual real life situation, is formulated. This perspective is explored through the eyes and feelings of educators (in this case) who have experienced any number of sides of the selected supposition issue. These experiences (data) are not to be viewed as "collected knowledge" with typical coding as recurring trends, happenings or instances (as would be the case in a standard qualitative research protocol), but more in a "humanistic" framework. In such an environment, the impressions and responses from the interview (data collection) correspond more to a reflective proactive not reactive thinking. The consequence of the analysis serves to formulate the inherent thematic possibilities for likely plot lines and character profiles.

The final outcome of this research is a provoking dramatic insight with a clear, specific microcosmic application. The end purpose is not so much to discover a "trend" in the field. It is more to provoke a viewer (a targeted group of educational administrators) to probe, question and compare their personal and probable actions if they were in a similar situation (to that of the piece) as compared to those characters represented in the piece. The assumption here is that such

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<sup>33</sup>Elliot W. Eisner, "Building Curricula For Art Education," *Aesthetics and Problems of Education*, ed. Ralph A. Smith, (Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1971), 393.

true examples provide a clear and reflexive reality for a viewer (in our case an active educational administrator).

Much of the working procedure of the data collection process and its manipulation, employed many of Denzin's six steps to interpretation:<sup>34</sup>

- 1- framing the research question;
- 2- deconstruction and critical analysis of prior conceptions of the phenomenon;
- 3- capturing the phenomenon, including locating and situating it in the natural world and obtaining multiple instances of it;
- 4- bracketing the phenomenon, reducing it to its essential elements, and cutting it loose from the natural world so that its essential structures and features may be uncovered;
- 5- construction, or putting the phenomenon back together in terms of its essential parts and pieces, and structures; and
- 6- contextualization or relocating the phenomenon back in the natural social world.

Such elements of the steps as prior conceptions, phenomenon, natural world, and contextualization have been consistently adapted (as the needs arise) during the project's genesis. These steps were abridged to fit the needs of the responses in the script creation element of the project. Performers and production personnel, to consistent with the interpretation, also used these six steps to assist them in their preparation of their selected parts in the piece.

Therefore, three adaptations of Denzin's six steps were viewed within this project. The first application concerned itself the first-time analysis of the data. It consisted of identifying and probing the data in terms of classifying actions, reactions, procedures (standard and improvisational) of both the administrative personnel and their respective organizations (deconstruction). We listened to the "crisis" at both the personal and organization levels by capturing the angst of the interviewees in their journey through such phenomena (capture and bracketing).

The next ongoing process was to study the interviewees' individual and collective decision making process in a context of

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<sup>34</sup>Denzin, 48.

*Action → reaction → decision → consequence*

followed by a sequencing process of the actual actions (construction). This led to formulating the evolving thematic cause-and-effect relationships derived from the interviewees' experience(s) and isolating the real and assumed purpose of the event for the interviewee (contextualization).

The cumulative contextualization of the data resulted in the foundation of one or more thematic plot line possibilities, characters, settings, and other structural members of the dramatic piece.

The second adaptation came about with the working script. It was in this stage of the project that the production team and I came together and dissected the script for production preparation. Denzin's steps were also employed during this discussion procedure. The third adaptation occurred with the actors and myself. I used Denzin's steps as starting-off points for their on-stage preparation. The dramatic piece metamorphosed from the two-dimensional script to the physical reality of live production. The human elements along with the actors' collective interpretation of the work and the ensuing transformation to the three-dimensional reality of a working, breathing stage piece re-defined and re-directed some of the data's analysis and innuendoes.

### **DATA PRESENTATION - MIRRORS OF REALITY**

A theatre (or drama) presentational format, regardless of the writing style, by its inherent nature promises a workable "reality." The thought and association of the viewer with the piece can provoke such intimate and private thoughts that it will first challenge the viewer to think about his/her personal procedures and second to incite discussion within the field. As is the purpose of all theatre presentations, the themes and their contents must be justifiable in terms of the viewer's discoveries of his/her personal realities and second, in relation to the piece itself as an *object d'art* (in this case) vehicle.

This is not to imply that different research methods do not cross over and share techniques, objectives and similar goals. Each method's end results have different uses.

However, I believe the artistic-aesthetic approach will become a typology employed more and more in administration teaching and learning applications, especially for the working administrator who on a daily basis must deal with grass-roots issues more than larger-in-scope issues. In the field already many researchers (Sergiovanni, Guba and Getzels, Eisner, to name a few) consistently use "real life" peoples and places in a descriptive style to illustrate their theories. By association, the application of those theories to the working administrator can be very real.

*Theatre as representation* is a highly sophisticated interactive representation vehicle. Due to the performance medium, the method instantly incites reaction and association to the subject matter. This is its major difference from a case history or other descriptive two-dimensional presentational format. It is simultaneously live, immediate, reflexive and most important, due to its subjective nature, it forces the viewer to take an immediate position on what is presented.

### EXAMPLES OF THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION

*Theatre as representation* is not an entirely new concept in educational administration. There are several examples, however written in very different styles. In the first of Fenwick English's scenes, "The Principal as Conflict Mediator,"<sup>35</sup> a conflict is construed between members of a school's English department, where the Principal is depicted as an outstanding mediator. Written in a highly "academic" and conflict style, the scene portrays professionals arguing politely and the Principal, as leader, defining problems, clarifying issues and stakes, presenting evolving alternative solutions and the like. In his next scene, "The Principal/Superintendent Interface,"<sup>36</sup> a dialog occurs between two honest and honorable administrators from different sides of the administration coin. The story line concerns communication assumptions between the two levels of administration and how misinterpretations

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<sup>35</sup>English, 211-221.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 227-241.

incur due to the “laying on” of mandates. English’s dramatic writing style clearly does not have “provocation” as its *raison d’être*. It is more a reflective idealistic narrative style. However, the use of dramatic presentation does succeed in presenting a working conflict even though English’s motivation appears to be more academically illustrative than theatrically viable.

Matthew Meyer’s, “The Marginalization of the Principal,”<sup>37</sup> is a full one-act play which depicts an independent school’s search committee in negotiations in their quest for a new Principal. The school community’s constituents are in a clear power struggle for control. It was written with a highly confrontational conception and was designed specifically for an educational administrator audience. The piece clearly reflects a “political” issue within a “school community” in a showdown environment. Key in the content was the exposure of the school’s cultural and sub-cultural groupings within the key political decision-makers of the school.<sup>38</sup>

As a research methodological experiment, it forced its viewers to choose sides on the presented administration issue, its resolution and the use of the theatre format. In its first public presentation (in the form of a dramatic reading), it instigated a profound open debate and angst among the viewers.<sup>39</sup> There was clearly a division between those who believed that this research method was not valid within a positivistic-quantitative framework because of its “story-like” approach. The more qualitative oriented researchers in the audience loudly attacked this stand. They defended the method proclaiming that first, the content of the piece was truthful and realistic; second, it insidiously forced viewers to take a stand on the issue and question themselves; and third, because it successfully created within each viewer an alter persona while clearly associating with one of the presented characters. An additional debate arose regarding the

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<sup>37</sup>See footnote 2.

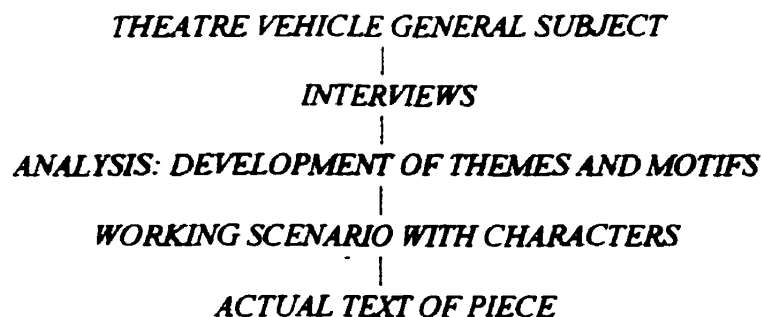
<sup>38</sup>The theoretical foundations are based primarily upon the works of Vijay Sathe, *Culture and Related Corporate Realities*, (Homewood: Richard D. Irwin, 1985); and Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Boss, 1985).

<sup>39</sup>Presented at the CSSE/CASEA Annual Convention, Carleton University, Ottawa. Its Presentation clearly incensed some, outraged others and found acceptable by still more as both a provocation piece in the field of educational administration and as a scholarly research project.



feasibility and acceptability of such an artistic-aesthetic qualitative research methodology in educational administration. By the end of session, the consensus was in favor of its potential.

### DESIGN PARADIGM



### SOME CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES

For this project, the theatre vehicle general subject (plot or story line) concerns the area of Principal selection in a Montreal area anglophone secondary public school. Principal selection is always of concern to all community constituents. The senior educational leader and manager of a secondary school institution, as mentioned earlier, wears many hats. As an authority figure for all community constituents, his or her selection also commits a school to a person as well as a philosophy. Sergiovanni<sup>40</sup> goes into great depth revealing the components of the school principal. The selection process of the principal varies from Board to Board.

In two major anglophone Montreal Boards, the final acclamation of a principal lies within the approval of the Board of Commissioners, the elected governing body of the school commission itself. By this alone, the selection process is in part, if not all, a political one. The final selection is influenced by the political, social and ethnic views of all concerned constituents: the Board of Commissioners, the school itself with its parent and student agendas, and the

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<sup>40</sup>See footnote 8 and Thomas Sergiovanni, *The Principalship: A Reflective Practice Perspective*, 2d. ed., (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991).

“visionary” direction of the other major player - the Provincial Ministry of Education with its mandate, subsequent protocols and requirements.

The “Principal selection” is the story issue for this project. The background begins with administrators themselves. The kernel for this concept was based on the following. One large Montreal school board, in 1992, created an entire leadership program for prospective administrators. Even with this program, almost all newly appointed Principals from 1992 were candidates who had never participated in this program.<sup>41</sup> Presumably, this was due to the political wants of the Commissioners of the Boards. The issue here is one of power brokering and hence a “true” subject for inquiry.

The purpose of this project was to create a reflection and transformation vehicle for the viewer. The scenario context and content were highly subjective by design. As a provocation device, the piece was designed to awake, irritate and initiate the internal beliefs of its viewers. Each narrative had its own unique personality and tone. The data grounding brought the required verisimilitude to both scenario and presentation even with some of the problems with typical coding paradigms, since they tended to be based upon an empirical approach to the data.<sup>42</sup> The personality of each interviewee, together with myself as interviewer, inevitably flavored the perspective of each narrative.

The transformation from data through analysis to scenario is multi-dimensional. It is two-dimensional in that the data analysis, with its codings (areas of reference, and spheres of infra-influence, see Chapter 4) and interpretations, culminates in a document (a script) that resembles more an empirical-objectivistic looking text. It then became a three-dimensional

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<sup>41</sup>The Board of Commissioners of this particular Board, in 1995 cancelled the program believing it was unnecessary. However, many “insiders” believed it was due so that certain commissioners would not lose their power to appoint whomever they wanted as opposed to going through a more scrutinizing process.

<sup>42</sup>Strauss, 25.

highly subjectivist vehicle onstage with its live interpretation. In both dimensional frameworks, it provoked controversy.

### PRESENTATION FORMATS

There are two creation steps for *theatre as representation* after the data has been analyzed. The first is a "background scenario"<sup>43</sup> which depicts all the events and criteria that lead up to the theatrical piece itself. Much like a short story, the scenario establishes the characters with their conflicts and personalities. The stakes of the vehicle are clearly established: the what-is-to-be-gained and the what-is-be-lost within the conflict. There are no gray zones within the scenario. It is written in the third person in a fairly two-dimensional narrative style. This story foundation sets up and leads to the second section - the theatrical piece itself. The audience does not read the scenario since it serves as the nourishment for the piece.

The second creation step is the piece itself. As in all theatrical presentations, its thematic foundations must be clearly set and clearly discernible early on in the piece. It is dialog text with no description for the viewer. Its three-dimensional live actors represent and portray the direction and goals rather in a insidious subliminal flow of conflict and dialog.

### CONCLUSION

The piece is unique in its form and manner. It is not a case study or story or surface description of a phenomenon. It is a live representation with a primary intent to provoke its viewers to play critic and serve as a proxy (in their own mind) character or participant. This occurs in the passive state of an observer. The goal of provocation is to force the viewers into taking a stand (in both ethics and practice) on the presented conflict as they are watching the piece unfold. The act of provocation in and of itself can initiate discourse between the viewers themselves. In other words, the play provokes dialog within the viewer, challenging what one "knows" or thinks one "knows." After viewing the piece, they can review their positions and

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<sup>43</sup>In this dissertation see Appendix 3, "The Novella."

hopefully initiate a discussion of proactive strategies to resolve the presented issues' conflicts. The issues are either of a personal or human (of the character) nature, of an organizational political structure or a combination of the two. Administrators are leaders and decision-makers. They deal with real, sometimes heartbreaking, issues, not purely theoretical ones. *Theatre as representation* is a research and presentation methodology that assists the field administrator in clarifying his/her decision-making protocols. Eventually, if successful, the play could be employed as a teaching tool in administrator preparation or perhaps as an animation tool for use at conferences for working administrators.

## CHAPTER FOUR - DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the journey through the data and its grounding. In this study the “data collection” and the “data analysis” are intrinsically intertwined, therefore they have been included the same chapter. As will be seen, the data - the interview contents, serve as both factual information and as potential story and character profiles. Consequently, throughout this “analysis” journey, the underlying *raison d’être* for the data is always that the data serves as the inspirational first steps for the piece’s life. There are several key questions that are pervasive, ubiquitous and filter into the analysis:

- 1- At what time does the transition between the researcher and the artist occur?
- 2- What is the path from the grounding of the data and the data management to the transcendence into the creative work?
- 3- What are validation and trustworthiness in an inspired creative work?

There are data management rules or guidelines and there are playwriting guidelines. They are not mutually exclusive. Much of this chapter describes the course of the data management guideline. The one great challenge in writing a play is defining the theme or purpose of the piece itself. In this instance this theme must have several specific aspects. Primarily, its end result must provoke its audience into questioning their own personal problem-solving mechanisms in comparison or contrast to the presented scenario and its finale. This is not to provoke value judgments on the part of the viewers, in the sense of the scenario’s realism; it is more to vex the viewers, through their personal imaginative prowess, to be silent invisible participants in the scenario.

Secondly, this theatrical piece’s thematic scenario must also be grounded from, or perhaps in, reality-based “inspired” creations. These creations must have a more than marginal amount of truth. At minimum, the piece must have an appeal to the relative experience sense of each individual viewer. The prospective audience members are deemed to be active professional

secondary school administrators. The characters, issues and conflicts must immediately relate to each viewer's reality.

The data that inspires these theatrical elements must be factual. The plot scenarios and created characters can only be founded on material spoken, inferred and referred to from the actual data. Factual evidence is the link between the "scientific" data grounding methodology and theatre "aesthetics and art production" creation end products. A theatrical piece is not theoretical. It is real. Relative truth, for this project's success, was the required compositional element. As previously mentioned, the jump-off point from data to transcendence is not clear. Since "inspiration" is a highly individual constituent of one's (in this case a playwright) personality, each journey of inspiration is different from the next. This will be dealt with more detail in Chapter 5.

At the outset we explore the following questions:

- 1- What data is appropriate for this type of inquiry?
- 2- How will this data reduce itself into understandable or workable categories?
- 3- How will validation be defined?
- 4- What validation mechanisms will be employed?

## PART 1- DATA AGENDA

Based upon concepts from Miles and Huberman (1984)<sup>44</sup> the following data agenda was fabricated to be completed in four broad steps:

*Data collection:* Extended interviews are to be conducted with individuals directly involved in the process under scrutiny. The interviews will be transcribed, read and reread.

*Data reduction:* The data will be analyzed and reduced through a sorting into distinct detailed categories and subsequently into four areas of concern.

*Data display:* Using an adapted *rules of inclusion* approach, the data will be further clarified into clearly defined patterns of behavior by administrators.

*Conclusions: drawing and verifying:* The conclusions will be drawn from the "rules of inclusion" (to be discussed later on in this chapter).

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<sup>44</sup>M. B. Miles and Michael Huberman. "Drawing Valid Meanings From Qualitative Data: Toward a Shared Craft." *Educational Researcher* (May, 1984): 20-30.

In this application, the rules will serve as part of the findings. The findings will also include directions for the theatrical play (or "piece"). There are two types of verification for this project - internal data and external view. These will be discussed later on in the chapter.

### *DATA COLLECTION*

The data was collected in two time periods: June 1995-February 1996 and January 1997-February 1997. The targeted interview group (a purposeful sample) was composed of experienced administrators. An educational administrator had referred each subject to me on the basis of personal knowledge. On my first contact with the subject, I always mentioned that "so and so" had referred me to them. This was an important credibility element. It also made the subject feel "respected" by a peer.

There was a clear defined strategy with the interview process itself. Both the questions and the questioning order were deliberately designed to allow the subject:

- 1- to feel comfortable with me as the interviewer;
- 2- to believe that the information he or she was supplying was both important and useful for a 'worthwhile' piece of scholarship;
- 3- to realize that his or her time spent with me would be time well spent.

The interview questions were guided by a *naturalistic inquiry* paradigm. This has become standard fare for much of the current qualitative research, for it is based upon interviews as its primary source. Much of the interview's protocols are founded in Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985).<sup>45</sup> However, many researchers have based their methodology in similar or other grounds such as a psychological phenomenological outlook, Giorgio (1985), sociological, Goffman (1959), and narrative, Reissman (1993).<sup>46</sup> Both Denzin (1989) and

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<sup>45</sup>Y. Lincoln, E. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, (Newbury: Sage, 1985).

<sup>46</sup>A. Giorgio, "Sketch of a Phenomenological Method," in *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, (1985); E. Goffman, *The Presentation Of Self in Everyday Life*, (Garden City: Anchor, 1959); C. Reissman, *Narrative Analysis*, (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993).

Seidman (1991)<sup>47</sup> influenced the construction of the actual questions and interviewing guidelines, especially during the latter interviews.

The interviews had several goals. In this application they are posed as questions:

- 1- What are the series of principal selection parameters that typify this principal selection process?
- 2- What are the personality characteristics of working administrators and candidates for senior administrative positions?
- 3- What are the conflicts that arise in the process of principal selection?
- 4- What are the underlying moral and ethical issues that will lead to the eventual thematic foundations of the piece?

### *A TYPICAL INTERVIEW*

This journey begins with the interviews. Each interview participant (referred to as respondent or subject) was either a current or recently retired administrator. The years of field experience for each interviewee ranged from between 25 to 35 years. Every administrator has been, or continues to be, a field practitioner, has made administrative decisions, taken risks, made mistakes and has had great victories in the field of education.

The subject determined the time and locale of each interview. The interview's "comfort" level had to be high. My goal, with a very "open ended" series of questions, was for the subject to feel relaxed so that the interview would take on a more *conversation aura* than a straightforward business-like session. Typically, each question's responses led to a series of probing questions. The responses, even if they went off topic a bit, permitted the subject to expand on his or her observations and lend further credibility to the interview. It showed a concerned interest on my part and usually led to deeper underlying issues of the educational arena.

The following interview guide served as the skeleton of each interview.

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<sup>47</sup>N. Denzin, *Interpretive Interactionism*, (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989); I. Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research. A Guide For Researchers and the Social Sciences*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991).



## **INTERVIEW GUIDE: PRINCIPALSHIP SELECTION STUDY**

### **PART 1- OPENING**

#### **1- INTRODUCTIONS**

**2- THE STUDY - I WANT TO DEVELOP A PLAY THAT EXPOSES ISSUES RELATED TO THE SELECTION AND PROMOTION OF EDUCATORS TO THE POSITION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. IN PARTICULAR, I WANT TO DRAW UPON YOUR EXPERIENCE - WITH SPECIFIC CASES OF PROMOTION, OR THE LACK THEREOF AND THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THEM. MY INTENTION IS TO INTERVIEW A NUMBER OF EDUCATORS AND WRITE A PLAY THAT IS BASICALLY DESCRIPTIVE AND REVEALING OF THIS PERSONNEL PHENOMENON WITHIN THE QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE CONTEXT.**

#### **3- GUARANTEES**

**A- COMPLETE ANONYMITY FOR YOURSELF, YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND THE PEOPLE YOU MENTION.**

**B- I WOULD LIKE TO TAPERECD THE INTERVIEW. NO ONE BUT MYSELF WOULD HEAR THE TAPE.**

**C- THE CONSENT FORM**

**D- IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW?**

**E- CAN WE BEGIN?**

### **PART 2 - BODY**

#### ***1- QUESTIONS: BACKGROUND***

**A- WOULD YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CAREER AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?**

#### ***2- QUESTIONS: PROMOTION***

**A- CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE "OFFICIAL"<sup>48</sup> PRACTICE, PROCEDURE OR POLICY THAT YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM USES IN PROMOTING INDIVIDUALS TO THE PRINCIPALSHIP OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL?**

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<sup>48</sup>Such words as "official, unofficial" may or may not have been used depending upon the position of the interviewer in the actual selection process. Other phrases would be used, for example, "formal or informal." There was a risk that there may have existed a subliminal agenda on my part, however I do not think this was the case.

(PROBE FOR ANYTHING ELSE)

B- CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE "UNOFFICIAL" PRACTICE, PROCEDURE OR POLICY THAT AUGMENTS THE OFFICIAL POLICY?<sup>49</sup>

(PROBE FOR ANYTHING ELSE)

C- PLEASE THINK BACK TO THE LAST FEW YEARS. CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT A FEW CASES YOU ARE AWARE OF THAT ILLUSTRATE TYPICAL AND ATYPICAL<sup>50</sup> PROMOTIONS? PLEASE DESCRIBE THE CASES IN SOME DETAIL.

(PROBE FOR OTHER CASES OR POINTS)

D- IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF AT THIS POINT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ME ABOUT PROMOTION TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP?

### **3- QUESTIONS: PERSONNEL**

A- IN YOUR EXPERIENCE DOES THE CURRENT PROCEDURE WORK SUCCESSFULLY? DO EXEMPLARY PEOPLE GET SELECTED FOR THE PRINCIPALSHIP?

B- DESCRIBE WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCEDURE?

C- WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE THAT ARE APPOINTED BUT FAIL AT BEING SUCCESSFUL AT THE PRINCIPALSHIP?

D- WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE SELECTED CANDIDATES AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN APPOINTED?

E- WHY DOES A PERSON WHO SEEKS A SECONDARY PRINCIPALSHIP NEVER GET IT?

### **PROBE QUESTIONS**

A- WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT SUCH ISSUES AS:

- AGE
- GENDER
- INSIDER VS. OUTSIDER
- ETHNIC, RACE, RELIGION. ETC.

B- WHAT IS THE ONE PHENOMENON OF A CANDIDATE THAT MUST SATISFY YOU IN ORDER TO APPOINT THAT CANDIDATE?

<sup>49</sup>Many questions and follow-up questions were of a "leading" type. Subjectivity, or a point of view was sought. Therefore, in many cases leading questions also served as part of the verification process. Or in some cases, where another interviewee had responded to the same incident mentioned, a leading question was used as a quasi-triangulation verification medium.

<sup>50</sup>Similar to footnote 48, other phrases could be employed depending on the perspective and position of the subject.

**C- (PROBE RESPONSES)**

**D- IMAGINE YOURSELF SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE WATCHING A PLAY ABOUT ADMINISTRATION. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?**

- WHAT ISSUES?
- WHAT TYPES OF CHARACTERS?

**PART 3- CLOSING**

- 1- THANK YOU
- 2- WOULD YOU BE AVAILABLE FOR A SECOND INTERVIEW?
- 3- WOULD YOU RECOMMEND SOME COLLEAGUES OR OTHERS FOR ME TO INTERVIEW?

Typically each interview lasted between one hour and two hours. Usually it was after the first section, dealing with the subject's background, that I felt that the subject was warmed-up and felt comfortable towards the interview. I believe this was due to the satisfaction resulting from the telling of one's personal history. It gave credibility to the process. It also enabled the respondent to expand his or her answers including examples from and references to real-life experiences. In effect, one anecdote led to another anecdote and so on. This allowed me to offer summation statements for the respondent to agree or disagree with, to expand to another inquiry method or zero in on a specific point.

The following example from interview A6M, lines 4650-4695 illustrate this point. The interviewer's questions and comments are in italics. The summation question begins at the (\*\*), In this example, the respondent was discussing how school board commissioners deal with giving, or in some cases, bestowing the final approval on a principalship candidate.

*I would assume though, as an elected official they sort of set policy, but as an administrative appointee they would carry out policy, so consequently it's part of the mandate of either this department or the DG as to come up with a short list upon which the commissioners have the final word.*

That's right.

*It's basically an official rubber-stamping. But it's not turning out that way.*

Not entirely. Because what you say is true. That's the way it should work and the short list should go to the them. However, who gets on the short list?

*So that's the element here that we don't see.*

*That's right, that's right.*

*Could you describe a few specific cases that you can think of without mentioning names or mention names and I won't mention them?*

Sure. I can think of a recent case where the job description says a minimum of 5 years or 8 years depending on the position for the job in terms of teacher experience. Well, I can think of a case where the teacher had only been teaching 4 years and has been placed into an administrative position. Because the commissioners liked that particular individual. Now having said that, I can also think of a case back in 69 where a young friend of mine, a lady teacher, was promoted after 3 years in the classroom by the people who made the decisions at that time who were the administrators. So now people, when this happened recently, people got very indignant at the politicians. It hasn't changed, it's just a different group that's making the final decisions, seems to me.

[lines 4678-4682]\*\* *What you're also saying is that the commissioners who are not the front line administrators, they may feel they have a political need depending on whatever ... They appoint people, in effect, in many cases they may be appointing the wrong people for the wrong reasons*

*Yes they may be ...*

*And the retaliatory effect ...*

And there is always a danger of that, although on one hand these politicians generally know their communities very well. They only really influence the schools within their region and they may only have two or three schools within their particular area. So within that community of 2 or 3 schools, they got elected because they knew the people who went and vote. I think they're fairly sensitive.

*On a certain level.*

*Yeah, on a certain level, yeah.*

At this point, in the interview, this led to a discussion that revealed much insight into the moral and ethical ramifications of school board commissioner interference in school commission policies and protocols. From this point on, as in most of the interviews, the respondent's comments would go back and forth on a variety of related issues.

The structure of the interview began with a general question followed by series-specific "probing" follow-up questions. When most of the questions were sufficiently answered and the respondent felt very relaxed, the final series of questions began. The thrust of this series of questions began with asking the subject, "In your capacity as an administrator, sitting in a theatre setting and watching a piece on educational administration, what scenario would you want to see?" After usually a bit of pause, or perhaps a bit of questioning concerning the question, the

responses consistently revealed a wanting for a confrontation between high end board officers and board-elected commissioners. Since a theatrical piece is a highly subjective - not objective - work, the interview itself cannot be a passive conversation. It must result in a relationship of "trust" and truth - a mutual "gut" friendship-like bond between the subject (respondent) and researcher. Every respondent in some way indicated that subjectivity is a large and critical element of leadership, decision-making and administrative life. Respondents answered questions honestly and where they believed they could not answer honestly or completely they stated such. A point of view was assumed.<sup>51</sup>

## **PART 2- DATA REDUCTION**

There were 13 interviews in total. The chosen interviewees were not randomly selected. The interviews are defined as the data. This data, after reduction and analysis, served as the inspirational ignition spikes for the theatrical piece. Inductive conventions were required in order for the data to speak out in terms of personalities, issues, dilemmas, settings and human strengths and frailties.

Since the core of this project concerned high-ranking administrative decision-making protocols, only experienced administrators were targeted as interview subjects. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a cross-section of respondents was required. For the project's purposes, experienced administrators were defined as administrators who had a minimum of ten years teaching experience and a minimum of three years in one administrative post.

The interviews were completed in four successive stages. The first stage designated recently retired high-end board level administrators who had spent many years in many positions in administration except assistant director general or director general. These administrators, for the most part, had followed a career path that included such positions as department head, vice-principal, principal and board level mandarin (e.g. educational services, personnel, special

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<sup>51</sup>See Riessman, 64.

education, special projects, etc.). These retired administrators set the initial parameters and set the tone. They had no allegiances to their former school board employers, no loyalties to protect, and had no qualms reporting anything they each felt about their respective boards, colleagues or current school board policies and politics. More importantly, in terms of the principal-selection process, they each had participated in the creation, implementation or process of different protocols throughout their respective careers.

The second group of respondents was active vice-principals and principals. These were considered as “line” (as in “on the front line”) administrators. They dealt with the day-to-day challenges and responsibilities of running and directing a secondary school. They were “local level” policy makers – within their own school. They executed administrative and/or bureaucratic directives from their school commission’s central office. Line level administrators were also the communication first links between students, parents and the school commission. In fact, they served almost as a public relations arm for the school commission. School Principals and Vice-Principals were also responsible for the supervision of their school’s teaching and support staffs, student affairs such as curriculum implementation; time-tabling, health and safety and student behavior standards and discipline as it applied to their school. It is quite clear that the school itself did “belong” to the Principal. Their perspective on administration was from on the receiving end of commission policies. They were not often consulted in commission-wide policy creation. Interaction with Board Commissioners was usually limited to contact with the elected Ward Commissioner responsible for their school.

The third group was in-service Regional Directors and Commission Department Heads. A Regional Director is an administrator who is responsible for all the schools within a designated geographical ward. A Commission Department Head is responsible for a specific administrative body such as personnel, curriculum, special education, secondary education, educational services, and the like. Both Regional Directors and Commission Department Heads were typically first very experienced Principals. They knew intimately the realm of requirements for operating a

school. It was at this level that involvement with Board Commissioners it was shown on a constant level.

The fourth and final group was Director Generals. A Director General is the highest appointed administrator of a school commission. The Director General is responsible for the entire operation of a school commission. He or she typically has had lengthy experiences at all the previously mentioned positions of administration.

The group that is conspicuously missing is Board Commissioners themselves. The Commissions, at the last minute, refused to participate in the study.

### **PART 3 - TRANSCRIPTION PROCEDURE, ANALYSIS INTO AREAS OF REFERENCE, AND THEN INTO SPHERES OF INFRA-INFLUENCE**

#### ***THE TRANSCRIPTION PROCESS AND PROCEDURE***

All interviews were tape-recorded. After the interviews were completed, a word-by-word transcription of the interviews was initiated. Prevailing wisdom suggests that interviews be transcribed immediately after recording. However, I purposely waited until all the interviews were completed before transcribing them. This was for a specific purpose. From a playwright's view, I wanted to feel for each respondent's "soul" and "gut" and each respondent immediately in turn. As I listened to the voices of the interview (the subject and myself), I discovered that many of my initial "gut" feelings of the individual interviewees had changed. Perhaps it was due to the time between the interview and the transcription that I found myself more understanding and less biased, towards or against those interviewees I had perceived some "hidden agenda" or perhaps felt threatened, to some degree, with some of the questions and responses of the interview session.

The actual physical act of transcribing the interviews was completed in two months. The transcription procedure included using a Dictaphone Model 2750 Express Plus Standard Cassette Voice Processor unit. Microsoft Word, version 6 was the employed word processing program

using an IBM compatible operating system. Each transcribed line is numbered sequentially from the first line of the first interview to the last line of the last interview.

*DATA ANALYSIS (GROUNDING) –  
STEP 1- INTO AREAS OF REFERENCE*

This transcription process compelled me to become a more open listener. It was a catharsis. With each examination (the combined reading and listening of an interview), a more lucid vision of the issues came into focus. Allowing for the inductive analytical process to take its course, in the second reading, the data began to fall into *areas of reference* (my term).

The grounding of the data (the interviews' content) was an evolving phenomenon. It germinated several simultaneous inquiry-like seedlings: actual administrative issues, clear principal appointment procedural protocols, personal (of the subject's) values and moral questions, school commission ethics, personal courage and decision making. From the outset, it was clear that these seedlings have a synergetic (working together) interconnection with each other. In an almost osmotic (a subtle or gradual absorption or mingling) fashion, they symbiotically (the living together of two dissimilar organisms especially when this association is mutually beneficial) live within each other. These areas came clear with each examination of the data. Objectivity was not a given or expected. All respondents in some way indicated that subjectivity is a large and critical element of leadership, decision-making and administrative life. The *areas of reference* resulted in what eventually became a hybrid-like classification system. The responses both individually and collectively surreptitiously found their way into categories of professional, causal, philosophical, and spiritual natures. On the third reading I narrowed them into more specific areas. With the aid of high-lighters, I color coded each transcription line into one of the following specific areas as follows:

- orange: principal characteristics, selection processes;
- purple: personal goals;
- green: pedagogy;
- blue: leadership references;
- fluorescent yellow: any reference to politics;



- pink: ethics and values;
- dark yellow: evaluation of any sort;
- rose: school board officials or school commission policies;
- fluorescent green: references to potential plot scenarios for the eventual theatrical piece.

It is important to note that these *areas of reference* are specific distinct categorical subject data bases. With each subsequent examination of the data, these areas spread out and were re-grouped into more broad encompassing data base groupings. This was finalized by the fifth examination. These areas can also be looked upon in a framework protocol of *working from the general to the specific*. I was always asking myself the question, “What is this person saying to me?” This necessitated and led to a more detailed breakdown of these areas using an adaptation of the constant comparison method. This resulted in a component-building inquiry paradigm loosely based upon a *rule of inclusion* structure.

#### STEP 2-

#### *DATA REDUCTION INTO SPHERES OF INFRA-INFLUENCE AND THEN INTO RULES OF INCLUSION ADAPTATION*

These more broad-based data groupings are labeled *spheres of infra-influence* (my term). They are made up of clusters of factored data rooted from the initial areas of reference. The distinctive element of each sphere is that the sphere's data areas are independent, in the sense of a category, but can '*influence*' or be influenced by other factored data from within sphere. Hence the "*infra*". In other words, the information clusters and inter-links within the areas of reference and influences each other. Metaphorically it acts much the same way siblings factor within families: they are independently dependent on each other.

There were four *spheres of infra-influence* reduced from the data:

- 1- principal selection characteristics, procedures, requirements;
- 2- personal goals;
- 3- politics;
- 4- ethics-politics.

Such domains as pedagogy and evaluation affected all of the spheres' data reductions. Similarly, both theoretical concepts and actual field administrative experience permeated all spheres. These were the common threads shared among the spheres.

As previously stated, the results of the data reduction are to primarily inspire, animate, and motivate the creation of story lines, thematic foundations, and character types for the piece. It is at this point where the bulk of the research takes on a transformative, or perhaps transcendentative direction from normative qualitative research protocols and conventions. There are several critical objectives of the research genre of *THEATRE AS REPRESENTATION*. The key word is representation. There are many parameters to the use of the term. Here are a few: "representations - a description or statement as of things true or alleged; a Lockean form of subjective idealism in which the perception of an object represents exactly the primary qualities of the object itself; the practice or principle of representing or depicting an object in a recognizable manner, especially the portrayal of the surface characteristics of an object as they appear to the eye."<sup>52</sup> The notions of *things true or alleged and portrayal of the surface characteristics* are closest to the theatre aspect of the project. If the goals are to capture the spirit of administrative dilemmas then exact verisimilitude is not required. It is assumed that the viewers of such a dramatic piece will recognize the ethical, personal and professionalism of the portrayed dilemmas. Subsequent to that, the research must *project the representations* of the piece.

Where does this leave the process of data reduction? Data reduction in this application forges into overlapping spheres of *infra-influence*, which, from an aesthetic-philosophical viewpoint, are conceived through the administrative beliefs (and their subsequent implementations) that were derived through the actual actions (described from and throughout the data). Actual issues are never in isolation. They supplant and infiltrate each other. In due time,

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<sup>52</sup>*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (Unabridged)*, (1971).

they ultimately coalesce and through a morphogenesis of sorts generate a credible story line and characters. To get to morphogenesis, the next step was to take the *spheres of infra-influence* as collection points for rules of inclusion.

#### *RULES OF INCLUSION ADAPTATION*

The use of the rules of inclusion (ROI) concept has been adapted for use in this application. Actually, the ROI application is integrated with two other analysis formulas: part of Denzin's "Six Steps of Interpretation" and Lincoln and Guba's "the constant comparative method of data analysis."<sup>53</sup> This hybrid use of three analysis formulas has a specific purpose and that is to create a data analysis formula to fit the responses in the script creation element of the project. Further, to keep consistent with the interpretation, the eventual selected actors will use an adaptation of this analysis formula to assist them in the preparation of their selected roles in the eventual dramatic piece.

Rules of inclusion are results of data analysis using the constant comparative method are explained by Maykut and Morehouse.<sup>54</sup> Briefly, this method consists of analyzing the data by systematically coding the data into distinct categories as it appears in some defined manner (in this case the order of interviews). A distillation is formulated regarding the foundational concept of each distinct category. For the purposes of this study, the categories are deduced from within each sphere of infra-influence.

The continual grounding of the data therefore must serve at least two functions: first the function of the research in the sense of determining elements of a relative reality of truth; second, the function of theatre production (*mise en scène*, character and role preparation, and the like). ROI adaptation (to include aspects of Denzin's and Lincoln and Guba's works) accordingly will focus the areas of infra-influence in terms of creating such rules (or perhaps causal and/or

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<sup>53</sup>Y. Lincoln and E. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, (Newbury: Sage, 1985).

<sup>54</sup>P. Maykut and R. Morehouse, *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*, (London: The Falmer Press, 1994).

conceptual frameworks) for the data analysis, interpretation of the data and the personal directions of the actions/reactions of the respondents.

As previously mentioned, the process of the data reduction through ROI was executed by analyzing and cutting up each interview in terms of the four spheres of infra-influence. There are some categories that have a more causal character as opposed to purely functional or descriptive demeanor. In some ways the ROI are part of the data analysis findings even though traditionally rules of inclusion tend to be deemed more a tool for data analysis. However, in terms of a theatre creation application, they guide the piece's playwright, director and cast into a fuller, more complete, understanding of the personalities of the eventual created characters, their professional environments and the interaction of these phenomena.

#### **PART 4 - RULES OF INCLUSION**

##### **SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 1: PRINCIPAL SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS, PROCEDURES, AND REQUIREMENTS**

*AREA: Principal Selection Characteristics, procedures, and requirements*

*CATEGORY: Selection protocols: historical aspects*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 1.1: Nepotism and "who you know" give way to selection committees because the needs of secondary education and fairness in the application practice are needed, and when examined, are upgraded.*

From almost all the interviews, the history of principal selection in most local school boards went through a similar growth. There had been three basic phases of principal selection procedures. Until the mid 1960's, the working concept for principalship selection was, "It appeared to me that the policy of the time was to feel the body, and if it was warm, they took it" (AR1M, 60-61).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>The interviewee identification code is as follows: the first letter is the category. A= administrator; R= retired; P= principal; VP= vice-principal; RD= regional director; DG= Director General. The number is his or her order of being interviewed. The letters M or F indicate gender. The numbers that follow are the line locations in the data. AR1M, 60-61 is administrator retired, first interviewed, male, lines 60-61. For dissertation purposes all interviewer transcript words are in italics. A [ - ] appears at the beginning of each different respondent or interview.

Through the population expansion and rapid school growth of the late sixties and seventies, a candidate's promotion was ordained by word of mouth from a principal to either a regional director or director general.

The second phase began sometime in the late seventies. Promotions were taken more seriously. Selection committees within the board structure were created to sift through needs and candidate applications. It was at this time that the first women applicants (for secondary school) began to appear. During the 1980's, formal structures were put in place. "We said, if you want to become an administrator you have to jump through certain hoops ... at best a structure," (AR1M, 137-139). "There were no formal procedures until in place until I went to the board in '86," (AR4F, 3000-3001). The third phase, in use since the late eighties, includes much of the following:

- At this point in time, let me answer that in 2 - there's a theoretical model and there's a real model. The theoretical model is the officers, that is the senior people in this building, they are 5 regional directors, directors of the major departments, there may be 3 or 4 people, and the 2 senior - the Director General and the DDG. Those people theoretically meet, go through the applications that people make, and have made over time, so there might be quite a large number of these. You're talking of 2000 teachers. So 10% is 200 applications, so 5% is a lot. These people will sit around and discuss, let's say they're looking at the following school year, they're starting maybe January, they're looking at where the needs are going to be, how many people are retiring, etc. so how many jobs are we looking for? And then they'll try and come up with a list of people who they believe will be suitable; and at the same time to move people from one school to another, so 2 things go: people are moving - lateral moves - and new people coming in. Now, the theory is that they are working with people who formally applied for promotion. Because they have met the criteria that's stated on the job applications, they send out these circulars and ask for people who have the basic qualifications and requirements and then they send in their c.v.'s etc. The next step, once they have made those decisions and think they have picked the appropriate people, they're supposed to take those recommendations to the commissioners (A6M, 4599-4614).

*AREA: Principal Characteristics, procedures, and requirements*

*CATEGORY: Selection protocols: the need for upgraded candidates*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 1.2: A candidate for principal or vice-principal is considered of a "higher quality" if they have gone through additional educational upgrading such as obtaining a masters degree, taken on leadership roles in the school, or participated in "principal training activities."*

In the major anglophone school boards during the early nineties, in-house principal training sessions or programs were in place where prospective principal candidates completed tasks, seminars and the like in such things as shadowing actual administrators, and special seminars in time-tabling, finance, discipline. If appointed, the next series of steps was being a

vice-principal for at least 3-5 years and then to principal. These training programs slowed down, were put on hold or abolished by June 1994.<sup>56</sup> It seemed that there was very little movement in promotions; a surplus of candidates accrued in most boards. However, in one major Montreal anglophone school commission, it was more political. (We will explore this further in the politics sphere).

Currently, the basic requirements or characteristics for a potential vice-principal and principal are: an interest in the role, demonstrated initiative in taking on leadership roles in and out of the classroom, building up a visible profile to those higher stationed in the command line, and some effort in furthering one's higher education (a master's degree or completion of the principal's certificate program through McGill University).

*AREA: Principal Characteristics, procedures, and requirements*

*CATEGORY: selection protocols: personality characteristics*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 1.3: an acceptable candidate must have the ability to establish successful communication procedures, be a keen listener, and be a collaborative team leader.*

- I look for a quick study. I look for quick intelligence, a person who either knows at if a question is phrased stupidly by the person who is phrasing it, is quick enough to say, "I don't understand the question, what are you trying to get at?" Somebody that isn't going to get sabotaged by somebody else's inability and also somebody who very directly answers the question and doesn't go on, droning on and on for 15 minutes or ... and that happens more often then not that people feel that they got to expel a lot of gas and they don't have to. They should direct themselves to the question and answer the question and then maybe say, "Do you want me to go on any further into this explanation?" or something along those lines. I'd say more people kill themselves in an interview by over-talking than under-talking (DG12M, 8598-8606).

- I look for a candidate. I think the given is academic strengths: intelligence, and also the ability to establish relationships and work collaboratively with individuals, a belief in the value of human beings and the understanding that the team at the school needs to be working together to produce the best results. We also have great interest in those who are strong believers in professional development, and our organization believes that learning is lifetime and we are. we are strengthened as an administrative group by people joining it who have demonstrated participation in growth activities - we have had a lot of students do their masters, a lot of teachers do their masters, and participated in the post grad program at McGill and other institutions. And we have people who have participated in institutes that just cover work. So we are really influenced by people open to further learning and development.

- So I can take that to mean you're looking more for an educator more than a manager? Would that be fair to say?

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<sup>56</sup>The documentation of the program has been obtained. However, the Board meeting minutes, which indicated the cancellation of the program, was unobtainable. It was a closed meeting. The creator of the program was one of the respondents to this study. Other respondents corroborated the demise of the program.

- Yes, an educator more than a manager but one who respects the need for some management (DG13M. 9408-9422).

The consensus is that a successful principal serves more as the educational leader of a school first before demonstrating his or her managing skills. The definition of "an educational leader" however is immense. The data indicates a trend to include such qualities as being a nurturer, a person of action, a very good listener, a promoter of professional development and a leader who strives towards consensus but not total democracy. This category covers quite a bit of ground in terms of both the requirements of the potential administrator and how the interviewer interprets what is witnessed during a candidate interview itself.

#### *SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 2: PERSONAL GOALS*

This general area was deceptive. The goals of being an administrator were, of course, always stated in hindsight. However, personal goals seemed to be very important and serve as motivation vehicles for many.

*AREA: Personal goals*

*CATEGORY: Non-altruistic*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 2.1: Becoming a administrator brings such compensation as financial reward, recognition as an authority figure and possibilities for career advancement in an otherwise non-promotion profession (teaching).*

- Has that question ever been asked? Why do you want to become principal?

- Oh yeah, sure sure. We ask that and we get snowed. No one is going to say to get more money, that'd be ridiculous to say that if you want the job. No, No, they say I'm at the point now where I want something different in my life, I like being responsible. No one has ever said I like the power. I like wearing a badge like a policeman has. That's part of it too, because of the psyche ... Why do you become a teacher? Put on a uniform ... You get a lot of respect ... not so much anymore. From the community you got a lot of respect, too. You don't get that anymore. Especially here, in (name of town), Everybody here has a Ph.D. At one time when I was a teacher, if you had a bare-ass BA, you were better educated than anybody in the community except maybe the doctor or a lawyer or a dentist. You were in the top echelon. Everyone put you on a pedestal and looked up to you. But nowadays if you have a BA, everyone in the community is ahead of you. So that doesn't work anymore (AR1M, 502-513).

*AREA: Personal goals*

*CATEGORY: Altruism*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 2.2: Being an administrator brings such altruistic compensation as mentoring, serving as a positive role-model for others, demonstrating good community citizenship through responsible acts.*

Sometimes the reasons are a bit more subtle - to help people improve themselves - serving as a mentor.

- I'm (administrative title) What that means is ... I'm responsible for the continuous growth of all of the employees of our system. So I work with Principals, but I work with a lot of teachers. I work with caretakers, management, central office. My role, in a sense, is to help people in our system to work with the whole professionalisation process, grow as individuals, as pupils as well as professionals as well as workers as well as employees (AR2M, 1042-1046).

Self-reflection is another personality trait. The principal must seek a balance between his personal and professional lives. This is not consistent between administrators. This is sometimes met with a great deal of success and sometimes not. Dedication also seems to carry with it a price tag.

*AREA: Personal goals*

*CATEGORY: Personal and family sacrifices*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 2.3: Being an administrator brings challenges to all his or her family members in sharing the difficulties relating to the requirements of the position.*

- It's difficult to be a family person and an administrator. That's just a generalization. It's very difficult to be a good administrator, a good husband/or a good wife, to be a good mother or father, that's a pretty full load to handle, and to be a home-owner and to be somebody's son and somebody's friend ....(PE3M, 1726-1729).

Another goal is the quest for personal determination and fulfillment. The next biographical excerpt demonstrates this.

*AREA: Personal goals*

*CATEGORY: Personal growth*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 2.4: Being a front-line administrator brings personal growth in terms of courage, career fulfillment and the ability to take on not-as-yet-experienced challenges.*

- After high school, I went to Macdonald College for 2 years for the certificate program and then I started teaching elementary school worked on my Bachelor of Arts degree at Sir George at night and summers. After I finished my degree, I was immediately pushed into teaching high school, something I really hadn't asked for, but as soon as you got your degree in those days, I'm talking about 1959-65, you were pushed into a high school position so I taught high school for 9 years, .... no, elementary school for 6 years then high school for 9 years. So after 15 years of teaching, my principal said to me, why don't you apply for a position of increased responsibility? That's the way it was termed in those days and I said I would do it because I did a lot of organizational things in the high school, I was a department head - English and history, ... so I applied and was accepted as a Vice-Principal in an elementary school. So after going from elementary school to high school, back to elementary school as a Vice-Principal, I was a elementary VP for 2 years, and then I was promoted to Principal, where I was for 5 years. When I went to \_\_\_\_\_, I decided to work towards my Masters Degree at McGill .... about 1978 - because I got my masters degree in 1983. So I worked on that at night and during the summer, and then I went to another elementary school as Principal for 3 years, and then I got very tired at elementary school and wanted to go back to a high school setting. So I asked to go to a high school as a Vice-Principal. And when I went to the Director of Personnel, they were just thrilled, because at that point very few women wanted to go into high school. That's always



been a problem they say, that women, especially at our board, that women are not promoted into high school, I but very few women want to go into high school administration. So I was there for 2 years and at that point I applied. I was very interested in personnel, for the job of assistant director of personnel because I was interested in personnel, I enjoyed the work I did with \_\_\_\_\_ at McGill, so I decided I wanted to work in personnel. Now I didn't get the job. The present person got it instead, and I was told by the deputy director general, no, the regional director at that time, that the reason I didn't get the job was that I never had been a high school principal and that I was a woman. Those were the two reasons I didn't get the job. So, immediately, this is June 30, he comes to tell me I didn't get the job and, "You're now promoted to high school." And I hadn't asked for a high school Principalship at this point. So I was promoted to (name of School) (AR4F, 2876-2900).

Successful principals must take the initiative to encourage their staffs to be at their best.

Laziness is not in the definition of a successful administrator. Leadership must be considered a personal goal.

*AREA: Personal goals*

*CATEGORY: Personal sense of dedication and life expansion*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 2.5: Being a front-line administrator brings out the either the best in you or the marginal in you.*

- But the job is what you make of it. You can do the bare minimum, you can just do what is required by the school board. Make sure everyone is in class and it will be simple. Simpler. If you want to have an involved school where you have more active programs going on, where you encourage the teachers to get involved and working on things and so on: ... Once you do that, you have a more effective school but your job increases (P5F, 4457-4461).

Finally, humility is also a personal goal. With humility comes optimism and pragmatism.

This final excerpt is from a DG who was about to retire. We were at the end of the interview.

*AREA: Personal goals*

*CATEGORY: Personal sense of humanity*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 2.6: Being a front-line administrator requires enough passion for the job, humility and humanity which positively affects many others.*

- I'm going to stop it here [the interview]. Talking to you is really fantastic because, you know, you sound so optimistic about yourself and about where things are going in this board and I haven't heard too much optimism in education. It's really refreshing to hear.

Well, I think if I leave anything with this board is that there is a half-filled glass.

*As opposed to an half empty glass.*

And that no one can do alone. It can be done together and there will be barriers along the way but barriers create opportunities. If you think of them only as barriers or a boundary, someone else is going to get (in the way?), so I just really believe, and I never expressed this early in my life, I never realized the impact of me saying some of my beliefs had on others. So it's amazing how people will react to me. It is to be optimistic. If you always are speaking vehemently - run (DG13M, 10102-10115).

### ***SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 3: POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP***

These two areas are grouped together for a variety of reasons. First, politics, by its nature, concerns power-basing and shared beliefs as proclaimed by one faction towards another. The spokesperson for a particular view may oftentimes be the leader of that faction. Second, in decision making, there is a conflict between viewpoints and the makers and shakers of those viewpoints. The leaders of these viewpoints are the strongest believers of the specific viewpoint.

All teachers, and subsequently all administrators, are leaders by default. They are given responsibilities in their respective domains which require decisions and a following (students, rank-and-file teachers, office and support personnel and the like). The competency and success of his or her leadership and decision-making abilities are not mutually exclusive. Even though "consensus" might be striven for in a specific situation, there are always minimally two views to every issue. Proponents of each view will be "happy" or "unhappy" with a final decision. The leader is ultimately responsible for that decision. In many cases (such as in a classroom), it is more a case of blind acceptance, not of discursive decision making, for the following.

***AREA: Politics***

***CATEGORY: Leadership through competency***

***RULE OF INCLUSION 3.1: A successful administrator demonstrates leadership through demonstrated competency not by title alone.***

- Think some teachers have a helluva more impact than their administrators ... Just at a staff meetings, they're strong, good and people listen to them. That's leadership. Leadership through competency not through title. So, if you have a very competent principal. If he's going to be able to show a lot of leadership. But if you don't have a principal who is competent in education, then somebody in the staff is going to end up being the leader ... and is going to rise to the surface (ARIM 495-500).

Omnipresent are the members of the Board of Commissioners, the elected parents or concerned citizens who run for the school commission. As any political animal, a school commissioner listens to his or her constituents. Leadership and/or a decision made by a Principal or Vice-Principal can affect the "view" of an administrator.

***AREA: Politics***

***CATEGORY: Leadership complaints from commissioners***

***RULE OF INCLUSION 3.2: If a complaint is loud enough, it will be heard.***

- Starts off probably with a school board member talking ... has the ear of some parent who said, this guy is terrible, not doing this thing ... then he'll call the principal and they'll confer about it. The principal may agree or not agree. Depends on how much loyalty (AR1M 567-569).

There are times in principal selection where certain issues take precedence over candidate competency and educational needs. It is at these times in the selection process where other issues come into play. These issues are sociological, consequently, political in nature.

*AREA: Politics*

*CATEGORY: Social/political factors in appointments*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 3.3: When the political winds of time and change are apparent and/or popular, decisions will reflect these changes.*

- Yes, I think that has happened in each of the, in terms of the race, or multicultural natures, of the language issues, certainly in the gender issue. I think that has been a concern of school commissioners, some school commissioners in particular. There has never really been a group of school commissioners that have espoused a certain kind of value that there has to be a group of young males or we need more females, I think that's been more situation and more individual than collective direction, but certainly that has played a part in it. Some of those people are very influential and so have influenced central office administrators, and school administrators in their thinking along those lines and to be also kind of \_\_\_\_\_ central office administrators and school administrators on their own point have been thinking of those things as well (AR2M, 1147-1155).

*Is there any kind of unofficial way that one becomes a principal? You mentioned this thing about politics?*

Oh now, yes ... Now it's completely, I mean, the mulling, I think you'd hear it from anyone at (NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD) that unless you were, and that's "he's" not going to be promoted unless you're Greek or black, you're not going to get promoted. And yet ... Now it's very political. It's a shame. We now have an employment equity thing. I was involved in that too, a whole employment equity thing. You're supposed to be employing women, certain groups, but they're not abiding by it (AR4F, 3064-3083).

Politics are not confined to commissioners alone. Teachers and front-line administrators will politic to their advantage in and out of the school itself. This can have a ripple effect one way or another.

*AREA: Politics*

*CATEGORY: Front-line administrator politicking*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 3.4: Front-line administrators know that political alliances can be useful to the enhancement of their position.*

- So, theoretically, an in house candidate \_\_\_\_\_, if they were smart enough to pick up on this, could make some political alliances.

Oh yes, oh yes.

*Have you ever seen this happen?*

Well I've seen it happen because I think it happened in my school. I think it happened at \_\_\_\_\_. The person that ... See, what happened was in November of my second year there, my enrollment went up. As

you know, you get a Vice-Principal after you hit a certain number of, over 800. So in November, my numbers went so much, I was allowed to appoint another vice principal. So my commissioner says, "Oh, I would like this teacher." And I think he wanted him, because he had been a very popular guy; he had done a lot of politicking with this commissioner in the past. He had been on the school committee with this commissioner in the past. As a teacher, if you go on these parent committees, that's another important thing, the parents get to see you in another role (AR4F, 3463-3478).

The different governing levels of the Board Commission each create and set "agendas" for administrative position selection. Each level, from front-line up to the Director General's office, has a view to what type of person should be appointed as well as the person (at times) him or herself.

*AREA: Politics*

*CATEGORY: Selection for administrator agendaing*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 3.5: If an administrator desires a specific type of person or a particular person for a designated position, the administrator will set into motion a plan of acquisition for that person.*

*- When you have an opening, and you are a principal and you know there is going to be an opening, because someone is retiring or whatever, can you put a request in ... not for a person but for a type of person?*

You can, sometimes you get what you want and sometimes you won't because when they're doing the placements they're working with a lot of different restrictions on them. They gotta place everybody, head office will have their own sort of agenda that they're working by. They try to dove tail.

*This is the regional director who does ...*

And the higher ups though, the regional director has some say, but the very top of the board the commissioners and so on. It doesn't always work.

*I've heard some very interesting things about boards of commissioners in the \_\_\_\_\_ school board, how they have their own (agenda), ... there is one theory out there they have their own ...*

I wouldn't want to get into it, but there's always the feeling that if you know the right people, you would evolve.

*So that would be the unofficial ...*

Yeah, that's the ...

*Politics?*

Yes the politics. It depends on how you handle it (P5F, 4077-4103).

The political in-fighting between the upper echelon organizational constituents can get fairly antagonistic and politicized. It can get to a point where a senior board official will give in, not negotiate or discuss to a commissioner's belief at the cost of his or her own personal ideals

and integrity. This, it seems, in one Montreal area board, is now commonplace. This leads to the demoralization of the governance systems (the personnel) of the board, and it also contributes to the demoralization of the teacher corps. Power can not only corrupt an individual it can also pervert the organization's integrity.

*AREA: Politics*

*CATEGORY: Blatant political interference*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 3.6: When it is to the advantage of a politician (an elected board commissioner), or a demonstration of political power or arm-twisting (referred to as power-basing), the credibility of commission governance will be undercut and marginalized.*

*- To your knowledge, ok, if someone wanted to become an administrator, vp or principal, we'll rank them together for the moment, what would be the procedure as you know it, the official procedure as you know it?*

You get friendly with a commissioner, powerful.

*That's the official way of doing it, or the unofficial?*

That's the unofficial way. But that's the way I look at it, I'm afraid. There are people who are very, very good people around that will never make what they want because they don't; because the positions are being filled. I can give you a very good example. I know someone who has just come into the multicultural department from the personnel department who was a substitute teacher and was so despised by his colleagues that they barely spoke to him. He went from that to a principal of a elementary school in this commissioner's \_\_\_\_\_ bailiwick \_\_\_\_\_. He went from there to coordinator - from principal of elementary to coordinator of personnel. He's now head of the (a director's status). This is a man who is an asshole. I mean really. But he's a friend of (a particular powerful commissioner), his next door neighbor or something - ridiculous. People are ... for example there are people on this staff who would like to be administrators, but will never make it, and it's because they're not competent. I can think of some totally valued, talented, creative, assertive, confident people who will not make it because they don't fit the underground profile. That's the reality (VP7F, 5341-5360).

- These people {the school board senior staff} will sit around and discuss, let's say there're looking at the following school year, they're starting maybe January, they're looking at where the needs are going to be, how many people are retiring, etc., so how many jobs are we looking for? And then they'll try and come up with a list of people who they believe will be suitable, and at the same time to move people from one school to another. So two things go - people are moving, lateral moves, and new people coming in. Now, the theory is that they are working with people who formally applied for promotion. Because they have met the criteria that's stated on the job applications; they send out these circulars and ask for people who have the basic qualifications and requirements and then they send in their c.v.'s etc. The next step, once they have made those decisions, and think they have picked the appropriate people, they're supposed to take those recommendations to the commissioners. What happens in this, is that some of the commissioners get involved in the process before they have completed their administrative consultation. So you will have situations where a commissioner will be speaking to a regional director and say, I think there is a teacher "X" in school "Y" who I would like as a principal at one of my schools. Whether that individual has all the qualifications as stated on the application in the general circular doesn't necessarily count for anything anymore. Because if the regional director reminds the commissioner that "I'm sorry we just can't accept that individual for the following reasons," that regional director is going to very quickly find that their job has become very difficult.

*So this is sort of the unofficial way people get ...*

That's right. It's not ... I'm not sure that it is not. I think it's common knowledge, actually because the interventions that you see in some of the appointments, are so blatant that the troops outside know, the troops ...

*The teachers?*

Oh, the union let's them know what's going on, and the union is not afraid to say what is going on. God bless them. So it's really not a particularly healthy situation ... on one level .... But then you know, when you think about it, if I could just ... But when you think about it, and this has upset me over the years, coming to the end of my career, and I'm sorry to be going off in a somewhat cynical mood, but when I think about it, how is it different to what it was 20 years ago when I got promoted to \_\_\_\_\_ (of from interests of different parties? when it was just a different process) - It was the regional directors or senior management who were making the decisions. The presumption being is that they know more than the politicians, but I'm not entirely sure they knew!

*Would you consider this then sort of a jurisdictional kind of question?*

Yes.

*I would assume, though, as an elected official they sort of set policy but as an administrative appointee they would carry out policy, so consequently It's part of the mandate of either this department or the DG as to come up with a short list upon which the commissioners have the final word.*

That's right.

*It's basically an official rubber stamping. But it's not turning out that way.*

Not entirely, because what you say is true, that's the way it should work and the short list should go to them. However, who gets on the short list?

*So that's the element here that we don't see.*

That's right, that's right.

*Could you describe a few specific cases that you can think of without mentioning names or mention names, I won't mention them?*

Sure, I can think of a recent case where the job description says a minimum of 5 years or 8 years depending on the position for the job in terms of teacher experience. Well, I can think of a case where the teacher had only been teaching 4 years and has been placed into an administrative position. Because the commissioners liked that particular individual. Now having said that, I can also think of a case back in '69 where a young friend of mine, a lady teacher, was promoted after 3 years in the classroom by the people who made the decisions at that time who were the administrators. So now, people, when this happened recently, people got very indignant at the politicians. It hasn't changed, it's just a different group that's making the final decisions, seems to me (A6M, 4604-4676).

The political system of elected commissioners has the possibility of creating some commissioners who are involved for what some might consider other than the benefit of the students and the community. In other words, some commissioners are involved in the system for their engendering of personal power or perhaps as a stepping-stone for a future political career.

AREA: Politics

CATEGORY: Personal power

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.7:** *When certain commissioners gain too much political power and exercise that power over their peers or subordinates, it creates a clear hierarchy of the "haves" and "have nots" within the stratum of any constituent organizational group.*

- But if there were a couple of strong, oh \_\_ commissioners who have been there, re-elected and re-elected, they probably do have some sort of power-base, even within the commission itself.

Yes, no question.

*And that would also, I am making the assumption here, could probably influence particular decisions ... I'm sure that any political organization, and a school board is not exempt from this ... can you think of cases in your experiences where you might have seen commissioners from various other areas saying, "on the hand, Joe might be right."*

Yes, oh yes, this is quite common, and there are two commissioners who do have this kind of power and do this kind ... exert this kind of control and do influence, do have support.

*From lower based commissioners or lower ...*

Well, for just in general they do have that by the strength of their personality, whatever. They do exert a control over others within the group .....

*And that hurts you?*

In one instance I have in mind the saddest group within the board (A6M, 4702-4725).

- The unofficial policy is that ... well, I'll give you an example. Recently, you see the difference ... There is an elected Board, and the elected Board, like any Board should be there in an advisory capacity. They do not [make] policy, they make recommendations. They do not carry out policy, they evaluate how well the policy was carried out. There was a position open within the Board itself, in administration. The mandate was given to the Board Officers, as it should be, to short-list people who applied for the job, then to interview the short list; and then to come up with who they felt was the most worthy candidate. So they came ... so this was three years ago - recent enough - they came to the board with their choice. They said we have gone through this whole process, the job was posted, it was advertised, people responded and they were selected, they were short-listed they were interviewed. The winner is .... And the Commissioners led by a couple of commissioners who have this wonderful mesmerizing effect on the others it seems, said "No, we're not interested in that person. He or she is not appropriate. We want this person." So then the response from the Board Officers at the point was, "well that person is not on our short list. In fact, come to think of it, that person never even applied for the job. It doesn't matter, that's who gets the job. So do whatever you have to do as a group. Scramble around now, re-organize yourselves, bring that person in for interviews, but they're getting the job." And that's what happened. Now, that was for a fairly significant position itself. In terms of administrative appointments in the schools, again recommendations will come forward from the regional directors, from other administrative levels, and when it's brought to the table and a lot of these names would be thrown around and. I once heard feedback from one of those meetings where one of the commissioners said that person will never, ever have an administrative position anywhere as long as I am a commissioner in this board, and when asked why, that person said because this person is, and it was, a comment about the person's character. But first of all would it be impossible for this commissioner to know of. I mean it was of sexual nature (bi-sexual?) and certainly was something that never emanated out of this person's professional career. So matter how appropriate this person was for the job, this commissioner concluded that he or she represented a certain personality or characteristic - and that was it. Don't ever bring the name forward again. So when you think then about some of these people who had been asked to join this selection process, who had taken their courses at McGill, had taken very-well-

put-together courses by \_\_\_\_\_, who had given up two nights a week to do all this, and now know that there will be no way they'll ever get an appointment and it was all for naught. This was ...

*I'm assuming this must have gone down very poorly in the ranks.*

Absolutely, absolutely, because ... At first, a lot in the ranks, a lot of feedback was, "Well, let them do that at the board, we have our own little school and we'll ..." But now, it takes a while, but does percolate down. And now in the schools there is that sense of discouragement, well, realizing that what really happened was that for a long time, administrators in the school really didn't say much of what was happening above them. So that certain inconsistencies and inadequacies or other negative dynamics that were happening - you know, the staff might say, well these are anomalies, whatever, and maybe even look critically at their own administrator, but now they're realizing that a lot of the things that are happening are a direct consequence of this type of environment that exists at the board (P8M, 6041-6081).

#### ***SPHERE OF INFRA - INFLUENCE 4: POLITICS, ETHICS AND VALUES***

Ethics and values are areas that are extremely wide and evolving. Minutiae, within different or opposing viewpoints, are highly subjective. Rational thinking and procedures may inspire specific ethics and values. However, they are always subjective. Corporate cultures, spiritual influences, political dogmas and sometimes common sense devise value systems. School commissions, due their democratic foundations, claim to protect, reflect and are responsible for the maintenance of their territorial responsibilities. School commissions maintain the moral and ethical status quo of its constituents as defined by their mandates. Each school commission constituent, whether appointed or elected, is a visible and active proponent of the organism's cultural, political, ethical and moral beliefs. The school Vice-Principal, at the lowest administrator level and the Director General, at the highest level, are the standard-bearers of the commission's perceived ethical body of moral tenets.

Moral dilemmas arise when differences of belief ensue between any of the community's constituents, whether they are the creators of the moral tenets (elected board commissioners), the executors (appointed board administrators) or the rank and file (teachers). A moral decision is a final outcome. It is the weighed belief of the rightness of an issue. Decisions have residual and percolating effects up, down and throughout all the organizations' constituents. Positive and/or negative attitudes are immediately shaped by each decision. These end results ultimately affect



the corporate effectiveness and success or failure of both the individual constituent and the corporate collective's vision and end product.

*AREA: Ethics and politics*

*CATEGORY: Deprecating integrity*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 4.1: The virtues of truth, self-respect and personal honor are tested by patronage demands when performed as part of one's duties.*

*- What's an underground profile? Give me some characteristics.*

OK, there are two very top commissioners at the board. One is Black and one is Greek. And they scratch each other's backs. There is a job that is available right now - Co-ordinator of Personnel which has been vacated by this person I was telling you about. My regional director was in. We were sitting chewing the fat because he and I had ultimately talked over what it was that had happened to me. He was very apologetic. It wasn't him. So I sort of swallowed and got on with my life. So he was in last month, and the Principal and I were sitting and chatting. The subject had just came up, somebody in personnel, the person who is actually doing the job on an interim basis and was very tired, called me and said why didn't you apply for this job. "You know you'd be perfect for it." So I said, "I'm not going to apply. I've removed myself from it. I'm not playing any politics I'm not asking anybody for anything. I'm very happy, and it's true, 100% honest. I'm very happy here."

And I got over my resentment because I don't give a damn. And I said I refuse to dance that dance and I'm not going to do it. So he said, "You know, somebody has to stand up to this man." Well, it's not going to be me. Who am I? And I'm going to stay where I am. Anyway, my regional director was in, and the subject came up. And I said, "\_\_\_\_\_ said I should apply for the job, but I'm not going to and these are my reasons I'm not going to play this game."

"So," he said, "you wouldn't want it anyway, you know what happens there," [I'm going off on a tangent, but it is sort of germane to the main point]. The said, "Let's say you did get the job, \_\_\_\_\_ (the Greek commissioner) and \_\_\_\_\_ (the black commissioner) will come in and say, "here are five names from my community, give them jobs. And, if you don't, you're out on your ear." And that's what happens. And you lose your personal integrity. And I have discussed this with people who are in far higher positions than I at the Board: people who are not necessarily close friends of mine, but people with whom I have worked and who are now to the wherever and have integrity. And there are some at the board for whom I have the greatest respect for their commitment to education. People, like our director general and our deputy director general - kissing ass, and it makes me sick. And I say, Why somebody is totally humiliated? There was a situation for example, where a woman, who has now left and gone to a much higher position at a CEGEP. She was called in, she was in Student Services. And she was called into the director general's office. The Director General was there, the Deputy Director General was there, this was one of the senior officers (of the Commission). And there was a parent there, who was a friend of one of these commissioners and he accused her of sleeping her way to the top. Neither the Director General nor the Deputy Director General said anything to this man. They didn't say, "leave my office," or "how dare you?" ... In order to maintain your position in the board, you have to lose your integrity. And I have said to a number of people, whom I trust, why do you put up with this crap? They say, it could be done to the director general for example, why doesn't he stand up? The answer has always been, he could lose his job. So I mean, what can I tell you?

*So your underground profile is really more of an undermining reality.*

That's right, you have to be, you have to be close to a powerful commissioner. You see there are 15 commissioners at the board, as I'm sure you know, and there is a small group there. The question that is asked, not just by me, by other people as well, is where are the others? Where are the other heroes? Why did they fall into line? I mean people who don't need to fall into line like \_\_\_\_\_ (another commissioner) for example. \_\_\_\_\_ is a very bright autonomous woman, so if \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't line up with somebody, then her schools don't get the funds. And it's as simple as that (VP7F, 5363-5407).

Loyalty, the faithfulness to commitments or to people, is a distinct element of the teaching and administration phenomena. Most levels of administration see loyalty going to the constituency to which one is responsible: teachers to students; vice-principals to teachers; principals to teachers and students; regional directors to principals. At the board level this tends to change. Board level bureaucrats, mandarins or department heads deal solely with their territories (or kingdoms) of responsibility. The uppermost level, the executive Director General and Deputy Director General must carry two banners which many times are in conflict: the generic commission and personnel needs as opposed to the needs - personal, collective, stated or intended of the Board Commissioners themselves.

*AREA: Ethics and politics*

*CATEGORY: Loyalty- students first*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 4.2: If teachers and administrators are educational leaders and role models, then the responsibility of loyalty goes first to the student, not to one's personal gain.*

*- You're watching this play on principal selection. What do you want to walk away with?*

OK, I guess you're talking about the best of all possible educational worlds. Something that deals with, I think we're talking very mildly here about educational leadership and educational scholarship. First rate people holding important jobs. People with fine minds with people skills with a little integrity, and I guess the reverse of the coin might be an interesting way to go too, because the impact that leadership, educational leadership has on the student body, dealing with the negative aspects. How one teacher can totally destroy a kid's life or totally make it worthwhile. I truly believe that. I do believe that some teachers can totally destroy because they're asses ... or helped, or helped to develop in a positive way. Something that draws a very strong parallel between the effect of one human being on another, whether that human being is the administrator and the teacher, or the teacher and a student - negative and positive - *might be of interest*. In administration as well, I believe my primary responsibility is to the student, but my very, very close next responsibility is to my colleagues.

*So you see a real loyalty split here?*

Yes, very much so.

*How big an issue is loyalty for you?*

Very big. Loyalty doesn't have to be mindless loyalty.

*Mindless?*

That's right. I think its possible to be moral and critical. I think that is one of the tragedies when we talk about incompetent teachers. I do think a lot of people run away from their things because they are incompetent and it is uncomfortable. But you have to say to yourself, whose interests should I be looking after here and really the bottom line is the kids' interests (VP7F, 5803-5831).

The cadre of front-line administrators lose faith with their immediate supervisors, the executive, and the Board of Commissioners when they feel that the integrity of their mandate and collective respect from the commission have been compromised. When this loss occurs, morale drops and the cadre feels disenfranchised from the organization. This result feeds the belief that they are on their own.

*AREA: Ethics and politics*

*CATEGORY: Loyalty and colleagues*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 4.3: When teachers believe that their administrators are pawns of the Board of Commissioners, they lose faith in the system; and to others, credibility with both their superiors and the organization as a whole. Front-line administrators can also feel this loss.*

- At first, a lot in the ranks, a lot of feedback was, well, let them do that at the board, we have our own little school and we'll ... But now, it takes a while, but does percolate down. And now in the schools there is that sense of discouragement, well, realizing that what really happened was that for a long time, administrators in the school really didn't say much of what was happening above them. So that certain inconsistencies and inadequacies or other negative dynamics were happening. You know, the staff might say, well, these are anomalies, whatever, and maybe even look critically at their own administrator, but now they're realizing that a lot of the things that are happening are of direct consequence of this type of environment that exists at the board.

*When those things take place, the association of administrators, do they voice a ....*

Yeah, they did. Well, first of all there is a problem. When you have an association, you all get together and some concerns were raised. You know that these are real problems, and then, one of the persons that raised one of those concerns - then got a phone call from one of those commissioners that night who demanded an apology. So what does that say? It says that's how much your association is worth.

*The emasculation of the association?*

Well, indeed, it turns out, that one of your fellow administrators is in the back pocket of one of those commissioners (P8M, 6074-6094).

Many times at the board level, top-end and executive administrators are threatened with the potential loss of their jobs and/or positions if they do not surrender to the beliefs, or, at times, the whims of some board commissioners. When this occurs, perceived or real, the view of true and honest consultation, in the democratic participatory sense, is deemed compromised or at worst that such actions are the price of democracy.

*AREA: Ethics and politics*

*CATEGORY: High-end job security*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 4.4: An administrator's personal survival will take front seat to higher democratic principals of governance.*

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*- You just submitted a list to the board for final approval for principals, and a name appears that they [a commissioner] bring forth or something. How do you feel about that?*

Nobody likes it. They haven't done it recently. Now there's a better way of doing it. They talk to the officers of the board, and say, "I'd really like to see that person in a job," and they're the ones who have the final say on the selection of officers and there are people who they have put into these positions.

*So there's manipulation has taken place here in a certain degree.*

Yeah...

*I can say that, its OK. I would assume that even the upper echelon of the commission, meaning the DG and DDG and Regional Directors, probably don't like that kind of invasion of change of mandate or invasion of area responsibility, I assume that has raised a few eyebrows in the past.*

Let me answer it this way. Commissioners hire and fire the Director General and the Deputy Director General; and they have contracts that go a certain number of years. If they take in the commissioners too many times, they find themselves out of a job eventually. So their job is a very difficult one too. They've got the people underneath them - the bureaucrats, and they have to do the liaison with the politicians and, depending on .... They walk a tightrope, they have politicians who say, can't you get my cousin a job, and I hear that person is really good, and they're not the ones who necessarily stand in the way of candidates who come out.

*So democracy does have some problems here?*

Like in any political system.

*You're so polite ...*

*(LAUGHTER)*

I don't know what it's like in other boards. This board is very political.

*I've heard that.*

And there's some very powerful people that control a lot (A10M, 7205-7246).

It is a reality that each level of governance promotes its own agenda regardless of its moral outcome or definition. Board officers have become more aware of the agendas of their superiors, the Board Commissioners. With this knowledge, board officers must generate candidates that fulfill the perceived needs of a specific commissioner (of a school in his or her jurisdiction). There is the implied reality that assumes that the needs or qualifications for a position are defined from the viewpoint of the commissioner, and not necessarily through the eyes of a school's actual needs. Therefore, the action of a board officer(s) to generate the candidate list must include the perceived political agenda of the commissioner (s) to avoid

conflict. This action may in fact also create an ethical dilemma for the board officers. In the end, the board officer will surrender his or her ethics to the needs of the commissioners. If not, he or she must consider leaving the board.

*AREA: Ethics and Politics*

*CATEGORY: Political common sense*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 4.5: The use of political acumen assists in breaking down the adversarial relationship between the elected commissioners and the appointed commission officers. However, this does not necessarily have positive outcomes with the rank and file front-line administrators.*

*- ... For all the region directors, it puts you, perhaps, sometimes in a very difficult position, I would assume, where you guys spend hours of time interviewing, people, getting a short list up and then another short list appears that you have no ...*

Yeah, well now, most of us talk with our commissioners of the boards where we operate. And discuss potential candidates. There's no use in putting someone on the table which they will just shoot down anyway because what ends up happening, they have to discredit one to promote another one. And you don't want to see wholesale attacks on people that are very competent just so that the other person looks better. So there's no use putting someone forward they'll say no to. And the rest of the commissioners are not interested in having the other commissioners telling them who they are going to get, so let's say the commissioner of this area here if they say, "I don't want that person," the other commissioners won't force it. They have a lot of control over their schools.

*So who goes in?*

We have to sell it to them; and if we can't, they get and say before of the rest of the board, "I don't want that person," or, "I'm not happy," or, "I'm concerned about that person." The rest won't force it on him because then it could happen to them.

*So basically, what I understand by reading through what you're saying, now, specifically, since the last couple of years, since the leadership program has been rejected, the regional directors, such as yourself, must work much more closely with your commissioner to have a very good working relationship between the two.*

That's right.

*So, therefore, whatever you want, in a sense in terms of whether it be administrative or something else, you have your guy on your side and vice versa.*

Yeah, you can't. They have final say, so, if you can't convince them that this is the best person for the job or this person is not ... you know they might come up with a name and say, "What about that person? I've heard that person is really good?" And if that person is good ... if they're equal and they'll say, "That's one I want."

*This must have modifications down the line though, I would expect in terms in your potential administrator ranks ... the political appointee system, patronage system ....*

No it doesn't. In fact, our administrators are now in a semi-strike position where they are not sitting in on a lot of meetings - like joint meetings with the Board people. They feel the commissioners are going to follow their own rules, because there was a person appointed to a position of regional director and did not meet the criteria written down what was posted. And they felt that a lot of them had applied and they met the criteria but someone else was selected. And they said ...

*It was political reasons?*

It's more of who you know than ....

*What you know?*

The qualifications - and so they really made a big deal about it and you might have heard about that case; it was in the papers

*It was embarrassing to the board, the school commission ... so what was the background to the commissioners that orchestrated that whole thing?*

(long pause) Politicians are sensitive to their electorate. And they are a bit sensitive to the media too. But often when they are attacked, they get defensive rather than ... they attack back ... rather than ... they don't cower. So I think there is more an attempt to be fairer and, I guess, less likely to throw in political appointees. I sort of hate to use the word political appointees. If you look at the system of, let's say 1950 and 1960, most administrators were sort of an old boys network. Like it's always been that way, it just depends who's got the power as to who gets the job. So being the most qualified person sitting at school doesn't mean anything. It's as if you're known and well thought of by whoever has the power. In the old days it was, I guess the officers of the board. It was sort of a group, I mean that there were a lot more incompetent people put in then, I think, than there are now. So the system has just changed but I don't think it was ever that the best man always got the job.

*So right now the administration rank and file - principals and vice - principals are not the happiest group of puppies around here?*

No. They have seen jobs go to teachers directly into principalships when there is a whole pile of Vice-Principals who felt they should have that job.

*Obviously the board understands, I mean, knows about this.*

I have had feedback from commissioners that they ... and there are some new appointments coming up right now and they're saying, "Well, you know, let's not do something that's going to irritate them, let's not try and pull a teacher. Can you find a Vice-Principal?" So I think there have been some changes in the feelings. They have been meeting with the commissioners a number of times recently to try and resolve this, I don't think they want the principals against them either (A10M, 7249-7332).

## **PART 5 - SUMMARY- RULES OF INCLUSION**

### **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE 1: PRINCIPAL SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS, PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS**

**AREA:** *Principal Selection Characteristics, procedures, and requirements*

**CATEGORY:** *Selection protocols*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 1.1:** *Nepotism and "who you know" give way to selection committees because the needs of secondary education and fairness in the application practice are needed, and when examined, are upgraded.*

**CATEGORY:** *Selection protocols: upgrade of candidates*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 1.2:** *A candidate for principal or Vice-Principal is considered "higher quality" if they have gone through additional educational upgrading such as a masters degree, taken on leadership roles in the school, or have participated in "principal training activities."*

**CATEGORY:** *Selection protocols: personality characteristics*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 1.3:** *An acceptable candidate must have the ability to establish successful communication procedures, be a keen listener, and be a collaborative team leader.*

### **SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 2: PERSONAL GOALS**

**CATEGORY:** *Non - altruistic*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 2.1:** *Becoming a front-line administrator brings such compensation as financial reward, recognition as an authority figure and possibilities for career advancement in an otherwise non-promotion profession (teaching).*

**CATEGORY:** *Altruism*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 2.2:** *Being a front-line administrator brings such altruistic compensation as mentoring, providing a positive role model to others, demonstrating good community citizenship through responsible acts.*

**CATEGORY:** *Personal and family sacrifices*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 2.3:** *Being a front-line administrator brings challenges to all his or her family members in sharing the difficulties relating to the requirements of the position.*

**CATEGORY:** *Personal growth*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 2.4:** *Being a front-line administrator brings personal growth in terms of courage, career fulfillment and the ability to take on not as yet experienced challenges.*

**CATEGORY:** *Personal sense of dedication and life expansion*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 2.5:** *Being a front-line administrator brings out the either the best in you or the marginal in one.*

**CATEGORY:** *Personal sense of humanity*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 2.6:** *Being a front-line administrator requires enough passion for the job, humility and humanity which positively affects many others.*

### **SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 3: POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP**

**CATEGORY:** *Leadership through competency*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.1:** *A successful administrator demonstrates leadership through demonstrated competency not by title alone.*

**CATEGORY:** *Leadership complaints from commissioners*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.2:** *If a complaint is loud enough, it will be heard.*

**CATEGORY:** *Social/political factors in appointments*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.3:** *When the political winds of time and change are apparent and /or popular, decisions will reflect these changes.*

**CATEGORY:** *Front-line administrator politicking*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.4:** *Front-line administrators know that political alliances can be useful to the enhancement of their position.*

**CATEGORY:** *Selection for administrator agendizing*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.5:** *If an administrator desires a specific type of person or a particular person for a designated position, the administrator will set into motion a plan of acquisition for that person.*

**CATEGORY:** *Blatant political interference*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.6:** *When it is to the advantage of a politician (an elected board commissioner), or a demonstration of political power or arm-twisting (referred to as power-basing), the credibility of commission governance will be undercut and marginalized.*

**CATEGORY:** *Personal power*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 3.7:** *When certain commissioners gain too much political power and exercise that power over their peers or subordinates, it creates a clear hierarchy of the "haves" and "have-nots" within the stratum of any constituent organizational group.*

#### **SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 4: POLITICS, ETHICS AND VALUES**

**CATEGORY:** *Deprecating integrity*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 4.1:** *The virtues of truth, self-respect and personal honor are tested by patronage demands when performed as part of one's duties.*

**CATEGORY:** *Loyalty- students first*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 4.2:** *If teachers and administrators are educational leaders and role models, then the responsibility of loyalty goes first to the student, not to one's personal gain.*

**CATEGORY:** *Loyalty and colleagues*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 4.3:** *When teachers believe that their administrators are pawns of the Board of Commissioners, they lose faith in the system, and to others, credibility with both their superiors and the organization as a whole. Front-line administrators can also feel this loss.*

**CATEGORY:** *High-end job security*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 4.4:** *An administrator's personal survival will take front seat to higher democratic principals of governance.*

**CATEGORY:** *Political common sense*

**RULE OF INCLUSION 4.5:** *The use of political acumen assists in breaking down the adversarial relationship between the elected commissioners and the appointed commission officers. However, this does not necessarily have positive outcomes with the rank-and-file front-line administrators.*

### **PART 6 - CHAPTER SUMMARY**

At the beginning of this chapter, the following three questions were presented:

- 1- At what time does the transition between the researcher and the artist occur?
- 2- What is the path from the grounding of the data and the data management to the transcendence into the creative work?
- 3- What are validation and trustworthiness in an inspired creative work?

The answers to these questions follow.



*I- At what time does the transition between the researcher and the artist occur?*

In this project the researcher and the artist are one and the same. There is no transition period. In a typical research project, quantitative or qualitative, premises, research questions and data agendas are formulated. The researcher, whether in a deductive or inductive mode, in the end must substantiate the project's findings. The creative artist, in this the case the playwright, works on a provocation foundational motif. Research methodology is a means to an end. It starts out with objective and quasi-scientific protocols. In artistic research, the data must function in two critical areas: the identification of areas of concern and an inspiration creation tool for dramatic themes, characters and scenarios. The researcher is both the objective investigator and the creative artist. A theatrical piece is a subjective work. The contents may be listed or categorized in a scientific manner into areas of concern. The creative act, however, requires taking a "stand."

The researcher "listens" to his data and his respondents' beliefs while constantly brewing and coddling the mixture of thoughts, words and actions - real or implied. In this project, the constant comparative method of data analysis together with Denzin's steps to interpretation. This led to a "rules of inclusion" adaptation which brought about the final research findings (see Chapter 6 - FINDINGS). It is at that point that the transcendence begins from findings to script creation (see Chapter 8 - TRANSCENDENCE).

The pin-pointed transition point, where the researcher takes off his "objectivity" hat and puts on his "subjectivity" one truly can never occur. There is always present a point of view within the researcher. Each interview revealed the respondent's view of administration, not so much in terms of actual facts, but in implied attitudes. The researcher, as listener, must compile what is deemed as facts. S/he then re-interprets them simultaneously during the interview to ascertain, as precisely as possible, the beliefs of the respondents. The researcher cannot be placid and non-involved. This project's *raison d'être* is omnipresent: the end result of the research must effect a theatrical piece. Therefore, the two hats are merged into one. The dramatic piece is the end result of a recipe as if the researcher-playwright is baking a cake. Analogous to a cake's

ingredients, the data for the researcher serves the same purpose. Except in this case it mixes and bakes in the mind and afterwards emerges the dramatic piece.

*2 - What is the chosen path from the grounding of the data and the data management to the transcendence into the creative work?*

This journey began with the interviews. The chosen data-collection methodology is the naturalistic inquiry interviewing methodology. Specific not random respondents were targeted. Interview questions and the interview technique were designed to inspire responses, validate the responses (by use of leading questions) and promote the self-worth of the respondent. As previously stated a theatrical piece is a highly subjective, not objective, work. The interview itself cannot be a passive conversation. It must result in a relationship of "trust" and truth - a mutual "gut" friendship-like bond between the subject (respondent) and researcher. Every respondent, in some way, indicated that subjectivity is a large and critical element of leadership, decision-making and administrative life.

The grounding of the data is (the interviews' content) an evolving phenomenon. It germinates several simultaneous inquiry-like seedlings: actual administrative issues, clear principal appointment procedural protocols, personal (of the subject's) values and moral questions, school commission ethics, personal courage and decision making. It became more transparent, with each examination of the data that all aspects of the respondents' inputs evolved, synergistically, into one entity.

The grounded data analysis, with the creation of rules of inclusion based upon the areas of infra-influence, has become a solid foundation for basing the piece's foundational elements in terms of plot and characters.

*3 - What are validation and trustworthiness in an inspired creative work?*

There is data validation (or trustworthiness) and play validation. They are different. Traditionally, data validation has to do with whether the data is in fact genuine. In an interview situation, did the data faithfully represent what was said? Interview data would not be valid if it

was not faithfully recorded, if it was subject to filtering because of interviewer bias, or if it was over emphasized. Interviews are routinely transcribed word-for-word for analysis to insure exactly what was said. As well, we recognize a possible threat to data validity: that an observation can effect a phenomenon.

The physicist wants to know the amount of electricity flowing in a circuit. To measure the current, a meter is placed in the circuit and may affect the accuracy of the reading. Similarly, a recording device is present in an interview; it may influence what is said in the interview. Respondents may report from a slanted perspective because they do not want to offend or be discourteous, or the subject matter is sensitive, or the interviewer is male and the respondent is female. Researchers seek to overcome threats to data validation through a variety of techniques.

For example, in an interview situation, a series of questions can be asked to see if responses remain the same. The respondent can be asked to detail their comments with concrete examples, and multiple respondents can be asked to report on similar situations. As well, a respondent's comments can be summarized and reported back to see if the interviewer has understood clearly the point being made. This could not be done in this project because the chosen analysis time line required that all interviews be transcribed in sequence after the final interview was completed. The time lapse between the first and last interviews was extremely long for the respondent to remember accurately.

In this endeavor, leading questions were used to validate responses as the interview went along. There was also some fact and incident corroboration. Several respondents reported many of the same incidents. Since anonymity was assured, no respondents knew who the other respondents were. The interview contents had to "speak to" the researcher.

Play validation is another matter. At issue is whether the play, when viewed in a live production, is meaningful to the viewers. Given high-quality interview data, a playwright may produce a work that does or does not "speak to" the audience. Those in the theater say, "The play

works,” or “the play does not work.” That is, it has meaning for them, it resonates with their understanding of the world, it provokes them, and it challenges their thoughts and emotions.

When live theater is the medium, both data validity and play validity are essential. This can be further refined. In typical research projects, truth and data verification are critical for reporting or predicting a trend, mode or finding. In a dramatic presentation, it is only the *notion of truth* that is critical. It is the portrayed “belief” or the presented vision that create an illusion of reality. Real-life events can only inspire created illusion.

*Theatre as representation*, as a research project’s end point, has its validity solely in the success of the piece’s provocation in the mind of the individual viewer. The performed “live” dramatic piece in front of an “live audience,” in production, is the only medium that completely transcends two dimensional data findings into the totality of the three dimensional human condition.<sup>57</sup> This is accomplished through the representation of the themes by human actors in a live production; but realized, in a somewhat reverse cathartic way, by the passive audience member. It is the uniqueness of “live performance” which accomplishes this experience. The “live” or living, breathing actor is the third dimension. Where internal validity (the data) can be achieved through a contrived means, it can serve to create the foundations of the dramatic work. Only an audience member can provide the external validity of the piece.

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<sup>57</sup> This is not to say that other performance mediums such as movies, videos and television programs can not evoke emotions. Live dramatic presentations are the closest medium to share emotions between the participants on stage and the viewers watching the stage.

## CHAPTER FIVE - THE FINDINGS

### DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS AND NOTIONS OF INTERNAL DATA VALIDITY

#### *THE INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE*

From these interviews I was able to hear the issues - some clearly defined, some not; and feel the human pulse of the respondent. This pulse was a “gut” empathetic response between the subject (respondent) and me. This was due, more than likely, to the mutual shared respect for field practitioners.<sup>58</sup> This “feeling” cannot be underestimated. It was critical, in my view, for the respondent to truly believe that s/he was contributing something to the field of administration. I also believe that each respondent felt that by participating in this particular interview for this project, their work over their long length of service was being appreciated. The key result, as a playwright, was that I felt and saw the true personality of the respondent. This became a critical element in the character creations for the piece.

#### *THE INTERVIEW PROCESS*

An administration echelon “stage by stage” interview procedure was very important in creating a trustworthy authenticating processing of the data findings. As we recall, the first group interviewed consisted of retired high-end administrators who had a wealth of experience in decision making. With the average time in service of 35+ years, these administrators had been very involved in personnel hiring (and firing) procedures, most school commission policy protocols and the politics of such decisions. Their honesty and perspective created the working historical and ‘issue’ agenda.

Their comments continually created new discussion parameters. Further, their recollection and telling of certain “war stories” served as a bounce-off wall of sorts for other

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<sup>58</sup>I have been a teacher and department head and have held various administrative mandates for over twenty years.

respondents (in subsequent interviews in all interviewee groups) to confirm, deny or further elucidate. This served, in part, as an instrument for internal data verification and validation.

The second group of respondents was active line administrators (the principals and vice-principals). These administrators were more responsible for the daily running of their schools, served as the commission policy enforcers rather than commission policy creators. Therefore, their responses were very much aligned to the daily goings-on in their schools. There was also a constant feeling among this group that the farther away Commission officers and Commissioners got from the actual school, the more these individuals lost contact with the impact of many of the their policies. I also felt there was much bitterness felt towards commission policy makers (central office and the politicians).

The third group, the Regional Directors, was in the interesting position of being line administrators, policy makers, and enforcers. With their required many years of experience as field principals, they responded from both the authority figure and leadership perspectives. Their responses served as the voice of reason and direction to the lower echelon field administrators.<sup>59</sup>

The final group, the Director Generals, had the most complete and unique perspective. Their responses substantiated, countered and offered alternative perspectives to the issues that were raised in and from the previous interviews. The Director General is also the first and most important link to the political arm of the commission - the Board of Commissioners, the elected officials of the education community.

As a researcher, I was the most prepared for this last group of individuals. Not only was I primed by the previous interviews, I became very conscious of the issues of Board of Commissioners' politics and Commission protocol procedures. Therefore, this order of interviews could not be random or haphazard.

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<sup>59</sup>The administrative hierarchy from Vice-Principal up to Regional Director is typical of most public school commissions. Actual administrative titles will vary within each commission.

Groups three and four authenticated many of the incidents brought to light from the interviews of groups one and two, almost in total. Most interestingly, was that on the more controversial issues, there was little disagreement in the interpretation of the issues by the lower echelon groups of administrators.

### **CODING. AREAS OF REFERENCE. SPHERES OF INFRA-INFLUENCE AND RULES OF INCLUSION ADAPTATION**

As a naturalistic inquiry project, the rules of inclusion served as the inspiration vehicles for the theatrical creation. It is clear that administrators at all levels make decisions. The act of decision making is one the most critical areas of administration. The ROI served as both the gatekeepers of the final findings and as the foundations of the piece's character creations. Two directional parameters evolved from the ROI: first, those findings that were the results of the analysis of the areas of infra-influence; and, second, the more summative general findings that went across the areas of infra-influence.

### **INFRA-INFLUENCE FINDINGS**

#### ***SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 1: PRINCIPAL SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS, PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS.***

The selection procedures for line administrators have gone through a shifting over the past twenty years. Throughout the nineteen sixties and seventies, as the general student population increased, so did the need for teachers, facilities and administrators. The majority of secondary school administrators of the time were male with minimally five years experience in the teaching field. Potential candidates approached for positions had at least a Bachelor's Degree. Keep in mind that the minimum requirement up until the late sixties was a high school leaving certificate and the two-year teacher training program certificate that was available from Macdonald College of McGill University or St. Joseph's College. Selection procedures were minimum and based mostly upon the recommendation of a candidate's current principal.

As standards increased for teachers so did the requirements for administrators. The completion of a second cycle degree was expected. By the mid-seventies affirmative action

programs were in place. The major Montreal anglophone-based boards were employing females as secondary school level administrators. By the end of the seventies, more visible minority candidates were being appointed into administration positions. The minimal selection requirements were increased. Candidates now had to be aware of the changing provincial political landscape and have a working knowledge of the French language, and had to be experienced in line administration as a department head, or a Commission-level position such as subject consultant or special curriculum project leader. By the end of the eighties, it was necessary for administrators to have knowledge of multicultural issues.

There was consensus from all respondents that principals and potential principals must be excellent communicators and problem solvers, and community-wise, politically aware of quickly and changing economically depressed learning environments. The school administrator serves the School Commission as a first-line liaison between the parents and the Commission itself. Principals must be astute managers of people, supplies and physical plants. They must be flexible pedagogues in terms of executing curriculum implantation, scheduling timetables and constantly encroaching CEGEP (In Quebec, a mandatory two-year, post secondary institution whose successful completion is required for Quebec university entry) and university entrance requirement and business job training requirements.

#### *SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 2: PERSONAL GOALS*

The personal goals of front-line administrators fell into three fundamental camps: personal, professional and community. The "personal camp" goals consisted primarily of a growth in self worth, financial compensation and the feeling of power (i.e., "the buck stops here" concept). There were prices to pay for these amenities. An administrator's family saw less of the administrator. The work-day was considerably longer for the administrator. Almost every respondent (as principal) indicated that for most of the school year, they were one of the first people in the school in the morning and usually one of the last ones to leave the building at the conclusion of the day.



Respondents reported that there was very little free time during the day with phone calls, scheduled and unscheduled meetings, emergencies and the like from all members of the school community constituent groups. There were many meetings that occur outside of the school day itself with parents' committees, commission meetings, principals' association and with the media. Summer holidays were limited to maybe one month as opposed to the two for teachers.

The "professional camp" brings to the position a substantial public profile as both an academic leader and a business manager. Both of these areas must be working smoothly at all times. The successful principal must be versatile and talented enough to switch from the academic role to the business quickly, many times fulfilling both job requirements simultaneously. With the successful completion of these roles (and the actual events, conflicts and such within these roles) came "glory," respect from constituent groups, increased power, "a deep sense of courage" and personal accomplishment.

The opposite also held true. If an administrator did not successfully fulfill his/her position to the minimal satisfaction of all constituent groups, then the respect, admiration and such were not bestowed. Fear, constituent negative behavior, insurrection, undermining, back talk and other forms of constituent discontent aggregated rapidly.

Personal goals may change over time. In the early years as an administrator, merely to survive have been for some, ample reward. The level of success or survival was differently defined for each administrator. As experience grows and confidence in management practices increases, some respondents felt that a sense of humility and humanity also grew. This in turn became the basis (insidiously perhaps) for an administrator to become a successful role model - not only for students, but for staff and faculty alike.

The community camp consisted of those constituent groups that extend from the school outward. Primarily this group is made up of parents. The parent constituent group consists of several sub-groups. There are those parents who have very little to do with their school and contact the administrators only when forced. Another group of parents are those who are active in

the school committees and who promote the betterment of school life through some arm of school governance. The third group of parents are those that have links to the outside school community such as religious groups, community action groups, community service groups. Another group of adults consists of those professionals that are involved in municipal and social services, health services, police welfare and the like.

It is with these groups that the administrator's personal goals or immediate concerns tend to be focused with that of the school image and procurer of institutional damage control, those of a solid corporate citizen and that of concerned educational leader. At almost all times, a school administrator serves both as institutional leader and school commission's "middle man," the first communication link between the school community and the school commission. The personal success of the administrator's abilities as a public relations communicator makes a big difference in his/her overall success as an administrator.

### ***SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 3: POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP***

Every decision has consequences. The value of the consequence or result is in the definition of the constituent(s) or constituent group(s) the decision most affects. The causal parameters of decision making cannot be subjective. Once a decision is made, a stand/or position has also been made. Leadership is one of the most important factors in judging the quality of an administrator. There are several factors that enter into the leadership decision-making phenomenon. One factor is the preparation that goes into making the decision itself. This includes the research into the topic, the amount of consultation in which the leader participates, the explanation of the decision to be rendered to all the affected parties and the ability for the leader to weather the fallout of the decision. All these factors influence the competency of a leader. Because people are always affected by leadership decisions, leadership and decision-making are political by nature. Every decision made by an administrator therefore is a political one.

There was agreement that with ROI 3.1 *a successful administrator demonstrates leadership through demonstrated competency, not by title alone.* Clearly a person can be

appointed to an administrative position with much pomp and circumstance. However, the glory can be short lived if the appointee does not have the required executive ability that will encourage respect and support from his underlings. Personal decision-making habits assist in the creation of an administrator persona. This, coupled with the political winds of any particular issue, can either enhance or erode the credibility of the administrator, depending on the manner in which the administrator weighs issues, consults with involved parties and constructs the wording of decisions.

As an administrator's record of decision-making ameliorates or deteriorates, so does the level of executable power. Power is bestowal by a higher authority group. The level of power (the amount that can be exercised) is designated by a legislated mandate, by assumption, perhaps acquiescence and/or a triumphant battle. An administrator's execution of such power is measured (or judged) by the affected constituents. This assessment will cover areas of management, manipulation and subjugation success of both conflict and the participating combatants of the conflict. The outcomes of early major decisions form the persona of an administrator. ROI 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 reflect these results.

ROI 3.6 and 3.7 test an administrator's being manipulated by external forces. In this study the specific external force is the elected school commissioner(s). The circumstances of external power-basing determine the degree to which an administrator permits his decision-making ability to be influenced by a second or third party. These parties may hold the belief that administrative rules, and the execution of such rules, be "bent" to fulfill the needs of someone or something else other than the intended use of a ruling. There were many examples from the data to illustrate this use of power. The most referred to instances were those where certain school commissioners demanded "personal favors" in hiring support staff, in appointing certain administrators to specific postings or in having special project funds or projects designated for a specific school be redirected to another school.

## SPHERE OF INFLUENCE 4: POLITICS, ETHICS AND VALUES

Ethics, a system of moral principals, has been one criterion in the judgment of a person's behaviors. Ethics and values systems are outgrowths of what people (or a collected people) believe is "morally correct or incorrect" or, perhaps, righteously acceptable or unacceptable within their societal behavioral norms. From the viewpoint of this study, I use two more working pragmatic notions from Burke and then Weber.

Even if we assume the most utilitarian basis imaginable as explanation for the rise in moral judgments, holding that the ethically ennobled say *virtue* when they mean *promise of profit*, and when they say, *wickedness* they mean *threat of a loss* ....<sup>60</sup>

From a sociological point of view an 'ethical' standard is one to which men attribute a certain type of value and which, by virtue of this belief, they treat as a valid norm governing their action. In this sense it can be spoken of as defining what is ethically good in the same way that action which is called beautiful is measured by aesthetic standards. It is possible for ethically normative beliefs of this kind to have a profound influence on action in the absence of any sort of external guarantee. This is often the case when the interests of others would be little affected by their violation.<sup>61</sup>

These two excerpts reflect the data in the belief that ethics and the manifestation of ethics in these administrative situations are defined by one's personal use of ethics in fulfilling duties of an administrative office. It is similar to a gambler who hedges a bet on whether or not if the bet is lost the gambler can cover the cost of the lost. In this case "damage control." This may sound cynical. But the feeling across the interviews was that administrator's self-preservation, especially the higher up the echelon, drives the ethic and moral foundations of decision making. ROI 4.1 is concerned with the categorical concept of depreciating integrity. This is where the administrator is tested by power-play commission politics or patronage demands of being "requested" to submit to demands of higher authorities. These requests may or may not be

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<sup>60</sup>Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*. 2d. ed., (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), 196.

<sup>61</sup>Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, translated by Henderson and Parsons. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 130.

ethically correct even though they may be legal and within the administrative mandate of the administrator in question.

ROI 4.2 and 4.3 deal with the concepts of loyalty: the faithfulness to the principles that are held sacrosanct within the institutional community and certain constituent groups. There is a true conflict of interest when an administrator (regardless of his position within the commission's hierarchy) must choose between his personal or professional gain and the needs of his most important constituent group. For line administrators, the loyalty they show and prove towards their student and teacher constituent groups are critical for their success and credibility. When these specific constituent groups feel or believe their administrators have "sold out" in some way to higher constituent groups, they view their administrator's credibility as terribly damaged.

ROI 4.4 now comes into play. The "rightness" and "wrongness" of a decision is valued in terms of Burke's belief of profit loss and gain. The espoused virtues that are considered critical for administrative success can be, and many times are, put aside for an administrator's personal safety as opposed for the safety of the institutional. This conflict is most witnessed at the highest levels of a school commission. It is here where the daily frontline administrative issues take second or third place to the larger "benefit" issues and policies of school governance. It is at this level where politics, finance, and commission-wide policies regarding such as items school closings, curricula directions, moral and social behavioral policies are debated and negotiated. The data reveals that some administrators do not necessarily have the welfare of the community as their priority. Many times, this leaves the line administrators in very difficult positions of having to defend Commission policies that they may believe are immoral, inappropriate and improper for their school.

ROI 4.5 finalizes these findings. Common sense, either moral or political, seems to come into decision making more at the "eleventh" hour in decision making than at other times in the process. That is not to say that common sense is not considered earlier in the process. It becomes more a factor as the stakes and tensions rise nearing the decision itself is produced. At times,

very high-end administrators, such as Director Generals, have to coddle both elected officials and subordinate administrators in order to create a common-sense atmosphere for the both the decision making process to operate and be accepted. It is not a compromising or negotiating tactic. It is difficult to have an "objective stand" on moral and ethical issues.

### **SUMMATIVE FINDINGS**

The following are the summative findings of the data analysis. These findings reflect more a cross-case analysis. The findings (combination of interview responses and ROI adaptation) disclose that every decision made at every level is a political decision. These decisions affect many people and therefore deal with the possible altering of human relations between organizational constituent groups.

Second, the findings reveal that administrators, being human, must go through moral and ethical processes each time a decision is made. Decisions are subjective value judgments. The eventual success, failure, fallout, or complications of any decision rest with the administrator who must make the final call. Even with consultation, and perhaps hours of study, there can only be one terminal decision. It may be a successful (good), unsuccessful (bad), or a marginal decision with open-ended directions. It still lies with the decision-maker. The truthfulness, reliability and validity of a decision can only be studied within the context of the specific phenomenological reference of a specific decision making circumstance. In other words, a decision-making protocol (in any context) can only be prescriptive at best. It can not guarantee a satisfactory final outcome.

Third, the higher the administrative position, the further away the administrator goes from front-line administration decision making and the day-to-day challenges of operating a school. The only exception to this usually concerns legal matters. An example of this occurs when a student (or student's parents) brings some legal charges against a teacher. This is the case in harassment allegations and incidents that bring in social welfare agencies or the police.

However, such school maintenance issues as student timetabling, course selection, guidance issues, individual student behavior, and teacher evaluation tend to remain within the

realm of the local school administrative team. Ironically, teacher selection is not a local issue unless the local school administrator makes it one. This occurs where the administrator believes that a current teacher is unsuitable or incompetent for placement in the school.

Four, the higher the level of administration, the higher up go the stakes for solving moral and ethical issues. Racism, multicultural issues, health and welfare issues, vocational training, special project funding, first and second language support programs, and arts program funding are characteristically the issues that first get aired at higher levels within the commission. Even though a particular incident may initiate a "happening" or "event" at a particular school which cause possible administrative dilemma, the ramifications of a commission policy (whether in place, non-existent or in a planning stage) must eventually be consistent throughout all system schools. The democratic participatory action of individual elected ward commissioners will shape such policies in theory and content. Commission officers and department heads will create the managerial documents and execution policies of such decisions. The full impact of the execution of a policy will fall onto the shoulders of the line administrators. It was clear from the interviews, that many line administrators do not fully believe that highest commissioner officers or the elected ward officials, always have the student constituency first in mind (in terms of benefit) in decision making.

Fifth, the interaction with school board commissioners by administrators is proportionate to the echelon level of the administrator. Commission-wide policies are made and discussed at the commission level. Therefore the interaction level between board commissioners and school officers are seen more at this level than at the line level. However, many ward commissioners do keep a contact, of sorts, with the principals and the school committees within their wards. Notwithstanding, it was not clear from the interviews, what constitutes "contact" between these parties. One director general said that many times there is contact made for public relations and information giving. The school principal notifies a commissioner concerning an event at the

school. Many principals indicated that it was a rare instance, outside of a graduation ceremony, that their commissioner made contact with the school.

### **STEPS TO TRANSCENDENCE**

It is now, with the grounding of the data completed, that we begin the journey to transcendence - from the data to the theatrical piece. In summary, the data findings reveal, and demonstrate in some instances, the parameters and concerns of the political-organizational-cultural conflicts. As mentioned earlier, the act of decision making is one of the most critical areas of administration. The findings disclose that every decision is a political one with ramifications for everyone including involved or affected constituent groups.

The findings go on to reveal that administrators, being human, must go through moral and ethical processes every time they must make decisions. Decisions are subjective value judgments. The eventual success, failure, subsequent fallout, and complications of any decision rest with the administrator who must make the final call. Even with consultation, and perhaps hours of study, there can only be one terminal decision. It may be successful (good), unsuccessful (bad), or a marginal one with open-ended ramifications. It still lies with the decision-maker. The truthfulness, reliability and validity of a final decision can only be studied within the context of the specific phenomenological reference of a specific circumstance. In other words, a decision-making protocol (in any context) can only be prescriptive at best. It guarantees nothing.

Decision-making protocols, leadership parameters of conduct with the subculture constituent groupings, do not show any clear standard protocol. This leads to the belief that individuals involved in a decision-making situation must create highly subjective guidelines for making their decisions. The key tension points within both the individual's and the corporate needs may reveal "stakes" (risks or consequences) of decision making confrontations or procedures. Power "defined" and power "wielded" are not necessarily created and executed with the same intent.



## CHAPTER SIX - NOTIONS OF SCRIPTWRITING

### DRAMA AND THEATRE-LIKE ACTIVITIES AS INNATE COMMUNICATION

Drama as role-playing is one of humankind's oldest forms of communication. Since the beginning of time and from the earliest moments a parent first holds their child, physical gesturing (natural or contrived) and storytelling have been used as teaching methods. And since those first moments, most people (regardless of age or profession) have never ceased using these models of communication in their bag of explanation techniques to others. At some point in time, drama evolved as basic communication tool into other communication vehicles. "Drama and theatre as entertainment" eventually became the dominant outlet for many drama and drama-related activities. Our playwriting discussion begins with two given beliefs: first, whether consciously or not, all humankind employs drama activities in some way in their daily life; second, all humankind engages, consciously or not, in observational activities, synthesizes what they observe and draws wisdom, to some degree, from what they observe.

### PLAYWRITING AS A TECHNIQUE

There are no formulas or magic potions for writing a play. There exist many prescriptive texts that explain play elements and playwriting methods. Two of the more popular texts are *Writing Your Own Play*<sup>62</sup> by Carol Korty written primarily for younger secondary school students, and Stuart Griffith's *How Plays Are Made* for college level and above. Even though Griffith's work is written in a much more sophisticated fashion, they both carefully list the structural elements of many plays. Topics such as action, dramatic tension, subject, theme, message, characterization are carefully defined with numerous examples provided. Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing*<sup>63</sup> predates these works. It is written in a very similar fashion with

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<sup>62</sup>Carol Korty, *Writing your Own Plays*, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1986); Stuart Griffiths, *How Plays Are Made: A Guide to the technique of Play Construction and the Basics of Drama*. (Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1982).

<sup>63</sup>Lajos, Egri. *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946, 1960).

even more detailed and explained substructures. All these books present a number of items or phenomena to search for in a play. They all talk about temporal lines, vertical and horizontal growths in characterization, points of climactic plot attacks. These descriptive passages concerning a play's elements are all standard fare. There are extended bibliographies as well that literally go back centuries.

The creative act, from a mechanical standpoint can be explained. Thornton Wilder, one of this century's most important American playwrights begins our discussion:

The novel is a past reported in the present. On the stage it is always now. This confers upon the action an increased vitality which the novelist longs in vain to incorporate in his work.

This condition in the theatre brings with it another important element: In the theatre we are not aware of the intervening storyteller. The speeches arise from the characters in an apparently pure spontaneity.

*A play is what takes place.*

*A novel is what one person tells us took place.*

A play visibly represents pure existing. A novel is what one mind, claiming to omniscience, asserts to have existed ... It is the task of the dramatist so to co-ordinate his play, through the selection of episodes and speeches, that, though he is himself not visible, his point of view and his governing intention will impose themselves on the spectator's attention, not as dogmatic assertion or motto, but as self-evident and inevitable seduction.<sup>64</sup>

Aside from technical differences between a novel and play, Wilder suggests that audience members are empowered as viewers to take a "stand" on what they view on the stage.

Therefore, the difference between a two-dimensional script or short story and a dramatic script lies in several major foundational elements. First, a story, regardless of its genre format, tells a tale. A play (sometimes referred as a theatrical piece or script) shows the tale. Second, the story is meant to be read; a script is performed. Third, a story has the flexibility to alter its temporal line; it can easily move from present to past to future and so on. A play does not have that flexibility. A play's story line can shift, but not often or easily within the same script.

Fourth, in a story, its story line's premise tends to be more a proposition in nature that

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<sup>64</sup>Thornton Wilder, "Some Thoughts in Playwriting, (1941)" in *Playwrights on Playwriting*, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), 115.

supports a logical conclusion. It is usually written in a narrative style, usually but not always in the third person. There is much room for long descriptive passages. A play or theatrical piece is spoken in the first person in a dialogue or monologue with the audience, often but not always, serving as an invisible passive listener. There is virtually no description presented in the descriptive sense. Theatrical production devices such as set design, physical properties, lighting and audio elements will add flavor or perhaps a dimension of background. But they are not absolutely necessary for the play's values to be expressed.

The fifth and final major difference lies in the dimensional arena. A two-dimensional story (or even a script in the technical sense) is a paper with words written on it. It has value only if one puts value on it. That is the metaphorical difference between a five-dollar bill and a one thousand-dollar bill in that a piece of paper has a "value" if you define what's descriptively written on it as having value. A play, a three-dimensional work uses live physical representation. The third dimension of physical "live" form is what changes the written text to a play.

### HUMAN INTERACTION

Both the active participating actors and the passive viewing audience members conjointly experience the live human element. Live theatre representation forces both parties to take a "stand" in what they respectively portray and view. The element of temporal movement within as scene and actual time (in terms of minutes and seconds) is also present. However, this is latent not visible. The influence if this temporal element is heightened, intensified or lightened by psychological influences of human interaction of the constant intertwining between the real and created personas of each individual actor. This individual phenomenon intertwines simultaneously between all actors onstage within a global backdrop of psychological ⇔ sociological ⇔ physical ⇔ environmental parameters. This is what occurs on stage during a performance.

The stage action is viewed by the audience passively (most of the time) - as a voyeur, so

to speak, omnipresent and not attached physically to the actual action. The audience's collective presence is felt within the performance space affecting the actors in almost a spiritual manner. The audience synthesizes the visual, aural and intellectual messages from the onstage actions. Audience members feel the tension of the play's onstage projection and become engaged with the transmission in some way, psychologically or judgmentally. Or perhaps they imaginatively become one of the characters onstage. It can become a mystical metamorphosis.

This is part of the magic of live performance. This is not fully replicated in any non-live performance medium such as film, video or television.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF TRANSCENDENCE

There is one question that remains. Why does man create and perform plays? William Packard gives some insight:

... We have to look back to the origins of drama as the earliest of all art forms. 50,000 years ago, before the first cave man evolved the most primitive spoken or pictorial communication, he had to signal his wants and fears and needs to his fellow cave men through a series of awkward mime gestures and crude dramatic visuals. As in our earliest infancy, the first human impulse has always been to show through pointing and gesturing with our hands or with whatever other visuals may be immediately available to us. Thus *showing* comes before *telling*, and drama comes before the great epic narrative poems or histories or novels or short stories or essays. Drama is, quite simply, the most primitive form of human expression imaginable.<sup>65</sup>

Drama presentation is mankind's most basic communication medium. What is transmitted in every human dialog is the context through emotionality. Denzin goes into great detail explaining this phenomenon in his *On Understanding Emotion*.<sup>66</sup> He claims, "On the basis of emotionality, the person is moved to act morally on behalf of himself and of others. A moral person is revealed through emotionality." Man consequently has innate needs to be emotive and express these emotions.

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<sup>65</sup>William Packard, *The Art of the Playwright*, (New York: Paragon, 1987), xvi.

<sup>66</sup>Norman Denzin, *On Understanding Emotion*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984), 240.

Taking this a bit further, I would tend to say, as a creative writer, that all inter-relationships a person has with the other individuals, ideas, places or spirituality concern an emotional interpretation of the present with reflection on the past and a hope for the future. The role of the playwright is to connect the needs of the moment (an emotional dilemma) with a need (defined in a thematic device) for a better future. The playwright does this by composing a dramatic visual representation of a human scenario in which a character(s) interact with others. Conflicts arise with moral or ethical questions. The play is a universe within a universe with loosely defined borders, created from the inside (actors and production teams) to be shown to those on the outside (the audience). Even though everything is “make believe,” it exists in earnest for those few moments that the play is performed.

A distinguishing feature between narrative story and live theatre presentation is the use of action both in the philosophic sense and in the live usage. Packard explains that dramatic action can be expressed in “three words: *actions, visuals, and stakes*.” He goes on in detail to explain how these are used in playwriting:

1. *Drama is action.* Action is someone’s wanting something. Action is the strong objective that someone has in a beat or scene or act of a play.
2. *Character is action.* Character is someone’s wanting something. Character is his or her major objective in the play.
3. *Actions and characters should both be expressed through vivid onstage visuals.* A visual is any physical object that becomes the embodiment of some major action.
4. *Actions and characters run into obstacles.* Dramatic conflict begins when someone wants something but there is an obstacle (a strong resistance, a stone wall impediment, or some other character’s action) that gets in the way of what this character wants. Then the character will either have to overcome the obstacle, or else the character will not be able to overcome the obstacle and so he will have to try and approach it from some other direction.
5. *The greatness of any action depends on how much is at stake.* The greater these stakes, the greater the action will be – and the smaller the stakes, the smaller the action will be. If the stakes aren’t all that much then a character won’t care very much about his action, and then the audience won’t care either.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Packard, 13-14.

These five guidelines are used to bring out the theme or, perhaps premise of any work. The theme or thematic statement of a dramatic work is the *raison d'être* of any theatrical piece. For the purposes of this project, theme is defined as: *one or more qualified cause and effect relationships of specific abstract ideas as shown or demonstrated by one or more corresponding plot or action sequences.* Within this definition, causality is the vehicle to clarify abstract ideas. Abstract ideas are ideas or concepts that have no physical properties such as height, depth, weight, depth and volume. The abstract idea must be general enough to allow some latitude in the causal parameters.

The “qualified” in the theme definition is some explicit descriptive term to bring the abstract idea out from under the ‘general’ indefinite definitional haze. For example, the idea of “love.” There are many types of love: for one’s parents, love towards someone in a sensual manner, love for a political or societal cause, and love for a pet passion. In a thematic context, the abstract must be qualified or specific. The abstract idea of self-sacrificial love for one’s child would be an example of this application. The following are thematic statements from some well-known works:

**THE VISIT (Dürrenmatt):** A self-proclaimed justification that believes that inequity can be addressed by a demonstration of the manipulation of a justice system to satisfy one’s compulsion for revenge.

**THE DAUGHTERS OF ATREUS (Turney):** To maintain a personal (or family) sense of honor, as dictated by historical precedent; the characters are led to an obsessive interpretation of revenge as shown by a series of murders which are believed to serve as permissible justice system punishments.

**THE SEA (Bond):** Exaggeration or extremism of the idea of conspiracy, or the role of protector is shown by the fabrication of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

**DANCE OF DEATH (Strindberg):** Love inevitably turns into pure hatred which becomes the basis of a love/hate relationship as shown by a husband and wife who are destined to an increasing struggle of eternal torment.

**THREE SISTERS (Chekhov):** Self-inflicted suffering serves as life's *raison d'être* as shown by the major characters' compulsion to complain and be complacent (a frustration-release mechanism) as opposed to taking affirmative action to change their individual low-life conditions.

It is the responsibility of the director with his actors and production crews to insure that the actors continually project the piece's thematic message throughout each performance. In the preparation of a dramatic piece, every participant strives to understand the thematic foundation structures of the piece. Every acting, directing and staging scheme is employed to insure that the most realistic and human projection is assured. This is the critical preparation leading to the transcendence from the two-dimensional script to the three-dimensional human interpretation of the script.

The operative word is *interpretation* of the script. Just as the playwright interprets his research into script, so does the actor interpret the playwright's script and transcends the written word into the interpreted and resulting series of human and personal emotions of the portrayed character. This is the magic of theatre.

... One creates dramatic actions and onstage visuals because this is quite simply the deepest instinct that we know, and, because it is our strongest response to life itself. And if this act of creation has to take place in a theatre which some people see as "a miserable madness" why then, miserable it certainly is, and madness it may well be, but still it is the clearest mirror that we have for who we are and we are as we are.<sup>68</sup>

If we see theatre and drama performance as a working mirror or reflection of our daily lives, then this phenomenon is also a teaching tool for humanity to manipulate as a representational vehicle for self and communal learning. The playwright's most innate artistic and aesthetic wants are primarily to "show" the evolving world by having audiences share or attack or agree with his vision. It is the actor's most innate passion to "show" the challenge of their portrayed characters' struggles in the evolving world by engaging the audience with the working model of reality in the represented persona's acting. The protagonist of a play has a context to serve as his/her motivation for interpretation.

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<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, xxiv.

It becomes the vehicle for both actor and viewer alike to understand the vision of the production (or the play text itself or both). Jean-Paul Sartre explains:

A man who is free within the circle of his own situation, who chooses, whether he wishes to or not, for everyone else when he chooses for himself - that is the subject matter of our plays. As a successor to the theatre of characters we want to have a theatre of situation; our aim is to explore all the situations that are most common to human experience, those which occur at least once in the majority of lives ... For us a man is a whole enterprise in himself. And passion is a part of that enterprise.<sup>69</sup>

We interpret Sartre's words with much liberality for our purposes. The playwright explores and probes the challenges of humankind not so much from the empiricist's perspective, but more from the explorer's perspective. After the playwright creates the theatrical piece, and after it has been prepared and readied for production, it is up to the audience to explore its meaning.

An audience facing an unknown story will pay more attention to the story than to its treatment, and by necessity then such a play has to be richer in detail and circumstances than one with a known action ... Like every other form of art, drama creates its world; but not every world can be created in the same fashion.<sup>70</sup>

### *ENTR'ACTE*

The view of this short chapter on playwriting is primarily to present the ideas that theatre and drama are one of humankind's first experiences of learning and teaching. Drama and theatre practices, in the most rudimentary formats, are used often in daily communications between people. Playwriting differs from other forms of artistic literary creation in that the human element is "live." This human element is very evident at all stages of a script's development in terms of theme, dramatic thematic development, and in all aspects of performance production and its subsequent production presentation.

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<sup>69</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, "Forgers of Myths, (1946)" in *Playwrights on Playwriting*, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), 118-119.

<sup>70</sup>Friedrich Durrenmatt, "Problems of the Theatre, (1955)" in *Playwrights on Playwriting*, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), 134.



Finally, audience participation is a dominant element in play production. This involves the playwright and all production participants striving to engage the audience-viewer into becoming ethereally part of the play: in other words to be provoked. The viewer designs this participation individually. It can range from passively watching the production and then leaving it at that. Or, it can incite the viewer to assume, in his (her) imagination to intellectually become involved in the production and take political, social or moral stands on the subject matter in any manner he or she deems appropriate.

## CHAPTER SEVEN - TRANSCENDENCE

The primary purpose of a play is to provoke its viewers. Every play is subjective by design and is expected to have its viewers react. Regardless of the reaction, positive, negative or marginal, every viewer will find some element of the viewing experience to think about. This may come during the viewing itself or minutes to days after. If I have been true to the spirit of the data and have composed a workable script, then the production of the piece will be successful in provoking an audience.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the area of transcendence - the path of how the findings lead or inspire the creative act and the creation of the "piece." The use of the word 'transcendence' is intended towards the notion of the data going beyond the typical endpoint of "conclusions" and "summary statements" in research. The data in this project served as inspirational creative ignition sparks for the creative artist to represent concepts in the three-dimensional art form of a theatre piece. Each time the findings were analyzed, re-grouped and then transmuted in a reading or rehearsal, "the piece" became a more complete entity. At each stage in the script's development it grew. Simply, my use of "transcendence" is the ongoing, evolving use of findings into the representational form of *theatre as representation*.

Transcendence is the state of "Ku"<sup>71</sup> between the science of data and art of performance. Richard Causton explains Ku as being "applicable to those matters which we know to have a certain continuity but which only appear when the conditions are right. To all intents and purposes, the rest of the time they do not seem to exist at all."<sup>72</sup> Phenomenon when in a state of Ku is in a form

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<sup>71</sup>"A fundamental Buddhist concept, variously translated as non-substantiality, emptiness, void ... The concept that entities have no fixed or independent nature because phenomena arise and continue to exist only by virtue of their relationship with other phenomena, they have no fixed substance," *A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms and Concepts*, ed. Matsuda (Tokyo: Nichiren Shoshu International Center, 1983), 237.

<sup>72</sup>Richard Causton, *The Buddha in Daily Life*, (London: Rider, 1995), 81.

of latency where we know something exists but we cannot see it until something triggers it to become visible. Causton gives the following example,

...We may take it for granted that coal can be burnt...and that a cherry tree blooms in the spring, because we have probably all had some direct experience of these events. Imagining for a moment that we have had no such experience, if we encountered a cherry tree in winter we would most likely think it is dead, as that is what the evidence of our senses tells us, if, having been convinced that it was alive, we then decided to dissect and analyze it, we would find nothing to suggest that it would be covered in flowers in spring: those flowers at the moment do not exist. And yet they do, in *ku*, waiting for the right time and conditions to appear.<sup>73</sup>

A similar situation appears in transcendence. A researcher has data. The data analysis tells the researcher certain clear results along with unanswered questions, doubts and other phenomena that have no clear explanation but yet, the researcher must search for them. The playwright looks at the same hard data and interprets the hard fact conclusions, the doubts and the rest as equals and creates the conditions for clarity to appear. The script is the initiatory vehicle. Subsequent human voices and interactions (from the actors and staging) finalize and clarify the clear and not so clear data findings into physical (three-dimensional) and psychological interactive representational realities. The bridge between the data and its artistic and creative interpretation and then into representation lies in the state of *ku*.

There exists no absolute model for a playwright to create. Some playwrights go through excruciating research and some do not. Others get inspired from a conversation, or an observation, or a spiritual epiphany. Something or someone inspires the playwright to bring breath to his or her work.

These are the following critical questions for me as both playwright and researcher.

- How does the creative act operate in the realm of educational administration research?
- How are the data findings manipulated in the creation of the dramatic text?

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 81.

- Where is the threshold between “scientific” data and the creation of theme, plot, characters, and action?
- What are the production parameters of such a dramatic work?
- How much truth and/or realism are required?

There is no specific order to these questions. They are omnipresent and their answers inter-relate, cross over, and many times contradict each other. The answers, or perhaps better - the responses, to these questions should be viewed as a collective symbiotic entity.

### **THE DOOR INTO THE MAZE**

For this project, I was first interested in principal selection as a vehicle to demonstrate ethics and related organizational theory issues during my Master’s Degree preparation. I read much on organization theory, principalship and independent school constituent politics. The end result was the one act play, *The Marginalization of the Principal*, which, when presented in a theatrical setting, depicted the political power playing of the particular subcultural groups of an independent school in their search for a new Principal. My doctoral research was on a similar but larger perspective, researching the public sector on the same Principal selection topic.

Along with the data research findings, my observation of administrators at all levels over the past twenty some years as a field practitioner and from many conversations with colleagues from both the independent and public school sectors, led me to believe the following. In times of tough decision making, especially in the selection of line administrative leaders, logic is in the eyes of beholder and selection guidelines are haphazard at best. Those with the power tend to choose from their “gut.” Every school constituency wants a “hook” of some kind in the school administrative team.

### **INITIAL MOTIFS**

This led to the working concept of the project: inevitably all school decisions (made by administrators) are first considered by their political parameters before they are considered from

the moral parameters. The data research methodology was structured, and the findings were very clear. The journey as a researcher was near closure.

As a playwright, my life became more complicated. Absolute truth and proven data are not totally required for composing a script. Therefore, I was required to create some “stands” and what became the eventual “stakes”<sup>74</sup> for the piece. Throughout the research process and with every interview, I felt a certain collective yearning from almost all the respondents to say that, as working administrators, politics is the issue in education, not pedagogy, not theory, not students, not teachers, and not language of instruction. Ethics and morality are latchkey elements in the administration “game.” This “game” is the ins and outs of decision making.

A decision, for the sake of this project had to be defined, at the outset, in terms of a working evolving concept. It was defined as follows: an end product proposition, or response, to an issue which directs a workable conclusion to a problem that hopefully satisfies some of the needs of all involved constituent groups and most of the needs of the more powerful constituent groups. In other words, the constituent who has the most ‘muscle’, real or intended wins his stakes more times than he or she loses his stakes. Many decision making rules, guidelines and protocols are in fact molded, not by the needs of students or education, but solely by the power brokers (some external of a school commission) of the educational system - the politicians. Whether elected school commission officials, appointed Provincial Ministry of Education mandarins, university or C.E.G.E.P.<sup>75</sup> entrance requirements, and the governing provincial government elected ministers, school administrators have little, it seems, flexibility in many of their decision making results.

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<sup>74</sup>A “stake” is defined as what a character, player or constituent must obtain to either keep face; or what the player will win or what the player will lose concerning the matter being disseminated or debated within/between involved constituents.

<sup>75</sup>Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel or College of General and Vocational Education. This a Quebec pre-university, post secondary institution whose successful completion is a compulsory requirement for entry for a Quebec high school student to enter a Quebec university.

These concepts are pervasive. In the final series of interview questions, it was asked, "What would you like to see on stage in a play about principal selection as a subject vehicle?" After some moments, and almost always, the respondent's first reply was that he or she wanted a major confrontation between the needs of a board commissioner(s) and the needs of the school commission appointed officers especially in those cases where there was much moral and ethical differences of opinion.

### **GESTATION, TERM 1 - PHRASES AND IMAGES**

This told me as a playwright that the division of responsibility and power are not believed to be independent, freethinking, or equal (and not that it should) amongst all constituents. I heard the respondents' voices in my head and silently attempted to understand them both as practitioners and as dedicated professionals. I also made judgments on perhaps whether or not they were holding back information, being as cautious or as open as they could be. Artistic creation is founded on observation. I observed as much as I could - every gesture, the pauses between phrases, whether or not they looked at me. When they talked or responded - did the respondent look away or play with objects as they spoke. I asked mental questions to myself such as would I trust or not trust this person? Would I want this person as a colleague, a supervisor and so on? These are all subjective questions in search of subtexts and other hidden, or not so hidden, verbal and non-verbal mannerisms. A picture formed in my mind of the individual. It went through revision each time I read and listened to the transcription of the interview.

Once again, this was studied in tandem with the data findings, starting with the initial areas of reference, spheres of infra-influence and the rules of inclusion. From the very beginning of the process, mental sketches were formed of characters, scenarios, ideas and thematic elements. This all together, metaphorically similar to a stew, floated around in my head until literally, I felt it was time to begin experimenting with ideas.

## GESTATION, TERM 2 - THE NOVELLA

My playwriting style required me to create a background narrative before attempting the script itself (see appendix 3). This resembled a short story or novella where I could play with ideas, stretch characters, create situations and develop dialog. I wrote in dialog with minimal description. For me, I felt almost comfortable in this style. I constantly referred back to the interview tapes and data findings to get insights. It was not my purpose to represent the data findings per se. It was the purpose of the play to represent the characters in conflict within the parameters of the moral and ethical dilemmas the data brought forth.

One of the challenges of dramatic production is that a script can be very “flat” in a silent reading, but immensely moving in production with live actors and accompanying theatrical production elements (staging, lights, in a formal performance space). Scripting has very little description. The advantage of the narrative is to allow the description to sculpt the elements of the play. It is not meant to be performed, so flatness is not an issue. This is another reason I chose the first writing step as a narrative creation. Within this genre, I could be writer, participant and observer by easily putting my personal imaginative curve in each character as was being shaped. It was similar to playing a game of “sidewalk shrink” in which you simultaneously role-play both the patient and the psychiatrist.

The novella went through three revisions. The use of the novella is for me alone and not for publication or for any one else’s eyes. The novella was completed when I felt it was the right time for the script writing itself to begin. This did not necessarily mean that any part of the novella would actually be used in the play. In the final script, I took a section here and there, a dialog from one section and placed it in another. The creative act was an evolving metamorphosis on many levels.

For example, the story began with the use of one villain type - the Deputy Director General DeDroty. As the novella progressed, I believed it was important to have an “inside man”

in the school commission who did the nasty schemes for some of the more powerful school commissioners. This came forward from many of the interviewees. This worked well in the novella, but it was problematic in the script because this character was playing both sides of the fence (a commission officer insurrecting by doing the “dirty work” for some elected commissioners). He took on too much importance within the story. I wanted the conflict to be strong between the Director General and Kazankis onstage. Dedroty required lots of stage time. It would detract from the real conflict and add more time to the action on stage. In the script he was fired at the very beginning of the play to present the first power conflict, which then permitted a strong female Deputy Director General to enter and support the Director General. Now, the ‘power-playing’ element was more realistic between the two opposing forces on stage.

### **GESTATION. TERM 3 - THE SCRIPT**

The initial script was based upon a sketched scene (for writing practice) I had written about halfway through the interviews. There was a particular incident involving a commission level administrator who had been appointed to a very high position in one of the Montreal School Commissions. This person was “in favor” with some very powerful school commissioners of the time. His appointment almost caused an uprising with most of the senior commission officers. The appointment, according to at least five respondents, totally marginalized the commission, the supporting commissioners, and the public view of the commission itself. The history, in the spiritual sense, of this episode formed the essence of the scene. The piece itself grew from that incident. The script evolved outwardly from this scene keeping in mind that the final script could only have a limited number of characters and a contained performance time of under 50 minutes. These constraints were understood under the assumption that the piece would be performed at professional conferences where sessions have fixed running times. Also production-wise, actors and production crews in total have to be technically and financially manageable to transport and house. With these in mind, the script took its form.



Since I was dealing with a confrontation organism, so to speak, I chose for my time frame an actual Commission closed meeting. In the initial drafts, it became clear that having one lengthy scene of arguing characters would resemble more a "talking heads" display than anything else. The piece therefore required several distinct staging areas in the performance venue to permit certain groups of characters to assemble away from the rest of the characters or to allow a different time (hour or place) once the piece began.

It was also important for a few of the represented constituent character groups to be introduced outside of the confrontation scenes to the viewers. The audience would not receive a program notebook with detailed character descriptions and plot synopsis. They, as most viewing audiences, would be discovering these as they watched and synthesized the goings-on. In effect, the audience would have to work, as the actors would be working, simultaneously transforming and transmuting information onto multi-dimensional levels.

A purpose of this theatrical work was to provoke the audience members to question (agree, disagree or whatever) the viewed element(s) that emotionally moved them. There is a clear subjective stand in the piece. There are two very strong leader personalities presented. I purposely chose the Director General as the more altruistic leader, almost a bit too squeaky clean. He plays power politics very strongly as witnessed by the opening scene where he virtually forces the hand of his "bad guy" Deputy Director General. The content of this scene peripherally appears in reference several times throughout the piece.

The Board Vice President gives the aura of being a sleazy character. However, he is a dedicated member of the Board of Commissioners. His political agenda has a rationale for him as for his supporters, but he is a political creature. "Power" and "power brokering" are true elements of any political organism. He is true to form regardless of the ethics of his positions. This is also true of the DG and his staff.

The transcendence from the data to script brought to light this human element of confrontation. This is especially present in situations where all constituent groups believe that

they each hold the power and influence of “the best” solution in decision making. Where everyone is “right” and no one is “wrong,” there may be an occasional crossfire or two where, intentional or not, ideas are caught and go down in what best could be described as “friendly fire.”

#### GESTATION, TERM 4 - “THE PIECE”

The cold reading<sup>76</sup> of *Transitional Wars* occurred on Wednesday evening September 3, 1997 at the Bhatla Studio at St. George’s High School of Montreal. Seven readers, along with one of my dissertation committee members, Myrna Wyatt-Selkirk (responsible for the theatre aspects of the project), and I anxiously began the reading. After months of hearing only my voice in the different character roles, it was a revelation to hear the characters come alive. As expected, *Transitional Wars* began its next stage of transformation. For the most part, the story and characters held together satisfactorily. As the readers became more involved with their roles, I heard new personality sides of some characters. In the case of Commissioner 3, it had become clear that I had given him too shallow a manner. His perceived simplicity in fact was not correctly written. His composite persona, as derived from the data, was not solid enough to give him credibility as a commissioner who had presumably dealt with much racism in his life. The readers emphatically raised this issue in our after-read de-briefing. It was unanimous in the belief that even though the facts of the “Tyrizo” issue may have been correct in the data, they were not permitting the piece’s counterpart to breathe and be credible.

In its ‘cold read’ rendition, the momentum of the power play between the Commissioners and the Board senior staff was too lopsided in favor of the DG and his fellow Commission officers. Not that, it was inconceivable, it seemed too flimsy. It was discussed at length. The conflict had to leave the targeted audience with more of a dilemma. In other words because both

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<sup>76</sup>A cold reading is where the playwright and a handful of readers literally sit around a table and read the working script draft from beginning to end with little or no direction. Its purpose is to have the playwright listen to the voices of the piece.

the defined “good guys” and “bad guys” were so transparent, it was too easy for the audience to side against the Commissioner. This resulted in an emotional lull and rhythmic anomaly in the pacing of the piece.

This became a quandary of sorts. The data, based on accounts of certain real commissioners, was not successfully creating a credible stage character. As a researcher, I asked should I faithfully believe in and solely be loyal to the data? Or, as the playwright do I make it “work” for the theatre? How was this particular character to have more credibility without sizably altering the story line as inspired by the rules of inclusion and the other findings?

Clearly data alone is inspirational. Unfortunately it is sometimes not enough to animate, enliven and generate a credible character. I made the judgment call to expand the breadth of Commissioner 3. The fault in the character creation was that the several real commissioners, who the character was inspired from, were, in truth, more politically astute than was presented in the script. Even the “incident” which inspired the Tyrizo appointment candidate was an actual event.

There was a difference from Board to Board concerning who (the Commissioners or the Commission Officers) wielded more power. In one selected Boards, the political posturing of the commissioners was very blatant: also, the Director General was very weak (in comparison to the Commissioners). In another Board, it was the opposite. The piece’s DG was purposefully designed to be almost super human. The cold read, with different real voices, clearly brought this script weakness into the open. I had to strengthen the fiber of Commissioner three, the candidate Tyrizo and the need for both the Vice-President and Commissioner 3’s for Tyrizo’s appointment.

Further, the readers themselves in a Denzinian<sup>77</sup> motivated style de-briefing after the read, went into long discussions deconstructing and reconstructing the problems with both the character creation and plot vehicle element (the Tyrizo image). In the revision of this character, more credibility was given to the unseen Tyrizo. Commissioner 3 became more politically

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<sup>77</sup> Refer to Chapter four’s discussion on “Denzin’s Six Steps to Interpretation.”

smooth and manipulative. The incident now gives the audience the opportunity to debate the merits of the candidate and the power playing of the combatants. As a provocation instrument, the piece, by heightening the debate between the “good guys” and the “other agendized good guys” can actually empower the viewer to take a stand on several key issues of defining real power, racism and integrity. The turmoil can leave in its wake a threatening question: If everyone believes his or her side is “right” and no one is “wrong,” and everyone is still “fighting,” then how does an organization define ethics and morality?

### RECAPITULATION

Early in this chapter the following questions were presented:

- How does a creative act operate in the realm of educational administration research?
- How are the data findings manipulated in the creation of the dramatic text?
- Where is the threshold between “scientific” data and the creation of theme, plot, characters, and action?
- What are the production parameters of such a dramatic work?
- How much truth and/or realism are required?

I believe that the creative playwriting act is more the “show” than the “tell” of idea presentation. In this framework, this form of the creative act operates in much the same way as any educative model does - to inform, to demonstrate and to question normative and not so normative models of action (specifically power brokering and decision making).

The playwright, to create and forge believable characters and story lines, manipulates the data findings, in tandem with the human and spiritual directions that sprout from the data analysis itself. Credibility for the dramatic work lies within the eyes and beliefs of the audience viewers.

The threshold between science and creative artistic act begins with the *ku* concept. A series of data-based propositions, which are believed to be somewhat credible, institute working tenets that lie in the *ku* state. The creative artist initiates, more inductively than deductively, thematic and plots concepts from the *ku* ‘mist’ (of sorts). A presentational forum is formulated that can present them in a credible and construed manner with a certain degree of truth or notions

of truth. The threshold is then a net of capillary-like links between the data implications and workable contrived themes and plot lines. After a working script has been derived, typical production parameters and elements can be designed, constructed and programmed.

The amount of truth and reality required to make such a creative dramatic piece workable is the amount of truth and reality that make the dramatic piece believable to its participants and its viewers. This inevitably comes to the base point of the scriptwriter's view of the subject matter. It is within a relationship of the self-imposed boundaries of the piece. These boundaries are a seasoned collection of knowledge known, knowledge gained and the fusion of the two. The consequence of this "knowledge soup" is an enlightened (hopefully) creative vehicle. In this instance a dramatic representation. When presented, its resulting application is to leave a wise (as in wisdom) reflection apparatus for each successive user, viewer or participant. It is not only shared in some dimension within all these constituents, it evolves and regenerates. Laurel Richardson, a noted postmodern feminist scholar who has experimented with both poetry and drama in her research, links the aesthetic, political and academic into a shared entity.

Knowledge is not appropriated and controlled but shared; authors recognize a multiplicity of selves within themselves as well as interdependence with others, shadows and doubles. Alternate selves are interwoven by common threads of lived experiences.<sup>78</sup>

It is the "lived" and "shared" experiences that lie within the playwright that work together with both his participants and viewers to create the critical link - transcendence. The hard data, laboriously collected, digested and defined can only make sense and be of use if "the common threads of lived experiences" can successfully integrate with the realities of the both the playwright and his or her viewers.

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<sup>78</sup>Laurel Richardson, *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 166.

## CHAPTER EIGHT - TRANSITIONAL WARS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is in two sections: first, is a brief definition of the theme and character profiles; second the script itself as it was presented on October 19, 1997. In any public presentation of the piece, the audience would not see the first section's material. The nature of a "live" presentation, in itself, allows the actors and their stage director to breathe life into the characters. Throughout the performance, the actors' interpretations and stage interactions of the characters themselves would reveal all of the attributes and shortcomings of each character as briefly outlined in the following biographical character sketches.

This material was given to the cast of *Transitional Wars* prior to the first rehearsal and was referred back to many times during the piece's presentation preparation.

### THE STAKES

The theme of this play is as follows:

The ability to execute given political power leads to a corruption of that power either by design, default or innocence as shown by the actions of senior school commissioners and senior school commission officers in the execution of their duties within the framework of a "closed door" school commission evening meeting.

The "stakes" for each group is simple: whoever demonstrates the most effective use of power wins. *Transitional Wars* depicts the power contest between the school commission officers, who believe and strive towards protecting the best interests of the school commission in an honest and forthright way; and some school commissioners who have personal agendas which reflect their beliefs and personal needs of their political territories. As in all political conflicts, the issue is concerned with territorial "power" borders of its combatants, regardless of any altruistic, personal and community-minded beliefs or rationales. The play is slightly surrealistic in its

presentation. The first scene presents the strength of "power." This scene is detached temporally from the subsequent scenes.

The characters:

### BOARD OFFICERS

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL: For 15 years, Douglas Glasgow served as a director of secondary education and a Director General for a neighboring school commission. This is his third year as Director General for this Board. Known as an astute and excellent negotiator (especially with the provincial authorities), he has established or revised most operational board policies and operational procedures. He has the system's best interests at heart and, on occasion, has difficulty executing some of the more "stupid" political Board of Commissioner decisions. He is fully aware of the political influence of some Board commissioners towards some front-line administrator appointments.

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL: Donna Deglee is a very powerful administrator. She is in her early fifties and has been in this position for the past two months after her predecessor had been "asked to leave his position." A very progressive educator and high school principal (she was the first female appointed to Principal and Regional Director within the system), she takes her job quite seriously and fully supports the DG. She has a most collegial relationship with the DG and understands most of the political nonsense of the Board.

### THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIRECTOR (ACTING) AND PERSONNEL

DIRECTOR: A lifelong teacher and administrator, Peter Donat, is going to retire in two years. A very dedicated man and an active supporter of the DG, he was very much aware of what was going on in all the schools. As Personnel Director, he has voiced his concerns about the Board's intervention in the appointing of many inexperienced administrators. It was his responsibility to prepare the selection committee's shortlists. Being a career bureaucrat, he knew precisely where all the power and power struggles lay, the ones to avoid, and the ones to take sides. Recently

appointed as Acting Educational Services Director, he is presently responsible for many of the curricular needs that were formerly under the jurisdiction of the former DDG.

**DEDROTY- THE FORMER DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL.** He is a sly politician.

He is ruthless, nasty and believes in having friends in high places. He has used all his positions to further his own little kingdom. He specifically had remained the number 2 Board Officer for a number of reasons. First, as DDG, he never had to take the full heat of administrative decisions. He controlled many of the Board officers in charge of various operations. He favored some and destroyed others. He also performed as an "inside man" for the Kazankis contingent. Glasgow learned very quickly about DeDroty's power and dishonest use of authority. Glasgow felt that Dedroty did everything in his power to undermine both the DG's office and the Commission. It was just a matter of time until Dedroty hanged himself enough for Glasgow to force Dedroty's hand.

**THE COMMISSIONERS**

**THE PRESIDENT (Com1):** Leonard Peterson is in his early fifties. A corporate lawyer,

he is in his final mandate as Board President. He appears, to most, as "a faraway" person on some cloudbank. He detests loud public confrontations, believes in order and diplomacy. He rarely takes sides on any issue publicly - unless absolutely necessary or in order to break a tie in a Board vote. He is somewhat "waspy" but a fairly decent person.

**THE VICE PRESIDENT (Com2):** Paul Kazankis in his late fifties. He has been a Board

member for over fifteen years and Vice President for the past four. He is a second-generation immigrant who heads a large construction company. He originally became involved in school politics for several reasons. He wanted to help break the stigma and quiet racism towards immigrants from the established "white wasp" controlling community. He believed at the time by becoming involved he would prove to the "establishment" that a construction worker, without the benefit of a high school leaving certificate, can be not only successful, but also more importantly,



not stupid. He was very angry at the prevailing attitude of the times, which more than implied that immigrants (and their children) were so disadvantaged that they had to be placed in vocation-only programs.

His daughter was in the school system at that time, attending a predominantly upper-class wasp and upper economically-based school. Even though her schoolmates never victimized her, Kazankis was victimized (so he believed) by their parents. He became involved in the school committees and worked himself up into the school commissioners' race in his community - populated mostly by his ethnic and other immigration peoples. He worked hard and gained a reputation as being a "doer."

Over the years, his power within the Board grew. He began to insure as openings on the Board occurred that his choice of commissioners ran and were elected to the positions. At present, some Board members owe "something" to the Vice President. Whatever the Vice-President feels is the most appropriate action for the Board to take on an issue - his view tends to carry great importance. It influences members to "strongly" side towards Kazankis - regardless of established protocol, policy or jurisdiction.

COMMISSIONER 3- Finance portfolio. Ted Dowe was hand picked by the Vice-President for his position. A real estate agent from a family of real estate agents, he is a first generation black immigrant. He came to Canada at a very young age and has been totally integrated in the "Canadian Mosaic." He is in his mid-forties with two children in the school system. He is a leader within the black community and is very outspoken and fairly critical of the established norms of municipal and provincial politics and politicians. He first became involved in school board politics when one of his children was involved in a major rumble at his school in which the child was both verbally and physically attacked. Outraged, he joined a parent committee and became further involved until he was encouraged by the Vice-President to run for a seat on the Board.

**COMMISSIONER 4- Transportation portfolio.** Bill Thompson is an up-and-coming investment analyst. He is in his early forties and has two young children in the system. His entry into school politics had two basic rationales. First, to strive for a better elementary school environment for his children; and second, as a stepping-stone for an eventual political career. Seeing that the working power lies more with the Vice-president and Commissioner 3, he tends to support their beliefs on most issues. However, he always puts his personal self-interest before that of anyone or any issue.

**COMMISSIONER 5- Buildings and grounds portfolio.** Hugh Phearson is an older, more seasoned commissioner. He has been through several administrations and many Board commissioners. A respected architect, he has always attempted to marry the commission's needs with those of the students and the community. A very honest and committed person, he is not at all comfortable with the political and power politics of Kazankis and his buddies.



TOP: The final confrontation over the "Tyrido" affair.  
 LEFT: Dedroty (left) being chastised by Glasgow (right).  
 RIGHT: Commissioner Dowe (left) scheming with Commissioner Kazankis (right).





TOP: Educational Services Director (left), Deputy Director General (center) and Director General Strategizing in a break during the commission meeting.

BOTTOM: The Commission Officers (left) attempting to lobby with the "enemy" Commissioners.



## THE PIECE – TRANSITIONAL WARS

### THE CHARACTERS:

#### BOARD OFFICERS:

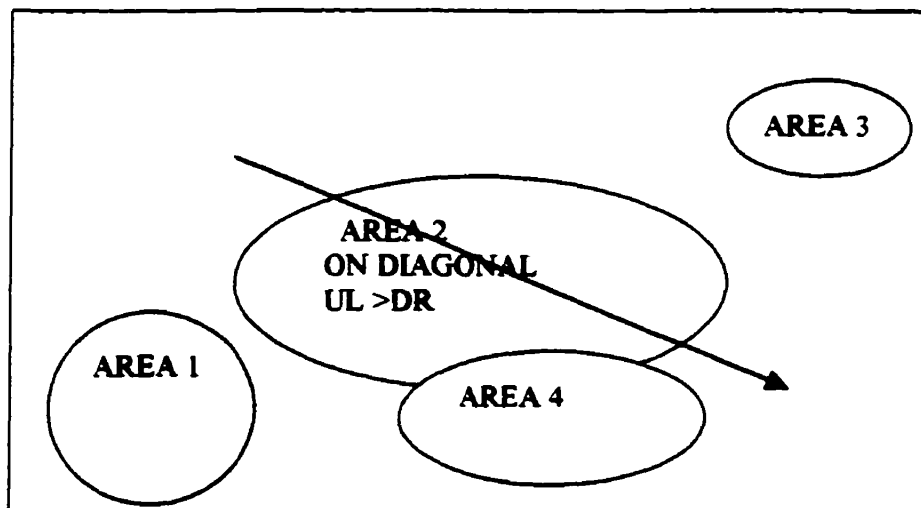
- 1- **DG** - Director General –Douglas Glasgow
- 2- **DEDROTY (DEDR)** former Deputy Director General
- 3- **DDG** - Deputy Director General – Donna Deglee
- 4- **ESD** - Educational Services Director – Peter Donat

#### BOARD COMMISSIONERS

- 5- **PRES (COM1)** – President Leonard Peterson of the Board of Commissioners
- 6- **VPRES (COM2)** – Paul Kazankis, a visible ethnic minority - Vice President of the Board of Commissioners
- 7- **COM3** -Ted Dowe, a black male (Finance portfolio)
- 8- **COM4** - Herb Thompson (Transportation portfolio)
- 9- **COM5** - Hugh Phearson (Buildings and Grounds portfolio)

There are 4 basic acting areas

- 1 - *Downstage right*
- 2 - *Center: long rectangle table slightly diagonal slightly center right to down left*
- 3 - *Upstage left*
- 4 - *Downstage center*



***ALL ONSTAGE DIRECTIONS ARE INDICATED IN PARENTHESIS AND IN ITALICS***

### **SCENE 1 - The Director General's office in February**

***AT RISE – DOWN CENTER AREA 4- DEDROTY SITTING NERVOUSLY IN THE DG'S OFFICE. AFTER A FEW SECONDS, THE DG ENTERS AND SITS***

DG: *(After a few moments)* Donald, let's not mince words. I will not overstate our mutual dislike for each other. That must be put aside. The Commission needs 4 new principals and at least 3, if not 5 new Vice-Principals, very soon. We have to get together on this one.

DEDR: What do you want?

DG: I want you to do your job.

DEDR: What is that supposed to mean?

DG: In the last two years, since I took this job, you've done virtually everything to undermine this office. Either consciously or not, and I really don't care, you've been manipulating the powers of your office for years, more for your personal gain, than that of the commission. You may have many friends in, shall we say, high places. You have also made many enemies.

DEDR: Your point?

DG: Regardless of this, it is your responsibility to oversee the candidate list for prospective principals and Vice-Principals. I want a list within a month. I want you to work with Peter following all commission selection protocols and create a list. Have interviewees, keep notes, etc., etc.,

DEDR: Why don't you just have Donat do it alone since you don't trust me?

DG: You are right about that, I do not trust you. However, Donat is extremely busy reorganizing the personnel department and preparing the school teacher cadres for next year. You know the wards and their commissioners better than anyone. I want you to make the best short list possible.

DEDR: I don't understand you. It seems as if you're goading me.

DG: Perhaps, but not how you think. All I am asking you to do, is do your job, work with the Regional Directors and Donat and generate a list of candidates.

DEDR: Without sounding too crass, why should I be so *trustworthy*?

DG: One, I don't have the time, and two, you're too close to retirement to put it in jeopardy.

DEDR: *(Pause)* Is that a threat?

DG: Not at all. We are going to go through a major front office reorganization- You know - to save money and be more efficient. If you do not want your office and position to become even more redundant than you have already made it, I suggest you do this well.

DEDR: I do take this as a threat. I'll be informing my lawyers. If you do threaten me, I'll see you in court.

DG: I would be very careful what and how you speak to me, Donald. No one and no position is sacrosanct in this commission. I know the law, the collective agreements much better than you. I suggest that you not become too ... aggressive. If it comes to that type of confrontation, you will lose everything and more. Your friend Vice-President Kazankis will not help you. He is too selfish and ruthless.

DEDR: How bad do you want me out?

DG: I'll be quite frank, tomorrow would not be soon enough.

DEDR: What I meant was, how far is your office willing to go to get rid of me?

DG: Are you suggesting something?

DEDR: I'll consider some options and get back to you.

DG: That's your call. In the meantime, I request you perform your duties as best as possible and fulfill all your professional obligations as your mandate outlines. That will be all.

DEDR: *(Gets up to leave, takes a few steps, turns back)* You know, you've basically fired me just now.

DG: No, I'm doing what I should have done a while ago. Call it what you want to call it. You don't have many options here. I have been cutting you slack for just too long. I have covered your ass so many times, it's not funny. Your track record is painted with many shades of gray. Going gracefully carries no stigma. You can blame it on anything. Fighting me can and will get dirty. You will also lose.

DEDR: Perhaps, perhaps.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

## SCENE 2 - Outside the Commission's Boardroom

TWO MONTHS LATER BEFORE THE CLOSED MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD – LATE AFTERNOON

### LIGHTS CROSSFADE TO AREA 3

#### ***VPRES AND COM3 DISCUSSING***

VPRES: Ok Ted, let's get things clear about this special meeting tonight. There is one item on the agenda - the principal selection lists.

COM3: Where do we stand with the other Commissioners?

VPRES: Principal Selection ... it's going to be a fight over several candidates. Dedroty, before he resigned, told me that Glasgow and company were planning to stonewall the Tyrizo appointment and a few others. We'll have to stand our ground on that one. And it will be a difficult meeting. We know that their main stance against Tyrizo is his inexperience. We have to counter that belief with our stand that he is not only young, he has great potential. The normal 5 years in the Vice-Principal position will have to be wavered in favor of his potential growth and his involvement with several youth organizations outside of school involvement.

COM3: That will not be easy. Glasgow and Donat are very smart. If we cannot get them on side, it will not pass. Even if we push a possible racial slant, I don't believe it will be bought. They do

run the Commission. I also feel that Deglee is incredibly supportive of Glasgow. She is very strong and, from what I hear, extremely good at the job. Unfortunately for us, we have no hook in her. With Dedroty out we really need another one of our boys in the ring ... I wonder how Glasgow got to him. What did Glasgow threaten him with ....

VPRES: Dedroty didn't say much - which was strange. He saw the writing on the wall. He was one of our boys. Glasgow knew it and was out to get him. Dedroty is not stupid. He played the system well and was not going to jeopardize his future somewhere else or his retirement. Frankly, we got off rather cheaply. There was no future here for him. Glasgow, Donat and his lawyers came up with a more than comfortable compensation package. And we owed it to Dedroty to approve it. Anyway he's dead news. We have greater problems to deal with. We're going to meet with Glasgow, Donat and Deglee in a few minutes to come up with a compromise before the meeting. We must hold our ground on Tyrizo. We need him for a number of reasons.

COM3: I like Tyrizo. He's young and quiet, just the type of Principal we need in my district. If only he had a few more years behind him. O.K., let's say they persuade the rest of the Commissioners and he is not appointed. Can we bargain in his favor somehow?

VPRES: Probably, but, let's see how it falls.

### LIGHTS FADE OUT

### **SCENE 3 - Inside the Boardroom, Before the Evening's Closed Meeting of the Board's Steering Committee**

### AREA 1 LIGHTS UP

*(ESD DISCUSSING, DG ENTERS A FEW SECONDS LATER)*

DDG: Now look Peter, our shortlist is not sitting well with Kazankis and, according to our sources, he will introduce his candidate-to-be this evening at the Board meeting.

*(Enter DG holding a report)*

DG: Well, it's what we expected, I just received a phone call from the Board secretary. Kazankis is putting George Tyrizo up for the Berlinder position.

DDG: Who?

DG: Tyrizo is a junior grade vice-principal - formally a grade 7 social science teacher in the Cracken school. This is his fourth year as a junior V.P. This is his file.

ESD: He had been teaching for about 5 years, with little or no involvement in the school outside of his teaching. He was appointed V.P. upon on the "word" of the Vice President to the to the McGovern School in Kazankis' ward. I remember this because when we processed his application, it raised some eyebrows. As I recall, he had bare qualifications - nothing further than a B.A. Interesting though, in the past several years he has become quite active in the Rainbow Youth Program in the south side of town.



DDG: I had heard that. How did he become a V.P.?

ESD: Basically by default and our error. Apparently, four years back, the retiring Cracken Principal appointed him a department head because the former department head was also retiring and for some unknown reason appointed Tyrizo to take his place.

DG: That's true. I telephoned John Jonas, his then Principal, to get some further information. John says he is basically a nice person, doesn't say much, with a marginal input into the school. John was surprised when Tyrizo was appointed by Papachou, his predecessor. He says that Papachou was angered by his forced early "retirement" by the Board. He believed that he was getting back at the Commission. The appointment did not go well with the rest of the social sciences teachers. They protested - up to the regional director Greenley. Unfortunately, according to the collective agreement, Department Heads are a local concern and, unless there is a criminal act, is in the hands of the Principal. He was appointed a V.P. unbeknown to my predecessor during that N.A.S.S.P. conference when all the top guns were away. It was an "add-on" new business item at the end of a very long emergency Board meeting, and how it got on no one really knows.

ESD: (Not said with racist overtones) He is a person of color and Hispanic background and plays golf with Kazankis.

DDG: I wonder if that has anything to do with it? Anyway, let's get focused here. What we must avoid, at all costs, is making them look so stupid that it will result in a public exhibition at tonight's Board meeting. In the last round of appointments, we were caught so totally off guard we had no comebacks to counter their list of appointees. That's probably why they want to speak with us now - to avoid an open public war. Listen, if they question me on the backgrounds of our candidates, I'll be emphatic on the application protocol ... state clearly the application process, even though I doubt very much it's even going to come up.

DG: That could be. I'm surprised they don't realize how much heavy scrutiny by the unions, Principal's association and press they're under - especially after the last round of Board elections. Anyway we won't mention the "press" thing unless we're forced into a corner.

ESD: I'm just a bit wary if they pit one of us against other. Perhaps one of you should handle all those questions?

DG: I don't think they will go that route. They honestly believe they have some divine right to make every decision, without realizing the fallout. Remember the last two override appointments? We had school parent committees picketing the Board offices. Now Peter, they know that none of us are in agreement with them - if you have to explain anything, just be calm and explain procedure and protocol - do not offer opinion and do not respond to any. They hate it when you do that. Let's face it both of us (*referring to DDG and himself*) may blow up in defense of our position - you must remain almost unemotional - straight as an arrow.

DDG: You are the Personnel Director and Acting Director of Educational Services. You are a force to be reckoned with. This Board Vice President is worse than his predecessor. Let's be realistic. Ever since he and his "team" were elected, they have been pushing their personal hidden agenda down the Board's throat against virtually all common sense. From appointments to budgets, his concept of putting only his candidates in positions without meeting the basic requirements is becoming dangerous.

ESD: I, more than anyone, know that. But we have to be careful - most of their candidates are of visible minorities. The color of the commission is changing to some extent and we've been attempting to reflect that with some of our appointments. It could appear a bit "bigoted" if we rejected all their candidates of color. We must also remember, regardless of the current state of political fighting with Kazankis, he was one of the first commissioners who fought for a racial and ethnic presence in the officer ranks. We must be careful that we do not find ourselves in a perceived backlash loop. When he gets angry, he always falls back to that stand.

DDG: Peter, I agree. Our only concern is that all candidates - minority, female or white, should minimally fit the basic criteria for selection. We have been successful in getting minorities and women appointed despite some of the chauvinism on the Board. All of those met more than the basic requirements. The others - who did not, and who have been appointed, have not been successful. Look at the mess we're in at Railway and Ballston High Schools. Inexperience helps no one.

ESD: But they approved your appointment to DDG.

DDG: Even my appointment was a fight. Just to get me appointed to Deputy Director General from Regional Director after Dedroty left, was no easy task. Doug pushed to have me appointed - not because I am a woman - but because I am good. My interviews for this job were brutal. In their presence, I always feel that I must prove my worth that I am not just the "token female."

DG: Your track record is outstanding - no one could argue that one. Listen, Regardless of their decisions - good bad or indifferent, we're the ones who have to execute their policy - and take the rap for it. *(Picks up some papers and studies them)*

ESD: But that's democracy. They were legally elected.

DDG: With a 13% voter turnout - a true democratic show.

DG: Yes *(putting down papers)* I have an idea ... His file indicates that he doesn't rock the boat too often, if at all. Basically he's a *(pause, thinking of something to say)* company player. Apparently, he is fulfilling his duties adequately as a junior v.p. There might be a future for him in the Commission at some point at least from a bureaucratic standpoint. If worse comes to worst, let's buy some time with Tyrizo. Let's say we'll appoint him to a technocratic position somewhere at head office - to give him some further experience - and then at some later time - if he doesn't totally screw up - and then after a year or so place him in some safe school as a senior V.P. ... to get some experience. Who knows? He might surprise us. At least that would not cause a teacher walkout.

DDG: Douglas, you may be unconsciously setting us up and putting future decisions at risk. It will not look good if we bury him at head office. It psychologically weakens the integrity of the commission.

ESD: It is a "horrid" *(said almost sarcastically almost as an excuse)* way to take care of our own ... it's a plan, though not the best.

DG: Agreed - but only if we're totally backed up against the wall. If need be we'll try and make them believe it's their idea. They're here.

*(The Vice-President and COM3 of the Board enter).*

VPRES: Mr. Glasgow, Mrs. Deglee, Mr. Donat. Thank you for this meeting before tonight's "Official" Board meeting. Now Mr. Glasgow, let's not beat around the bush. We do not agree with your list of candidates for the Berlinder School as well as a few others. I hope, with this little encounter here, we can come to some agreement and not a long drawn-out debate during tonight's meeting. So, we suggest you consider George Tyrizo for the position.

DG: Let's hope we can avoid a confrontation. However, Mr. Tyrizo does not comply with any of the criteria for selection consideration.

VPRES: So we seem to be at an impasse. Most of the other commissioners will support my selection. I realize you are somewhat new to the Commission so perhaps you are not aware of the changing face of the Commission itself. We have searched out the candidates that reflect this change in population shifts.

DG: No doubt you have spent a great deal of time researching this position. However, so have we. I just do not see how Clarkson, Berlinder's ward commissioner, would support such an inexperienced candidate. It is not so much an impasse as it is a mystery. As is School Commission policy. Given Tyrizo's background he cannot be considered.

COM3: Don't be ridiculous. In what way can he "not be considered?"

ESD: As I am sure you are aware, all openings for principal positions are posted only after our existing principal cadre has been placed for the upcoming year... Existing administrators have first choice at the positions. Where there is a need for new principals, our existing vice-principals are interviewed for an upward promotion. After which, when the number of openings has been established, to fill the new gaps in the vice-principal corps - according to the collective agreement, we can then advertise within the teaching ranks for candidates to apply for first-time vice-principals.

COM3: We know this. What's your point, Glasgow?

DG: There are several points. First, only candidates with either administrative experience at the Board head office or as a senior vice-principal with a minimum of five years can apply for a Principal position. Second, since your candidate probably knows this, he did not apply for the position.

COM3: That is a silly technicality that can be overridden by a Board resolution.

DG: Perhaps, but I doubt it.

VPRES: Go on.

DDG: Further, his administrative background is not comprehensive enough - or the length of his experience as a junior v.p. - in charge of discipline and attendance at the junior high school level, along with his minimal teaching experience would create a teacher uprising at Berlinder and everywhere else. This is especially serious in light of how many other more qualified candidates were passed over.

VPRES: So?

DDG: He is not qualified.

COM3: By what standards? He is ethnically qualified - a member of the population base that is involved in the Berlinder parent body.

DG: You mean, he is of Hispanic descent.

COM3: And black. Not only that, outside, on his own time, he has been volunteering hours of time with several high-profile youth programs in the more troublesome "lower income class communities."

DDG: This is true. However, the issue is not his ethnic background or his community work, but his administrative background and contribution to the commission that are weak. He is not experienced enough, nor has expanded his academic qualifications to begin to qualify.

COM3: This is absurd! He has the most important credential. He is a role model for the students. He is also young and high-spirited. He will inspire and rally the students. Look, here is a man who has made the commitment to working with youth both inside the school system and outside in the community. He has run literacy programs in the evenings and drug prevention programs on the weekends. He is inspiring.

DG: But not to a staff.

VPRES: The staff will do what they are told. He is of a visible minority, and he is a Vice-Principal. We've had our eye on him for a while, and, it is time for him to move up.

DG: That does not qualify him for Principal.

COM3: That's rather white of you, isn't it?

DG: No, it is professional. As Director General, it is my responsibility to operate this Commission with the highest degree of integrity - which includes the preparation of a candidate list for senior administrative school appointments. We have a directive in place for Principal selection. We are mandated to use the directive. It is not sitting well, with any of the constituencies that you've gone outside this directive twice before in recent times. He may have these fine attributes, but he has not performed these "community service" acts within his own school.

VPRES: As that has itself clearly demonstrated, mandates can be overridden. Regardless, your lists on both of those occasions were not acceptable.

DDG: Not acceptable to you.

VPRES: And rightly so. As a senior Commission Counselor, I represent the entire community and it is my responsibility to have more administrators appointed that represent the true nature of the Commission's changing population.

DG: May I remind both of you that the last two appointments you coerced the Board into had grave results. The first, at Walinda School, caused a teacher walkout after his first three weeks, with complete support of the school parent committee. This had never happened in the 100-year history of the commission. It was not until the MEQ [Ministry of Education of Quebec]

threatened to "pursue other means" of negotiation with the teacher's union, that you and the Board finally altered his appointment. Second, at Craven's Head School, your appointee had been accused four times of student abuse and harassment. You permitted us to relieve him, reluctantly, not because of your beliefs in him, but due to the lawsuit that was launched against the Board.

DDG: You may be the elected officials of the Board, but you are not allowing us to do our jobs. Please, the Commission cannot afford another teacher walkout. Please do not force your candidate in.

VPRES: These allegations have not been proven. It seems to me that you do not want Principals of color in the Commission.

ESD: Excuse me sir, the Commission has a long and distinguished history, as I am sure you are aware, of being at the forefront of affirmative action in hiring ...

COM3: Come off it. Perhaps his "in service" record is not brilliant. But he believes he can do more good in the youth organizations where there is no academic pressure to get in the way. You know, many of these underprivileged kids do not see education or "the school" as a way out of their poverty. His presence is felt where he believes it is most important. So, his commission record is not that great. The point is that the population is changing in color, and we have to address it and here is a man who is addressing it.

DG: We have been addressing it, but that is not the case here. It is question of substantive credibility... and by the way, the demographics do not at all support your claim on the ethnic and color breakdown of Berlinder. The Berlinder School is in a very established neighborhood with a clear non-color population. Even so, this is not the issue. The question is his underdeveloped academic qualifications, his minimal administrative experience and his shallow commitment to the Commission. His annual evaluation reports certainly substantiate where his priorities lie and they have not been in his school.

VPRES: It's even more of a reason to appoint him there. It would clearly make a statement that the Commission is open to taking risks. Let's put the energy he has outside of the school into the school. And, having a "visible minority" as Principal in one of the Commission's flagship schools - a predominantly "white" school - would be a great sign of progress. Many parents of his students have informed me that he is a good man and teacher. He is perfect for the job.

DDG: I doubt if any of those parents are from the Berlinder school. The McGovern School is in a totally different ward - different socio-economic class a very blue-collar working-class parent population - not the high-powered, up-end professional class of the Berlinder School. An inexperienced principal, as we have witnessed in the past, would be eaten alive.

VPRES: That's absurd - parents are parents. They have expressed their view ...

COM3: There is something very wrong here. You're really saying that a "white school" can't have a "non-white" principal.

DDG: *(pause)* Clearly not ... You still don't see the problem here. No staff will support him - not because he's a "non-white"- he has not fulfilled the experience criteria as a Vice-Principal or anything. He has not proven any leadership or management skills IN THE SCHOOL ... If you proceed with this appointment, you are forcing the Union's hand and, don't forget, not to

mention the Berlinder parents' committee who have always supported their faculty. They will march on the board and demand the MEQ investigate the Commission.

VPRES: Don't be ridiculous.

ESD: They have made such demands in the past. In 1988 and 1992, the board backed down.

COM3: Why can't you just agree or do you have something to hide - some closet racism?

*(PAUSE)*

DG: *(a very slow, tense controlled response - obviously avoiding the racist implication)* Mr. Dowe, This is not a race issue. I have nothing to hide. You, on the other hand, may feel extremely uncomfortable under the eyes of a MEQ investigation. You have never been through a MEQ inquiry. If they feel that there has been any wrongdoing or mismanagement, they could put this Board into receivership. The public record is on our side, not yours. The union is not in support of your position or management record. This government needs the union for support in the next election .... Receivership is not a healthy state of affairs. Do you realize the implication of that?

COM3: Come now, aren't we getting carried away here? I've been around long enough to know that they won't bother on this type of local issue. Stop posturing. Why can't you take the other position? The Ministry has been changing their position every day with more site-based management policies. It would seem to me; they would more than encourage a visible minority as principal in this school.

DDG: That is not the issue. You do not need to deal with the MEQ, but we do. An inquiry - especially brought on by the union, will cause havoc to the commission. The press will have a field day. You will be crucified and dismissed by crown order.

COM3: They can't do that. It's unconstitutional and illegal!

ESD: Actually it's quite legal under the Education Act - Article 3, Section 4, Paragraph ....

VPRES: Why do I have the distinct feeling you're trying to scare or blackmail us? I could have you relieved of your duties for such an act.

DG: *(Pause - The DG stares the Vice President down - with a look that says - don't threaten me)* First of all, there is no blackmail here. Second, we are giving you scenarios - and that is also part of our mandate - to protect the Commission. C'mon, you know that's not the issue here. You're playing Russian Roulette with the Commission. Read the law, and remember that everything that goes on is of public record - even behind closed doors. If the MEQ wants to find out - it will with court orders. The point here is you cannot afford to appoint this candidate to this position. The potential for problems is just too great.

COM3: Oh, come off it. This is outrageous. You're threatening us. You can't do this. We represent the people - your job is to carry out Board policy. If the Board wants Tyrizo as Principal, he will be appointed.

DDG: *(Backing down a little)* Yes, you do have the power to make such appointments. And, yes, when you forced the last two appointments, you convinced the rest of the board members to support you. This time it is different. Both the union and the parents committee are waiting for

you ... so is the press and so is the MEQ. For the sake of the Commission, drop this candidate and appoint from our short list.

VPRES: But what about Tyrizo....

DG: Your need for Tyrizo is purely political.

COM3: Our need is clear. The ethnic population by its simple growth through unemployment and immigration is changing the landscape of the school.

DDG: But not at Berlinder.

COM3: Allow me to finish. The criminal element and vandalism are on the increase in the high schools. Blacks and Hispanics are being blamed for these occurrences. As much as I hate to admit it, much of this is true. We need more role models for the students - especially in positions of authority. Don't you see this?

ESD: Of course we see this. And, we have been addressing it. We have appointed at least ten new administrators of color over the past few years, some better administrators than others. However, all these candidates had met the requirements for the position. It is critical for a Principal to show leadership towards his teachers - and give them confidence - so they can go and face the students. The role model must serve the teachers first- then and only then can the students follow suit. Tyrizo is young - give him some time to season.

COM3: A nice theory when both your administrators and teachers are white. Let's face it, when we have to have police in the high schools for student protection - and they are all white - it sends a message that we cannot take care of our own. We need more black principals! Here is a person who that has the credibility of both the ethnic and black communities. What other needs could you want?

DDG: We appoint qualified principals who are black, white, orange, green or whatever. If we appoint an unqualified principal, especially one of color - who can not cut it, a much worse message goes out to your "white population."

COM3: And what is that?

DDG: If Tyrizo is appointed - one, he will not have the support of his faculty; two, his record has not shown him to be a good technical manager - so he will not be able to deal with the technocracy of the school: so, three, the students and their high-powered parents will walk all over him - especially since the parents' committee of Berlinder is so strong they will not permit him time to learn on the job; therefore, four - he will force us to transfer him and you will be left with a case of "You see, a black principal can't do it." It will appear as tokenism and everyone loses - especially those black administrators who have made it. The chance is too great. If Tyrizo has the talent and the gumption, let him mature a bit. It's too great a risk.

VPRES: To me, it's worth the risk.

*(Pause)*

Blackout

#### SCENE 4 - At the Closed Meeting of the Board's Steering Committee

*(The meeting has been on for a while.)*

PRES: Ladies and Gentlemen, we can sit and argue this one forever. The administrator selection lists are in front of you – can we get some form of consensus at least. Now, why is Hempstead High School such a problem?

ESD: It's not that it's a problem. It's going through a plant expansion, and the Principal is trying to run a school with construction workers running into students all day long, the noise and so forth. The traffic congestion around the school is a mess. The parents want the school closed down for a while and want their children bused somewhere temporarily that's all. Principal Mason has had it and is taking early retirement. We need a principal who can pacify many different parties.

VPRES: *(Sarcasmically)* You mean the bluebloods are upset. Be careful, you'll make me cry. What's so difficult, is it that their chauffeurs are threatening to go on strike because they may have to wash and wax their limousines once or twice more a week and by driving the little darlings to another high school, it will make their snotty parents late for their morning bridge club game? Hey, I have an idea, put in Guilani Petzoni, head of maintenance, he batters both construction workers and students. *(Snickers from some and signs of disgust from others.)*

DDG: That is not the issue. The nearest high school to Hempstead that offers the required university prep courses is 45 minutes away by driving; we won't mention the cost of school busing or public transportation. Hempstead also borders the Daijon area. This is a solid immigrant neighborhood. The population of Hempstead High has increased 20% in the last three years alone. Many parents are threatening to move their children out of the school. The school administration has had to deal with much flak from all sides. Mason has had it. We need a very astute political and community high profile personality.

DG: Are there any problems with Vincento Allanis as the new Principal?

*(All nod in agreement.)*

Now to the next item, Vaughn and Revett High Schools, update, Mrs. Deglee.

DDG: Well, Vaughn is getting by, all things considered. Principal MacCauley was much loved by the community and his massive heart attack sent shock waves through the school. The staff is very depressed, as are the students. The Vice-Principals, they are both new, are holding their own. Christian McFarland, the regional director has pretty much taken over the school – and *(looking at DG)* we must say is doing an outstanding job. Mr. Glasgow and I are thinking that we may transfer in, on a temporary basis, Glen Leister, the senior Vice-Principal from Uniondale High School to serve as Acting Principal until George McCauley recovers. We spoke to Tom Merrick, Ward 3's commissioner, after which we consulted with Uniondale's Principal Joan Rosalind. She thought it was an excellent idea. She'll appoint a senior teacher to serve as an acting V.P. until everything gets settled.

Now Revett's another story. We are in very bad shape there. The teacher's union will not budge on its harassment charges against its Principal Kroosh. Morale is at such a low. Our investigation is just about complete.



COM3: This is my ward; I don't want you guys making unilateral decisions. Principal Kroosh has been an outstanding Principal for over 20 years and has kept Revett together for a long time. The parents and students support him.

VPRES: These two teachers are female activist twits; they should be disciplined. What would they know of harassment? They should spend some time down in my old neighborhood.

DG: Mr. Kazankis, our legal department has been on this case from its inception. The investigation is not complete. The union has clearly documented the case. Unfortunately, the Principal does not fair too well. From what Peter and I have discovered, it is clear that Kroosh, regardless of his administrative prowess, has been, for many years, rather "nasty" to his female teachers. The Principals' Association has not yet said a word of support. Traditionally, this means they inherently believe the charges. We'll have to deal with Kroosh soon. It's very much a work-to-rule response by a united faculty.

VPRES: What have you done to stop this ... insurrection?

ESD: I would not call it an insurrection. A "work to rule" is within the right of the teachers. You should recall that section of the Collective Agreement. Classes have not stopped. Extra-curricular activities have ceased. This has had a very negative effect on the student body.

COM3: Answer the question. What have you done to fix this? Have you threatened the teachers with punitive actions? I have parents telephoning my office every day demanding that SOMETHING BE DONE!

DG: No, I have not. They are within their legal right. Both John Jonas, Revett's Regional Director, and I have spoken to the faculty and the administrators to come to a working agreement. We have made some progress. Jonas may take over the school on a temporary basis. We must put the students first. This is a critical time. The CEGEP (or College) marks must be in by March 1. Final term exams are coming up. We must insure that teachers will not jeopardize extra study and review sessions. They are midway through a basketball season, the regional science fairs are in jeopardy as well, and so on. I do not want a repeat of what happened last year during the teacher contract talks. If it means moving a principal around for a month or two to get these kids through, than that's what will happen - after consultation with all concerned parties.

*(Silence).*

PRES: I think it's been covered. What about the rest of the principals - what does it look like for next year?

DDG *(Looking at notes)*: Well, along with our current dilemma, next year sees very little movement in the elementary sector; but in the secondary, two of our new principals are not faring well, two are retiring, one is going to the private sector, one has a heart condition, and another is under investigation. Three Vice-Principals are retiring. There will definitely be movement. Very few experienced principals want to move into the more troublesome high schools. Frankly, the Principal's Association is very concerned. Their greatest worry seems to have come home to roost.

VPRES: And what is that?

DDG: That the system is collapsing.

DDG: That the system is collapsing.

COM3: That's ridiculous.

COM5: No, it's not, If I may say a few words.

PRES: Go ahead.

COM5: Thank you, Mr. President. If you all recall, except for Mr. Glasgow who was not here three years ago, against the judgment of the Principal's Association and a minority of commissioners, including myself, the Board of Commissioners cancelled a principal's training course which was designed to prepare candidates to enter the administration ranks. Mr. Donat, then Director of Personnel, created the training course with the blessings of many. Unfortunately, two years ago - due to what can be best described as a political power trip by some commissioners, the program was stopped. So here we are now some three years down the line with a great need for administrators, with none in the ranks.

VPRES: Oh come on Phearson, aren't you exaggerating this a bit?

COM5: Not in the least, since you were the one who led to its dismantlement.

COM4: That was an expensive program, and the money was needed elsewhere.

COM5: That's not true and you know it. Let's not argue the point. That's a mute point. Right now, we need almost a dozen administrators and we need some of them now.

COM3: Funny, this is probably one of the few times, I agree with you. Which, on the subject, brings up the Berlinder School principalship.

VPRES: That's correct. *(Looking at the DG)* Speaking, I believe, on behalf Counselor Tom Merrick, we reject your candidate list and submit the name of George Tyrizo for the position.

COM5: I know that name. How did you come up with it? He was a very poor teacher and from what I've heard an almost useless Vice-Principal.

COM3: *(Somewhat taken aback)* And how do you know that?

COM5: He taught history at the Cracken School where my son Jeremy was a student. As I recall, he was nothing to write home about. I was on the School Council of Cracken when I first became a commissioner. His department heads and faculty colleagues were rather ambivalent regarding his classroom style. He was safer as a Junior V.P. Regardless, he hasn't been a VP long enough to qualify as a Principal. Am I correct?

DDG: Absolutely, among other things. He has only a bare Bachelor's degree and has had nothing to upgrade his schooling in administration. He is marginal at best.

COM3: What does this have to do with anything? He is an upcoming administrator, a role model, and gives hours to youth programs in community service programs.

ESD: Model for what? He has never supervised any extra-curricular activities in the schools he has served in or taken on any leadership roles in any of the schools he has been associated with.

VPRES: He was a department head.

ESD: Yes, for a year or so. He did not shine.

COM3: We need young administrators of color - to serve as role models for students. His service record also shows that he has been awarded several municipal and provincial awards for his community service. Get him in to show kids that they can make it.

PRES: This is true.

DDG: There is no question that all line administrators are role models. However, they must demonstrate their leadership for all the constituent groups of a school especially in the more racially mixed multicultural schools. Tyrizo has not proved himself in this regard. He has taken no initiative to understand the mechanics of administration. He has not applied for any professional development of any kind or indicated in any way that he was interested in advancement.

COM3: He has expressed an interest to me.

VPRES: And to me.

ESD: But he has not made any move ....

COM4: But Ted is right. We do need more administrators of color - hasn't anyone of color applied for this position?

DDG: No.

COM4: Have any existing principals shown an interest in transferring into Berlinder?

DDG: Apparently not. It was offered to both Foster and Timmons. They both declined. Besides, Berlinder is as "white" a school as you can get. It does not have a need, given a multi cultural parameter, for a principal of color.

VPRES: That's rather white of you. I thought you folks were color blind.

DG: That's not the issue. The parent population is middle to upper class and very active in the school. They would eat him alive.

COM3: *(Realizing defeat)* So, where does that leave us?

PRES: Let's take a break for 10 minutes.

## SCENE 5 - Powwows

*AS PEOPLE DISPERSE: ESD EXITS - LIGHT SEPARATE AREAS 1,2,3. IN AREA 1 ARE THE PRES AND COM5; AREA 2 ARE DG, DDG; AREA 3 ARE VPRES, COM2, AND COM4. IF NOT TOO DISCONCERTING, EACH AREA WHEN IN USE SHOULD COME INTO FULL LIGHT. REMAINING AREAS GO TO 30% ILLUMINATION WITH CHARACTERS MIMING, ETC.*

### CROSSFADE TO AREA 1

DDG: Well, that wasn't too bad for a start. I think the Tyrizo thing has been put to rest. Doug, why didn't you give the full disclosure on the Kroosh affair? From what you said to us this afternoon, I thought your ruling was completed.

DG: It basically is, but not all have ratified the ruling. I just sent Peter out to confer with all parties as was discussed at this morning's meeting at Revett. I didn't want to let on anything yet because Kroosh may reject the decision. He told me after the meeting he would probably abide by my decision. I will announce it tonight if Peter gets final confirmation from all parties. In this case it is Kroosh. Too bad, he is a good administrator.

DDG: When I last talked to him, I had the feeling he really is sorry for the whole thing. He has some good years left. I'm sure his pride is hurt. But he is a true professional. He'll take the heat. We can put him somewhere next year. He's not lost.

DG: Do you have the rest of the candidates list?

DDG: Yes.

DG: Good, we'll deal with that tonight as well.

### CROSSFADE TO AREA 3

COM3: Damn. I really wanted Tyrizo.

COM4: That's pretty obvious, but why? Normally, Ted, I support you, but this was impossible. He had no distinguished service record. What did you see in this guy?

COM3: You don't see it, do you?

COM4: See what?

COM3 (*Passionately*): In a lot of the more racially mixed schools, the acts of violence are increasing. And many kids of color see no use in coming to school. Lates and absences are increasing at an alarming rate. The racial conflicts are getting worse. The police are in more often than we'd like to admit.

COM4: But there's nothing new there. We have been working hard at trying to change that ...

VPRES: It's changed, though. It used to be just a black-vs-white thing. Now it's simply a "black thing." Jamaican against Haitian against Nova Scotian. The North African immigrants don't understand the culture. The Asians, Chinese, Thais, Koreans and Vietnamese have major gang

wars battling for territorial rights within the school. Shit, the whites are the least of the problems. It's not just race - it's culture, it's color, its religion, its money - it's a power struggle for identity.

COM4: So, what you want is administrators of color who can deal with this. Agreed. But they have to have the balls to deal with it. It doesn't seem that Tyrizo has taken the effort to demonstrate it in the school.

COM3: You don't understand the culture. Tyrizo made a conscious choice to put time and effort to where he sees the true problem - on the streets. He leaves the school and goes to community centers.

COM4: But that's not the question. He has to deal with a school's technocracy and bureaucracy. He has obviously chosen not to consider those critical items as important. You can't force a person to learn those things. Even the occasional times we have all played golf together, he has never really said anything seriously about this - even the last time you brought it up. He virtually shrugged it off, if you remember.

COM 3: He doesn't even know his own potential.

VPRES: He really hasn't been tested. But that's just the one of the problems. If we continually allow the establishment, such as Glasgow, to get his way, we'll lose ground in the end. We may forfeit this one, but we'll get Glasgow eventually. He must go through an evaluation before his contract renewal - "Commission policy." Let's just be very prepared. There are two Commission elections between now and then. Let's be "studious" in who runs for the positions. If we can't get him one way, we'll get him another.

COM 4: Tell me, is there something else here? What I don't understand is why you are pushing him, if Tyrizo himself doesn't want it?

VPRES: It's a question of power. If we can get more of our kind into the commission hierarchy, then we can get footholds into the more critical areas of the commission, and use the commission more ....

COM4: More for what?

COM3 (*After a few seconds*): That remains to be seen.

#### CROSSFADE TO AREA 2 WITH PRES AND COM5

PRES: I feel that these confrontations between Doug and Kazankis are getting pretty intense. We should really try to work together in these things instead of all this open nastiness.

COM5: Leonard, wake up. You've been on the Board long enough to know that Kazankis and his buddies are not exactly straight. They may be dedicated to their wards - as we all are. But, let's draw a line here. Whatever Kazankis gives, he wants back three times over in something or other. Hiring his friends, special funds for his schools- whatever. He plays politics better than the rest of us. C'mon Leonard. You may be the President of the Board and tradition dictates your sense of impartiality - but we all know Kazankis.

PRES: What we do not know or what we see in private should not influence the public arena of collegiality between Commissioners. That is not to say we condone misgivings. But they should not be in public view.

COM5: What are you saying? Kazankis is a crook. He uses his Board position for personal gain half the time, and we all know it. And, if we go against him, he plays each one of us against the another. The guy is a first-class manipulator.

PRES: This is not in question. However, the Board must always appear united beyond these doors. If not, any school council will act unilaterally against the Board. We've seen it happen all too often. These school councils have been the instrument of destruction. In order for the Board to operate successfully, there must be some *(pause)* "flexibility" *(implying a needed dishonesty)* in bending the rules.

COM5: Lenny, I know you believe that a little bit of corruption is necessary for the Board to operate with some degree of success. But lines have to be drawn. The writing is on the wall. It took Doug two and a half years to finally squeeze Dedroty out. He was robbing the Commission. And even with him out, he still cost us plenty with his compensation package.

PRES: Hugh, the point is that he is out and - without a public scandal, a Ministry inquiry or a press nightmare. We have a great new Deputy Director General in Donna. Realize that these guys had to support her or else Dedroty's hearing would have revealed too much. We won one. Let us count our blessings. All that said, it is clear that Kazankis and his following are somewhat tunnel-visioned and will inevitably hang themselves and unfortunately take us with them.

*(DG joins the group.)*

DG: Leonard, I am expecting some important information regarding the Kroosh affair to come in tonight. If it arrives, I will add it to the agenda.

PRES: Not a problem. By the way, Doug, do you have the tentative line administrator lists revised and ready for discussion.

DG: Yes, we should start this part of the meeting with them.

PRES: Fine, we shall do that.

### CROSSFADE TO FULL LIGHT

### **SCENE 6 - The Crossfire**

*ALL RETURN TO AREA 2 TO THEIR SEATS AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE*

PRES: Ladies and Gentlemen, Let us continue. We'll turn to the revised Principal selection lists. Douglas - *(DDG distributes lists to all)*

DG: With George McCauley out for the remainder of the year, Glen Leister will take over at the Vaughn School and then will become Principal at Berlinder in September. We have problems at Ballston High with Julio Ortega, and Louis Coswell at Railway Station High. I hope, that by the end of this evening, I will have more news regarding Kroosh at Revett. Unfortunately, I cannot talk about it at this moment due to some legal agreements.

COM 3: I find this all very upsetting. Both Ortega and Coswell are two young Principals of color. I am really getting the feeling that there is a strong racist agenda going on here.

DDG: I assure you, Mr. Dowe, this is not the case. Lesley Smits, Regional Director for Ballston, has been working with Ortega for the past two years since he was appointed. Unfortunately, he is having many difficulties. He gets nothing in on time, vandalism is up 26% over last year. The Vice-Principals are also very weak. Ballston is in Mr. Peterson's ward and as he will attest, we have received countless complaints from parents and teachers.

PRES: I'm afraid it is true. My own contacts in the school corroborate the situation. Something must be done. I have received many, many complaints.

DDG: The Railway Station situation is not much better. We had great hopes for Coswell. Railway Station High is a very multi-racial school. Coswell is trying his best. I have spent much time with him since my appointment as Deputy Director General.

COM4: I see a major problem here. These are two principals from visible minorities. If we can't keep them both, I see some very negative reaction from these racial communities.

COM3: This is very true. Unfortunately, Coswell is really having problems. This is a school in my ward. As you know, Coswell is black. The school is about 30% Asian, 40% Black and 30% everything else. It's a working class first and second-generation immigrant student body. Everyone is defensive about everything. There are lots of violent acts and broken homes which is unfortunately typical of this part of town. When Coswell sides with the none-blacks, he's referred to as "anti-brother" by the black students. When he sides with the blacks, he's attacked for "favoritism." He's caught. He doesn't have it. He has a heart of gold. He cannot take strong stands. I understand his position. But I can only hold his hand so long. I have another concern, and I'm sure it's not just simple paranoia on my part, but if he really blows this position, it may set back a lot of things race-wise in the school and in the ranks.

VPRES: As a member of a immigrant community, I am very concerned. The changing face of much of our community requires administrators who serve both as leaders and as role models. I really do not want to see these Principals go.

COM5: As much as this may hurt the efforts of this board with its affirmative action program, the safety and security of the schools and students must take priority. Doug, what do you propose?

DG: We've given this a great deal of thought. Donna and Peter have come up with the following plan. Donna, please explain.

DDG: For the remainder of this year, we keep it as is, monitor closely and continue to support them. Next year, if we take, let's say Greenfield, out of Islip Middle School and made him a high school principal at one of the more stable schools, we can then move someone like Timmons over to Ballston or Railway Station. We do have a number of middle-range VP's who could move up to Principal for the rest. There may also be some elementary principals who may be interested in moving up. If some applied, we could conceivably move them into the more stable high schools and those existing principals over to the more challenging schools. Don't forget, we still have two more retirements, one resignation, plus these others we have to deal with.

DG: The only hangup with that is that most principals will not move without a bit of coercion, especially into replacing Ortega or Coswell. The collective agreement with our administrators permits them to stay where they are in most cases if they have over ten years' experience.

COM4: And what about them? If we move those guys out, what do we do with them without embarrassing them and getting both the minorities and the press off our backs?

*(ESD returns and passes a paper to DG.)*

DDG: That's true. However, there may be some alternative positions here at the head office. For example, let's say we created a special project for multi-cultural and multi-racial secondary school integration and put either one of them in charge of it. There is some grant and special projects funding available - at least for one year.

COM3: Yes, I'm sure we can loosen up some funds somewhere - with retirements.

VPRES: That may work. But most people would see this as burying them in the Board Office. You know, taking care of our own. It's politically dicey. Let's just leave them where they are and bring in additional support staff for them.

DDG: The parent committees in these schools would storm the Board and you know it. We do have some elementary schools with high multi-racial populations. Maybe we could help them along by putting them at that level. In that way they would remain principals, but at a junior level. The only catch would be the transfer situation of the existing principals.

DG: This also means we'll need an additional two or three to the five we already need for Vice-Principal. However, there are always many candidates for these positions.

COM3: This is a horrible trade-off theory. Demotions. It makes every member of a minority community appear weak.

DG: The alternative in keeping these administrators in place would be catastrophic. We will work with this scenario for the moment. The other appointments on the list in front of you may change a bit with these new possibilities.

PRES: Is there anything left to discuss?

DG: Yes, I am now in the position to inform you more fully of the Kroosh affair resolution.

VPRES: *(Surprised, defensive and ready to fight)* What! Why didn't you say so earlier in the meeting?

COM3: *(Very angry)* How can you make a decision regarding a Principal in my Ward without first informing me?

PRES: Order, Order. I am sure Douglas will explain it all.

DG: Earlier this week, Peter, Christian McFarley, Regional Director for Revett and I completed our investigation of the Revett incident in consultation with our legal consultants. We concluded that Kroosh used inappropriate behavior not only for this incident, but for a number of incidents which came to light over a many-year period. After deliberation and consultation with our legal



counsel, our recommendation was that Kroosh be removed from the position for the remainder of the school year. It was also suggested that Kroosh participate in some behavior modification in order to be eligible to serve as an administrator in some capacity for the following year. He would come and be given some type of special project at the Board Head Office without loss of pay or seniority.

COM3: (*Losing composure*) This is completely out of the question! You have no power to do this. This time you've gone too far!

DG: Allow me to continue. To the teacher's union, Principals' Association and the parent body of Revett, this was acceptable. The meeting with Kroosh was not easy, but as a true professional, he reluctantly accepted the decision and agreed to all the terms. On his own, he clearly stated he would formally and publicly apologize to the involved teachers as well as to the Revett School community at the appropriate opportunities.

COM4: I cannot accept this. How can we as a Commission sit here and accept this decision and not support one of our finest Principals?

ESD: He is an excellent Principal in most respects. Unfortunately, during the hearings, he received virtually no support from any teacher, administrator or parent group on this issue of chauvinism. It was you, Mr. Dowe, that showed support. Kroosh was taken aback by the process and the lack of support. The investigation was incredibly thorough.

DG: I must apologize for not informing you earlier this evening. However, Mr. Kroosh, after hearing the decision wanted some time to seek advice from his legal counsel. He's a professional and knows he still has a future with us. We had all agreed to give him some time to consider all the implications of the ruling as well as the other parties involved, who, I am very pleased to say will not take this any further.

COM5: With this decision, can Kroosh be eligible for a future administrative position next year?

DDG: He will be eligible, but we have to be sure that he is capable of changing this one area of his behavior.

COM4: This is most distressing. I feel that this is an arbitrary, cold and totally unfair ruling making Kroosh a scapegoat for some feminist right-wing radical loudmouths. This must be investigated further. I strongly propose a Board resolution reversing this ruling.

VPRES: I demand your resignation, Glasgow. This is the straw that has broken the camel's back. First your forced resignation of Dedroty and now this.

(*SILENCE AND PAUSE*)

PRES: A moment please. Mr. Kazankis, Mr. Thompson, I petition you both to withdraw your request and demand. This is not within the jurisdiction of the Board.

COM3: Everything is within the jurisdiction of the Board.

DG: Mr. President. If I may. I have only a few words to make on behalf of our ruling, regardless of your "jurisdictional threats" towards both my staff and me. First, the running of all matters concerning the management of personnel come under the jurisdiction of my office as stated by

Board policy and my contract. Therefore, you cannot, without a nasty legal challenge in this matter, touch this incident. All due-process protocols were followed upon agreement of all involved parties, all unions and associations. The ruling was discussed and prepared by our legal department. You were all made aware of the proceedings. There was nothing hidden as it was in previous investigations. All parties agreed to the final decision. The matter is closed.

Second, we have averted not one, but two major legal "work-to-rule" incidents that, if they had occurred, would have been a public relations nightmare. If you decide to take this any further, you are tempting fate. And rest assured, at the next school board elections, the teachers' unions will make sure the third of you who will be running for re-election in June who do not support this position, will be targeted. It will be very, very messy. Please, for the sake of the Commission, accept this decision.

PRES: I concur with the findings and am also in agreement with Douglas on his legal position. Reconsider your stand, Mr. Kazankis.

*(After a few moments, realizing he has lost.)*

VPRES: I withdraw the motion. *(Gets up and turns to some direction.)*

COM4: Then, I withdraw my motion as well.

PRES: This meeting is adjourned.

*(AS PEOPLE BEGIN TO LEAVE, COM4 PASSES DG AND SAYS IN WARNING TONE)*

COM4: This is not forgotten!

FADE TO BLACK

*END OF PLAY*

## CHAPTER NINE - THE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND VIEWER REACTIONS

### THE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

This chapter presents the audience response to *Transitional Wars*. It is used to validate the "reality" of the play on the one hand and to assess the utility of drama as a vehicle for the ongoing professional development of administrators and in the preparation of students of educational administration on the other. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future production improvements and considerations.

### THE STAGED READING

*Transitional Wars* was presented as a staged reading (a dramatized reading with minimal staging and without full theatrical effects) to an invited audience of mostly educators and several others (business executives and spouses of readers) on October 19, 1997 in the Bhatla Studio of St. George's School of Montreal. By and large, the group was an experienced lot. Of the forty-one viewers, there were nineteen females, twenty-one males and one non-declared by sex. The groups' mean age was forty-nine. They had spent, on average (mean) twelve years in elementary education, thirteen years in secondary education and ten years in central office work (see Appendix 2A and photographs). The public school educators had an average of twenty-three years experience in the field; the independent school educators had an average of fifteen years field experience; and for those in higher education (university and/or CEGEP) fourteen years was the average. Many of the educators had had experiences in both the public and independent sectors.

The evening was divided into three general time frameworks. The first framework was the introduction of the evening and the presentation of *Transitional Wars*. The audience members, as they entered, were each handed consent forms and response form packages with the instruction of, "Please do not open until told to do so." After all were seated, Professor Geoffrey

Isherwood, the M.C., welcomed the audience members, outlined to them the evening's activities and also explained the data collection procedure. The presentation of *Transitional Wars* then followed. The second time frame was immediately after the presentation where the audience members were requested to complete the biographical information sheet, "Immediate-independent impressions" form (see appendix 2C) and the Likert-like survey questionnaire (see appendix 2D). After this written data was collected, the audience members went to their designated "de-briefing focus discussion group" areas for a twenty-to-thirty minute open-ended discussion debriefing which was audio taped.

The third time frame was a refreshment time followed by a plenary question and answer period which I hosted. Up until the plenary session, I had kept a very low, almost invisible profile to insure that responses would be as unbiased as possible, especially from those audience members who personally knew me (or of me). The evening itself happened without incident. The staged reading went without major production problems. The entire evening last approximately two and a half-hours.

## **THE AUDIENCE RESPONSES**

### **ORDER OF RESPONSES**

There were three sets of response findings:

1. Immediate-independent written responses
2. Responses to specific Likert-like questions
3. Oral focus group responses

In order to most fully get a "feel" for the viewers' attitudes, the first series of responses had to be as bias-free as possible. Bias-free here refers to the least possible influence of one viewer's reactions and ideas upon another viewer's reactions. Therefore, both the "immediate-independent written response" form and the Likert-like questionnaire were distributed in a sealed envelope with instructions not to be opened until given the "go-ahead signal." The "immediate-independent written response" was completed before the Likert-like questions. The specificity of the Likert-like questions (which dealt primarily with the use of theatre in the education of

administrators) could influence the "immediate-independent written responses" especially if audience members had no specific frame of reference. Simply put, the audience was asked to respond from their "gut" so to speak. The responses were to be as immediate as possible on anything and everything without the ideas, coaching or influence of other audience members.

### ASSESSMENT SEQUENCE

First, the Likert-like questionnaire responses and biographical information were analyzed employing the basic statistical concepts from the STATPAC statistics computer program to compute the data. The second step was to search the "immediate-independent responses" and match up, support or counter the results of the Likert-like responses. The third step was to listen to the audio responses from both the debriefing sessions.

#### 1- THE IMMEDIATE-INDEPENDENT WRITTEN RESPONSES

As stated earlier, the written responses were completed immediately after the presentation and before the Likert-like questionnaire. The shortest responses were under one hundred words. The longest were over several hundred words. The content was varied. Many dealt with the content of the piece, the political and racial aspects and the behavior of the commissioners. The more experienced administrators (those who had first-hand knowledge and had experienced Board Commissions' goings-on) expressed their personal view that showed agreement and corroboration with what they saw onstage. Many did comment on the potential positive and constructive use of theatre in the training of both current and future administrators. The following is from a member of the audience who had spent some thirty-five years as an administrator at all levels.

Thank you for inviting me to the staged reading ... I enjoyed the experience and found it to be very insightful. Your play was right on in revealing the issues and the ways that school board commissioners and the school board administrators work. You certainly showed the dynamic tension that exists between them ... Also you demonstrated that theatre can be an excellent tool in the training and professional development of administrators, commissioners and others. This is particularly timely with the advent of site-based management approaches from the MEQ [Ministry of Education of Quebec] ... you have broken important new ground, re: doctoral studies as well as education studies.

The following response from a central office administrator of twenty-two years experience gives view that the issues presented were of importance even though the blatancy or directness of the play was disturbing.

The tokenism bothered me a bit ... Several very real issues of importance here aired ... It is difficult to dramatize negativism but I'm sure that similar scenes are indeed played out at school boards across the land from time to time.

In the next excerpt, a teacher with eighteen years experience sees conflict and confrontation as personal concerns of the characters rather than the token concern for student needs. But it is more of a secondary concern for some in this teacher's mind – political correctness carries greater importance.

The play was impressive in its understanding of the dynamics between the Central Office administrators and the Board of Commissioners. The actors ought to be highly commended for their efforts in bringing the scenes to life. The interaction between the actors and the audience helped to create a vivid picture of what takes place ... Insofar as the two groups go; it was interesting to see how their different perspectives affected their decision making - much like the poem about the blind man describing the elephant. To some extent, each group had a certain amount of concern for the students - probably more than exists in reality, one suspects! The overwhelming concern with public opinion and political correctness gives evidence of their priorities. The whole point of putting the best person in the principal's job, of training people for the job is obviously overlooked; the main thing is to cover up mistakes - reactive as opposed to proactive planning ... All in all, this was most enjoyable and enlightening! Congratulations for using such an innovative approach!

Many of this teacher's attitudes of administration and education were revealed. The play provoked many reactions. For example, some felt the play portrayed the need for some officials to politically agendize every issue except students' needs.

The use of the theatre in this type of "administrator education" took a different path with this next comment. This view is from a twenty-eight-year experienced administrator.

The situation described exists in many boards, not just the one referred to tonight. Many decisions are being made for the wrong reasons, Decisions are political and not based on student needs. Commissioners get elected to school boards in

order to benefit personally. They don't always respect the policies which are in place. They only look out for themselves ... Being a member of a table of commissioners is often a stepping stone to "greater" political positions. The play made the situation more real and was a good way to expose what really goes on in many boards. I don't think that plays alone will have any impact in terms of changing the situation. I think that more should be done to expose what really goes on in some more public way.

This educator has clearly witnessed politics and personal gain for some administrators. This is further evidenced by the next two responses. The first, from a twenty-nine-year experienced administrator.

I could remember the real incidents being referred to ... I think they were worse in "real life" than as presented here ... I think the threats, innuendoes and harassment that Board employees have experienced were only touched upon, i.e., the surface was just skimmed. You had to really experience it - and I have ... to be honest, anyone who is not an educator probably didn't believe those things would be so blatantly transparent and that it was probably an exaggeration.

This once again corroborates the issue of politics and infighting as realities of board level goings-on as a status quo modus operandi. This viewer also implies that the seriousness and depth of the administrative interventions by board members is a lot more involved than the public is led to believe or imagine.

This response is from a thirty-five-year experienced administrator.

I felt the play reflected the actual process of administrative appointments. Unfortunately, promotions are not made based on qualifications. Commissioners use the excuse that there must be visible minorities as administrators, "to reflect the changing color of the community." The fact that deals are made is quite realistic; rules and regulations are waived ... Training programs for administrators have been abolished because the commissioners want to be able to select their own candidates - not because of expense. Compensation packages are given to weak administrators.

This viewer sees the manipulation of current community issues (race and gender equity) as rationales for commissioners to fulfill their own personal agendas. Clearly, the abolition of administrator training programs, in this viewer's mind, is not solely for the benefit of the financial needs of the commission but more for the wielding of power.

Many of the comments dealt with the specific content and issues represented in the piece itself such as implied racism, power politics and the need for each constituent group to pursue

personal agendas. Viewers who had not witnessed such activities at the commission level stated they were either shocked at what went on at such a closed meeting (as represented onstage), or at the probability of it.

## SUMMARY

The viewers were provoked. In retrospect, after studying the debriefings, I think that for some viewers, they may have been "pushed" into commenting on the play too soon after its presentation. There was more emphasis on the content and social issues of the piece than on the phenomenon as an education tool. However, this was not surprising.

## 2 - LIKERT-LIKE RESPONSES

Nine research questions were asked (see Table 1). The research questions probed the audience perception of the utility of theatre in studying administration.

**TABLE 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UTILITY OF THEATER**

Key: SA= strongly agree; A= agree; U= undecided; D= disagree; SD= strongly disagree

QUESTION	SA N/%		A N/%		U N/%		D N/%		SD N/%	
1. The humanities – performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - should be used in preparing administrators for administrative posts	21	55	13	34	3	8	1	3	0	0
2- The humanities – performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - should be used in the professional development of established administrators.	17	45	17	45	2	5	2	5	0	0
3- In my academic studies in preparation for work as an educator, the humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like – were part of my preparation	10	28	9	25	1	3	8	22	8	22
4- The humanities – performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - should be used in preparing lay parents for roles on parents' committees and school commissions.	8	21	23	61	6	16	0	0	1	3
5- Theatrical works would help in preparing non-administrators for administrative ranks	7	19	20	53	9	24	2	5	0	0
6- The play this evening, <i>Transitional Wars</i> , would help in preparing practicing administrators for improved practice.	9	24	19	50	7	18	2	5	1	3
7- The play this evening, <i>Transitional Wars</i> , provoked my thinking about administrative practices.	17	45	16	42	2	5	2	5	1	3
8- The play this evening, <i>Transitional Wars</i> , presents issues about administrative practice that are rarely discussed in in-service or other preparation programs.	15	43	10	29	9	26	0	0	1	3
9- From my experience, <i>Transitional Wars</i> , reflects the "reality" of administrative practice.	9	24	14	31	12	32	3	8	0	0



## **RESPONSE ANALYSIS**

**QUESTION 1:** Respondents clearly thought that the humanities should be used in preparing administrators for educational posts (89% SA or A). A few respondents (8%) were undecided.

**QUESTION 2:** An overwhelming 90% believed that the humanities should be used as a learning tool for established administrators. These results are virtually the same as in question 1.

**QUESTION 3:** Only 50% had experienced the humanities in their preparation as an educator; 3% were undecided and the remaining 44% had had no exposure to the humanities.

**QUESTION 4:** A majority of viewers - 82% - believed it was important that the humanities should be used to train parents for positions either on school committees or as commissioners; 16% were undecided and 3% disagreed.

**QUESTION 5:** A substantial number of viewers - 72% - agreed that theatrical works would help in preparing non-administrators (i.e., teachers) for the administrative ranks. However, with a 24% undecided group, it is implied that either they would be of little use or perhaps marginal at best.

**QUESTION 6:** On the use of *Transitional Wars* as an administrator preparation tool, 74% of viewers felt that it would have an positive impact. It is interesting that 18% were undecided and 8% felt that it would have no impact. This 25% is a significant amount. There is no way to establish whether or not this can be attributed to the medium or to the content.

**QUESTION 7:** Viewers felt strongly - 74% - were in agreement that *Transitional Wars* did provoke thinking about administrative practices. A small number - 8% - said no, and 5% of viewers were undecided. This may be attributed to responding too soon after seeing the play.

**QUESTION 8:** The great response of 72% in agreement indicated that such issues are not studied. If such issues as power politics, constituent group needs and agendas are not raised, does this indicate that these issues should be covered in administrator preparation programs? The undecided 26% of respondents implied that these viewers may not have participated in preparation programs for administrators.

**QUESTION 9:** Slightly greater than half the viewers - 55% - indicated a contact with the issues presented and how they were handled. The large group of - 32% - undecided respondents may not have witnessed such practices; the 8% disagree group either have either witnessed very polite boards of commissioners meetings or may not believe the issues presented have any validity in their communities.

**SUMMARY:** From the sample, it is clear that both the use of theatre and the piece itself successfully provoked thought and concern about current administrative practices and on the issues presented in the piece itself.

### **3- FOCUS GROUP DEBRIEFINGS**

The debriefing sessions lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. They seemed to follow a similar pattern. There was no established protocol, therefore group moderators were instructed to have their participants simply “start talking” about anything regarding the play presentation. Most discussions began with comments concerning the plot content and its governance issues. Subsequently, the discussions touched and then dealt with the process of theatre and theatre usage as a teaching tool. Towards the conclusion of each focus group’s conversation, an almost unanimous consensus was reached that *theatre as representation* as a teaching tool in administration could successfully provoke discussion and would be useful for all levels of educators to further their knowledge in school governance.

The actual content for each of the six debriefing groups covered many topics, viewpoints and personal agendas on education and school commission governance. The following are abridged transcriptions of two focus groups, which highlight and represent much of what was said in the other groups. The reader should note that interspersed in much of these excerpts were detailed comments regarding the content of the play in regards to what individual discussants had experienced within their own school commissions. Many questions, comments and concerns were raised and comments made about boards’ procedural, leadership and consensus (or lack of) building protocols and communication links.

*From focus group 3*

"I was surprised at how political the whole thing was ...."

"The politics of it all hit you."

"Unfortunately, I can't say that it surprises me ... and political concerns are more important than pedagogical concerns. It's actually dirtier than was on the stage."

"I was totally impressed, I was totally involved with what was going on - the actors on the stage and having observed school board meetings it seems to me that it was very representative - it was very typical of the kind of interaction that goes on where everybody is trying to cover up their mistakes that have been made in the past - there's never any planning or - how can we not let this happen again, and the students, although they were mentioned - really that was not as important as public opinion or political correctness or bandying back charges back and forth - charges of racism - everybody is defending their own bailiwick - looking after their own interests ...."

"It didn't surprise me. In fact, I almost thought I was at my monthly board meetings. It's there, except that it isn't quite as blatant. I think, if the intent of this is ever to use it as a potential teaching tool, then I found it dealt only with one issue ... There are a lot of other issues that weren't mentioned, but they would result in the same thing. In the same kind of discussion that they were having ... finances were never mentioned, school closures were never mentioned ... but what was mentioned to me felt very true to life ... My reaction to it is the same as my reaction to it when I go to my board meetings ... and that is to get totally angry and say to myself, "Why am I going to these things?"

"There is very little in the study of administration that has the data represented in theatre this way. In fact, it's virtually non-existent. I suspect that no one around this table, myself included, has ever been to a production dealing with administration. Is there any utility in this for the preparation for administrators?"

"Well, it certainly is an eye-opener."

"I could see the utility of creating scenarios that are more focused in terms of the kind of administration you're talking about - whether it is an in-school administrator ...."

"I definitely think there is something when you have the interaction in this type, when you are using this type of vehicle. The interaction between the actors and the audience it's, it's just altogether different from reading about something, - or reading case studies, - or studying another way. I just think it brings everything to light. It's like watching politics like Watergate, or any of these other things, you see people interacting like that - I think I've seen a play about the war poets at Stratford ... It had such an impact on what was really going on in their lives and it had such an impact on you ... and, I think, that's what theatre creates. There is the audience - another factor. It's beyond that. I think it would be constructive for people, who are entering administration, to be aware of some of some of the pitfalls - to be aware of some of the obstacles that are going to be thrown in their way - because, if you go in with too idealistic a view you're not going to be prepared for some of the in-fighting that you're going to face. It's very difficult to get over some of these obstacles if you want to move forward with your school. You'd be better prepared if you knew more what was going on behind the scenes."

"I think it could help [the use of theatre], it taught me something ...."

"I think as a tool, I find it very, very exciting. I find the concept very exciting. I can see, in a sense, that case studies, by dramatizing case studies - for a whole variety of purposes - I could see that as being extremely beneficial as a concept. I think it's good teaching practice."

"Part of the reason I did come tonight was because of the forum in a play. Because I think if I was just going to come to listen to someone talk I don't think I would have come on a Sunday evening. But because of the fact it was something different and we are always looking in terms of professional development for something new and exciting hands on, I just thought, I just think - and I don't know if this is going to make better commissioners or better administrators, but I think that there is a lot in there that can be used for professional development for administrators."

The conversations within this focus group were typical of all groups. This group discussed "typical interactions" in much the same way political press secretaries put "spins" on news stories to soften up any "damage" to the image of the commission. There was a frustration aired as well - as if the populace was almost helpless in the hands of these individuals. A good deal of discussion was also focused on TAR as an administrator-training device. There was agreement that it would be a positive tool. It was seen as not only novel, it was enticing and fun to become involved in.

*From focus group 2*

"The play was enjoyable"

"Very much so."

"Certainly was."

"Actually, an interesting tool. I was reading the reaction on the questionnaire - whether you agreed or strongly disagreed ... I thought the play itself would be a good tool for administrators and school commissioners and everyone actually in order to incite this kind of discussion - what is your position on the board? What is your position of commissioner, just what are your responsibilities, who do you represent?"

"This is a great stimulant."

"I found it very provocative ...you know that there are these kinds of currents going on in people's minds, even if many times they don't get expressed that overtly. But it's a ... feeling where a school or a system should reflect values that it teaches its own students, it always hits me as when we come across behaviors that fly in the face of what the school system is all about. In most cases they find commissioners and board officials - much more polite to each other - the kind of interference that we saw there taking place was very minimal I think - that occurs in certain instances - there are certain appointments - in certain schools that seem to grab some attention, but in most cases I haven't seen that kind of flare-up occur."

"Neither have I."

"If no conflict, there's no play."

"But it does in a sense put an incident or two under a magnifying glass - just blows it up whereby we can start to grapple with some of the emotions."

"I wonder if that sort of race issue is so important to this. The political aspect was based on the racial - ethnic, you know, the changing face of our community and all that kind of stuff, if you don't have that kind of situation, would it necessarily be any easier? It would probably be easier. I mean, I'm just wondering whether the conflict was dependent on having to have a kind of super-charged political thing happening on your community. I suppose for us, it could be an English-French thing for all that matters; like we had with the \_\_\_\_\_ moving to \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sure they had some heated Board meetings."

"On previous appointments there have been commissioners, as I'm sure there are in any metropolitan area school board, expressed views like those that were mentioned with respect to people of color, and one of the frustrations was that the base from which people are selected is not quite representative of the current demographics. So appointing someone of color is difficult if one doesn't have a set of people from which to choose or who might be competent or who don't want to pursue administration ... At the very beginning when ladies were not too present in administration, it was difficult to encourage people to apply."

"I felt that the racist issue was just an excuse, and it was really aggravating to me. It was like, what is the real issue here?"

"You mean, it was more like power trips ... than anything else."

"Yes, really."

"Because they seemed to go after the Director General, one group, and at the end they said, 'One way or the other we'll get them'."

"You had the feeling that there had been past conflicts that had been contentious issues."

"... Yeah, we didn't really know where it came from."

"... There were so many things that suddenly came in that I found kind of confusing."

"You're wondering if it's necessary to remember all these names later on in the play."

"Well, it shows the complexities of the field and all those things can almost be happening simultaneously ...."

"That's true."

"Simultaneously, I just wish I could control the zappers. You can't. They can just come at the most inopportune times. It just so happens that abuse case was sort of coming up to a conclusion right at appointment time. That could have happened at any given time."

"And there was a massive heart attack. You can't control ... the workmen in the school."

"And it's so true."

"... From the survey, from that question they asked, do you think this type of production would be effective for a way of getting people to think about situations? I found it very provocative."

"Very much."

"Much more provocative than reading a dry text, theoretical analysis of cases of studies in the field."

"And apart from all the value in doing all the discussions, stimulating the ... It was entertaining ... certainly at a convention of administrators it would be an interesting keynote."

"I think it was good that kind of an issue focusing on one set of topics relating to appointments of principals. Similar kinds of things can happen in choosing an architect or ... but it was complex enough just on this one topic."

"You could use this play just to illustrate the need for consensus building and how to come to group decisions, how to go through a decisional processes ...."

"I think it was good for us to witness that and then, in whatever group is viewing the play, discuss - what would you do, how could you prevent, how could it be different and some learning could come."

Most fascinating from this focus group was how the discussion moved from one area to another. The talk focused on the issues of race and power. It also dealt with value systems. Weaving in and out were the side issues within the play such as competency, gender, the process of decision making and the need to learn by viewing and discussion.

All focus group members touched upon their own experiences within the context of the play's portrayed "personalities" onstage. The groups were consistent in their progression from content reaction alone (plot and characters) to the process of reflection on the use of *theatre as representation* as a provocation tool for discussion. Much of the Likert-like questionnaire results were corroborated by the focus groups' verbal responses. Of note and demonstrated in the last few transcriptions, there was considerable discussion on "consensus building" in problem solving. This falls clearly into a number of areas of concern in educational administration such as leadership, decision making and conflict-resolution. Many discussants reported afterwards that if they had not been confined to the thirty-minute session, they would have gone much further in their evaluation of both the play and, more importantly, the subsequent areas of discussion that were provoked by the play.

## RESPONSE SUMMARY

The evening's findings (October 19) overwhelmingly concluded that a live theatrical presentation, formulated on an educational administration issue and presented in a proper venue, could provoke discussion. Issues of leadership, organizational theory, organizational hierarchies and the contest for power, to list just a few, were debated and discussed in depth. In an overall sense, there seemed to be a belief by many of the groups that if "their" focus group was an actual "real" Board of Commissioners, recommendations could be proposed that would lead to prescriptive protocols to enhance the efficiency and understanding of school commission issues.

This, along with the collected interview data and its findings heavily support the project's goals and precepts. All three response mediums were clear in their results. The overwhelming positive response was that *Transitional Wars*, as a research study employing the medium of theatre as representation, did successfully portray the executive succession issue and the "real life" administration and social issues of the play's script and characters. It was also successful in provoking discussion in many areas of educational administration. Clearly, *theatre as representation* could be successfully used as a potential learning tool for administrators' professional development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRESENTATIONS

The following next steps are evident:

- 1- to replicate the study
- 2- to create dramatic pieces based on different areas of concern
- 3- to refine the data collection, reduction and analysis and perhaps simplify the dramatic writing technique

These are in no particular order. Replicating the study would mean to present *Transitional Wars* to several audiences. These targeted audiences would again consist of administrators, lay people involved in school commissions and scholars in the field of educational administration. This is a necessary step to further support the notion that *theatre as representation* is a viable and accessible teaching tool for administrators.

The practical aspects of production must be understood thoroughly with each presentation. One of the project's foundations was to keep the production aspect fairly separate from the research aspect. I feel it would serve the both the play's dramatic impact and the research findings that wherever possible that actors and not field colleagues be employed as presenters of the text (either in a production or staged reading). Even though Shakespeare wrote, "all the world's a stage," not all stages are the same and neither are actors nor productions. This is not to imply that provocation and good discussion would not result from a presentation in a lecture-classroom setting or typical conference setting. Provocation will always promote discussion. However, formal theatre presentation adds "a magic." There is also a practical-consistency in the technical presentation that should be maintained. A possibility exists where colleagues (who are not actors) who are watching colleagues present in a dramatic format may (or not) affect the perception of the viewer and take away from the purpose of the presentation.

The second and third recommendations go hand in hand. I chose the story vehicle of "principal selection" because it is a current and important subject in administration. However, there are many other potential vehicles that could also serve as excellent confrontational platforms. Some might be: school closure, school bussing, and curricula alteration due to community morals, constituent group(s) morale, family values and political necessity.

The refining of the data collection and analysis would take a natural course of evolution. As particular issues become more identified, so will the interview questions, interviewing techniques and the targeted respondents. The interview questions would be tailored to the needs of the vehicle issue. The data reduction and analysis into the *spheres of infra-influence* and *rules of inclusion*, would be designed and created to fulfill the particular plot vehicle's conditions. The scriptwriting itself would become more standardized. This could lead to the creation of "issue packages" such as parent committee internal and external conflicts, the closure of schools in a commission and harassment issues to name a few.



## CHAPTER TEN - CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We recall these two rules of inclusion from *SPHERE OF INFRA-INFLUENCE 3:*

### *POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP:*

*CATEGORY: Blatant political interference*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 3.6: When it is to the advantage of a politician (an elected board commissioner), or a demonstration of political power or arm-twisting (referred to as power-basing), the credibility of commission governance will be undercut and marginalized.*

*CATEGORY: Personal power*

*RULE OF INCLUSION 3.7: When certain commissioners gain too much political power and exercise that power over their peers or subordinates, it creates a clear hierarchy of the "haves" and "have-nots" within the stratum of any constituent organizational group.*

The interview data inspired these rules of inclusion. These ROI, along with the others, inspired the contents and spirit of *Transitional Wars*. This in turn inspired the actors to interpret their characters with the fullest of reality, and finally their performance inspired the audience of viewers to respond. The viewers' responses were to the "issues" of the play - power politics, the debate between proponents of employment equity with those supporting affirmative action and to the problem of conflict resolution inertia between two governance constituent groups - the appointed Board officers and the elected people's representatives, the Board Commissioners. There are two very clear moral and spiritual dilemmas. First, what is "right" for the Commission may not be "right" for the Commissioner, and second what is "right" for the Commissioner may not be "right" for the Commission. These are moral dilemmas because there is no easy "win-win" solution. One side will win and one side will lose. The stakes concern themselves with the "rights" of a specific constituency and what they feel is inherently (to their beliefs) right. Their decision presumes that any other view is incorrect - or wrong. These are spiritual dilemmas because there is no real, tangible corporeal evidence to substantiate any position. There are only "from the gut" and "from the heart" responses - simply a belief in the "ku" of the moment.

The immediate question is, can there be a “coming together” of these adversaries so the entire school commission community (of the play) can benefit? No, they cannot. The data findings were clear. At least, not in the major school commissions from which most of the interviewed respondents worked. This was corroborated by many of the viewers of *Transitional Wars* as well. The play took place in a closed-door meeting and not one open to the public. This setting was the only setting possible. It is only in this setting that “public” faces and personas are dropped and the true natures of political combatants come to battle - hence - wars. The battle for whichever candidate becomes principal is more a battle for what certain commissioners feel is “territorial,” and changes to the territory must evoke the specific conditions of leader transformation - hence - *transitional*. However, as the findings implied, transitions occur multi-laterally as well as hierarchically. Conflict is inevitable. “Happy” conflict resolution may not be possible or even desirable. Public exhibitions of officials and politicians require “rational” behavior. Closed door meetings do not require “rational” behavior. There exists the inherent conflict between two constituent groups who individually believe that they are divinely “right.”

*When teachers believe that their administrators are pawns of the Board of Commissioners, they lose faith in the system, and to others, credibility with both their superiors and the organization as a whole. Front-line administrators can also feel this loss (ROI 4.3).*

Just as many interview respondents spoke from their beliefs in “lost” rationality, many of the audience viewers similarly responded.

“The politics of it all hit you.”

“It didn’t surprise me.”

“Unfortunately, I can’t say that it surprises me ... and political concerns are more important than pedagogical concerns. It’s actually dirtier than was on the stage.”

The combined power of the interview findings and the subsequent inspired dramatic piece clearly stimulated and provoked viewers’ questions and ideas of school commissions’

rationality (or lack of) in governance, decision making and conflict resolution. The immediacy of a three-dimensional “live” drama fueled discussion and reflection.

There is no doubt that conflict, confrontation and control are paramount issues in school executive succession and governance. The number of conflicts between and across appointed and elected officers’ scenarios as shown in the data is endless. This is what spoke to me both as researcher and playwright. The political intrigue that emerged from the data was nothing less than immense. The understanding of this intrigue evolved throughout the project. No set of statistics is as powerful in demonstrating power-play politics as the insidious Deputy Director General Dedroty covering up his continual chameleon loyalties between the Commission’s goals as an institution and the elected commissioners who are elected with their own personal agendas. Here is the “conflict” that the literature does not talk about in such a blatant manner. Who governs? Who administers? Who is right and, who is not right?

Here is a Director General who wants to operate the school commission in a morally correct and professional manner. He (and his staff who supports him and his goals of the commission) wants to administer for the benefit of the commission. On the other side of the confrontation are two polarized groups of elected commissioners: one set who supports the goals of the Commission altruistically, and the other set who supports the goals of the Commission by personal agenda. The cross-conflicts between appointed officers and elected officials breed and multiply. On the plot issue, some senior administrators also want to follow selection protocols, which best serve, the commission and fair selection. There are those administrators who do not share this view and are in the “political game” for their own personal ends. The “personal agenda” commissioners want their priorities to over-ride protocol. In order to “to get their candidate in” they push the racism envelope. The edge is reached where there are no longer clear boundaries between actual racism, engendered racism, affirmative action and reverse discrimination - competency vs. the denigration of competency. The interview data revealed these realities.

The most important finding of the research was seen consistently and validated throughout every successive stage of the project. It began with my Master's Degree monograph play and followed throughout the interviews, its data reduction, analysis and findings; through the successive gestation stages of *Transitional Wars*; and finally was completely substantiated through its "live" dramatic presentation. It is simply put. **Constituent power basing and power play politics among governing organizational constituent members is the issue in executive succession.** The method to explain this finding most explicitly and most directly was to create a dramatic vehicle. Its purpose was to provoke discussion in educational administration and leadership from its viewing audience. Its content, characters and "reality" were formulated and inspired from solidly grounded data using the constant-comparison qualitative research method. These adapted findings then took on a "field reality" and were presented in a representative piece of theatre. From the outset, a clear goal was to create a research engine that could take clear, hard, grounded data findings and "package" them in a way that would benefit those individuals who are in the top echelons of educational leadership at the field level. It clearly succeeded.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH**

We recall the two purposes of the study: to investigate executive succession in a large urban setting, and to create a dramatic piece that examined specific aspects of the interpersonal-power conflicts within school commission executive positions - appointed and elected. The dramatic piece's main purpose was to provoke discussion among its viewers, after which, their discussions would then inspire new strategies in problem solving and decision making. Ultimately these strategies, if enacted, would improve communication and execution protocols in the areas of leadership and organization evaluation of school commissions and their leaders - appointed and elected. Yes, theatre has always provoked its viewers, but not perhaps in the field of educational administration. The results of the presentation itself supported and validated these purposes. The contribution here is that the use of *theatre as representation* dramatic vehicles would successfully assist in training of existing, new and future administrators.

Much of the leadership literature is concerned with developing leadership theory. There is no question about the validity of this academic concern. But, how much of this material is studied by practicing administrators? Even if it is studied, is any of it employed? Time and funds presently available for professional development for field administrators are limited. If this be true (or not so true) using *theatre as representation* is patently one means of bringing research findings to field administrators in an accessible, challenging and understandable manner within an contained time span and financial feasible framework. Using *theatre as representation* can provoke discussion and reflection on "practice" in both the field and in the preparation of practitioners.

Therefore, the findings and results of this project offer several directions for further research in the field of educational administration. The first being that since much of traditional research practices - laden with positivistic foundations, is not easily usable for the working administrator (appointed or elected), *theatre as representation* becomes a means of professional development for the working field administrator. Using *theatre as representation*, in the form of the dramatic piece *Transitional Wars*, served as a successful "test" of the concept both as a medium and as a provocation means. The act of placing the administrator, as viewer, in a passive, nonstressful setting to observe a dramatic presentation and then to comment on its implications, as witnessed by the October 19<sup>th</sup> presentation, did initiate a series of probing discussions, working possibilities and alternative reflections of the viewers. By all accounts, the project was a successful and worthwhile endeavor.

Subsequent to this, much of its success (high provocation as demonstrated in the focus groups), is based upon the viewers' belief that what they saw was "truthful." The data collection and analysis protocols were successful in being able to inspire a "truthful" dramatic piece. The first purpose - to create a dramatic piece that examines specific aspects of the interpersonal power conflicts within school commission executive positions, appointed and elected - was fulfilled. This further opens research avenues from the humanities, in this case the performing arts.

The second purpose of the dissertation was to discover the issues that plagued governance when new senior administrators were required. This data was not disseminated from an existing literature, a survey laden with statistics, a manual or a set of hypotheses with clear clean queries to be proven. The method of research was "bottom up." It was taken first hand from the interviewees' experiences and work values of being field line administrators. This in itself is the foundation of "truth" or "the notion of truth." It then served as *Transitional Wars* story and theme lines. The "truth" was solidly grounded from grass-roots data and then analyzed in a proven qualitative format formulated upon theories and practices of several researchers using the constant-comparison method. Data was successfully transformed from "findings" to performance art.

This then is the final contribution. This project has proven that *theatre as representation* provides a successful means of bridging performance (as in a "live" dramatic presentation) research representations to the world of educational administration. This use can be added to the list of current techniques and methods of field research. I refer specifically to the area of transcendence, the use of the "ku" concept as a foundational transformation methodology for taking hard data and transforming it into a dramatic representation. This was framed in the sequential steps of the "gestation" parameter. It is within this gestation that the data inspires and forms images and solidifies thematic directions. It is in this representational design that the data breathes a life of its own and emerges as an entity that can shape and shift each time it is presented (as the dramatic piece) with different audiences, actors and settings.

## APPENDIX 1 - APPROVED CONSENT FORM

This consent form was approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on September 14, 1995.

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The research project you will participate in is designed to obtain information and insights from those individuals who have experience, either in a participatory or observer capacity, in the areas of secondary school administrator selection.

Your participation in this study will consist of one (maybe two) interviews with the researcher at a time and locale of your preference. Each interview lasts about 1 and 1/4 hours and will be audio-taped. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential known only to the researcher. Only the researcher will hear the audio-tapes. There is no physical participation component to this study or research protocol. There will be no request for any personal medical (such as psychological) information. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable during the interview, you may request the interview to conclude and your responses will not be included in the research.

By signing this consent form you are indicating that you consent to participate in this study, that you have read this consent form, and that all your questions concerning this project have been answered. If you have any questions regarding this research project, I can be reached at the following telephone numbers: (Home: 637-5019; Work: 937- 9289).

Thank you for your participation

Matthew J. Meyer

I \_\_\_\_\_ (please print) consent to participate in the research project entitled:

**THEATRE AS METHOD: A PROVOCATION MEDIUM TO ASSIST IN DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOLS FOR SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL SELECTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS<sup>99</sup>**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>99</sup>This was the original working title of the project.

## APPENDIX 2A - INVITATION TO THE STAGED READING

*(on McGill letterhead)*

You are cordially invited to join a small group of senior knowledgeable Québec educators and attend a 'closed door' staged reading of the dramatic work:

### **TRANSITIONAL WARS**

By Matthew Meyer  
 Sunday evening October 19, 1997  
 7:30 p.m.  
 St. George's School of Montreal  
 3100, The Boulevard  
 (corner of Ramezay, one block west of Côte des Niegues)  
 514 - 937-0753

*Transitional Wars* is a fictional dramatic play depicting the power struggles within a public school commission's Board of Commissioners and senior administrators. The play - a creative work - is based in the research and analysis of practicing educators' understandings of school commission operation. The play runs for about an hour. The presentation will be videotaped and forms part of Matthew Meyer's doctoral dissertation.

This approach the study of educational administration is new- the use of theatre to represent administrative practice. You are asked to attend and observe the presentation, then provide brief comments and participate in a small group discussion on the meaning of the work to you. Your verbal comments will be audio-taped and may be incorporated in the dissertation.

Guided by ethical standards as they apply to research on human subjects at McGill, you will not be video-taped during the presentation. As well, the written and the audio-taped remarks you make during the session will not be attributed to you. You are guaranteed complete anonymity. You will be asked to sign a form consenting to these conditions.

We hope you will be able to attend. If there are any questions, please contact Matthew Meyer (937-9289 X232 [W] or 637-5019 [H] or Prof. Geoffrey Isherwood (398-6746 X2242).

*RSVP 514 457 - 5733 Tel/Fax*



## APPENDIX 2B - VIEWING CONSENT FORM

*(On McGill letterhead)*

### VIEWING INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The research project you will participate in is designed to obtain reactions and viewpoints of the viewers to the theatrical piece, **TRANSITIONAL WARS**. This theatrical is part of Matthew Meyer's Doctoral research in the area of Educational Administration. Your participation in this project consists of:

- 1- viewing the theatrical piece, **TRANSITIONAL WARS**;
- 2- providing written comments on the contents and the presentation itself, immediately after the viewing; and
- 3- participating in one (or two), discussion groups regarding the viewing shortly after the viewing.

Your written and verbal comments may be incorporated in some way in the dissertation. Guided by ethical standards as they apply to research on human subjects at McGill, you will not be videotaped during the session and your audio-taped remarks will not be attributed to you. You are guaranteed complete anonymity.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating your consent to participate in this event in full knowledge of the above stated parameters and guarantees.

-----

I \_\_\_\_\_ (please print) consent to view and participate in the viewing of **TRANSITIONAL WARS** this October 19, 1997 as part of Matthew Meyer's doctoral research dissertation project.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2C - BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND INITIAL REACTION SURVEY QUESTION

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I am a female ☐ male ☐
2. My age is closest to: 35 ☐ 40 ☐ 45 ☐ 50 ☐ 55 ☐ 60 ☐ 65 ☐
3. If an educator, complete the following:

Elementary Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Years	Public Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Years
Secondary Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Years	Private Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Years
Central Office	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Years	Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ Years

If not an educator, my current occupation is \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

\* \* \* \* \*

**We invite you to take a few moments to write down your thoughts about the play you have just seen. Please indicate any and all reactions to the work.**

## APPENDIX 2D - LIKERT-LIKE SURVEY QUESTIONS

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**PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, TICKING - OFF THE BOX  
CLOSEST TO YOUR THINKING WHERE:**

---

SA = Strongly Agree  
A = Agree  
U = Undecided  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly Disagree

4. The humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - *should be* used in preparing educators for administrative posts.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

5. The humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - *should be* used in the professional development of established administrators.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

6. In my academic studies in preparation for work as an educator, the humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - *were part of my preparation.*

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

7. The humanities - performing arts works, biographies, memoirs, non-fiction works and the like - *should be* used in preparing lay parents for roles on parents' committees and school commissions.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

8. Theatrical works would help in preparing non-administrators for administrative ranks.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

9. The play this evening, *Transitional Wars*, would help in preparing practicing administrators for improved practice.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

10. The play this evening, *Transitional Wars*, provoked my thinking about administrative practices.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

11. The play this evening, *Transitional Wars*, presents issues about administrative practice that are rarely discussed in in-service or other preparation programs.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

12. From my experience, *Transitional Wars* reflects the "reality" of administrative practice.

SA ☐    A ☐    U ☐    D ☐    SD ☐

Any final comments ..

## **APPENDIX 2E - TRANSITIONAL WARS CAST AND PROGRAM**

**NOTE: THIS WAS PRINTED ON ONE SHEET OF STANDARD PAPER, BOTH SIDES IN THE LANDSCAPE ORIENTATION)**

**McGill University  
Department of Educational Studies,  
in Co-operation with  
St. George's School of Montreal**

**Presents a Closed Staged Reading of**

### **TRANSITIONAL WARS**

**By**

**Matthew J. Meyer,  
Doctoral Candidate**

**October 19, 1997  
Bhatla Studio  
St. George's School of Montreal  
3100 The Boulevard  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

Welcome to tonight's staged reading of **TRANSITIONAL WARS** and participating in our research survey after the presentation. A staged reading is a unique opportunity for the playwright to view his or her "work in progress" in a partially formal setting with an audience. This is not a fully produced theatrical presentation. Lines are read, not memorized. The staging, acting and directing are minimal. This unique presentation is, in part, a crucial element in Matthew Meyer's Doctoral research.

*This evening, after the play is over...*

Traditionally, educational administrators have been informed through theoretical propositions like McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, by scientific efforts (experimental) and quasi-scientific ones (surveys, case studies), by hortative studies of experienced practitioners ("In my day, we did it this way"), and to a much lesser extent by works from the humanities - biographies, memoirs, poetry and the theatre.

The purpose of the written survey and focus groups to be conducted immediately after tonight's *Transitional Wars* presentation, is to test a few key issues in the use of theatre in the preparation and instruction of school administrators and those who aspire to school administration.

However, *Transitional Wars* is fictional. It was created by Matthew Meyer - its strengths and frailties are in Meyer's perceptions. This is the case with any fictional effort. For theatre people the question is often, "Did the play work?" This evening, we want you to take in the play, then offer any and all commentary you have.

We envision a three-step process:

1- You will complete a questionnaire at the conclusion of the presentation. This will take you about 10 minutes. You will do this alone - working independently, offering any comments you wish. *(You are asked to sign a certificate of ethical release regarding your writings and remarks. That is, you are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality in your responses and you may withdraw from the survey or focus group at any time. Your remarks may be used in Meyer's dissertation.)*

2- You will then join a focus group and enter into a discussion of the play and its meaning to you. The focus group will have 8-12 people and will run for about 20 minutes. The focus group will be audio-tape recorded.

3- Finally, the entire group will be re-formed in The Bhatla Studio. You will be free to offer comments, to discuss any matters of concern, to you, or to seek answers you may have, with Matthew Meyer.

## TRANSITIONAL WARS

### READERS (in order of appearance)

<i>Douglas Glasgow, the Director General</i>	Alan Strand
<i>Dedroy, the Deputy Director General</i>	John Markle
<i>Paul Kazankis, the Board Vice President,</i> <i>a visible minority Board Commissioner</i>	Ralph Stantostefano
<i>Ted Dowe, a black male Board Commissioner</i>	Philip Taylor
<i>Donna Deglee, the newly appointed Deputy Director General</i>	Jane Wardle
<i>Peter Donat, The Educational Services Director</i>	Andrew Wilmer
<i>Leonard Peterson, Board President</i>	Bill MacDougall
<i>Herb Thompson, Another Commissioner</i>	Avery Plaw
<i>Hugh Pherson, Another Commissioner</i>	John Markle

### SCENES:

- 1- **THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE**, in February
- 2- **OUTSIDE THE COMMISSION'S BOARDROOM**, two months later
- 3- **INSIDE THE BOARDROOM BEFORE THE EVENING'S CLOSED BOARD "STEERING COMMITTEE" MEETING**
- 3- **AT THE MEETING**
- 4- **POWWOW**, a break in the meeting
- 5- **THE CROSSFIRE**, at the meeting's end

The action is continuous

### Mise en scène

Technical Direction	Cyrile Vo-Quang, Jon Brooks
Stagecrew	Michael Tauben, Yancy Meyer
Photography	Nicolas Pogue
Video-tape	Judith Cezar, Paul MacDougall

Greatful thanks to:	Judy Isherwood, Martha MacDougall
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### APPENDIX 3 - THE NOVELLA

*NOTE: This novella is part of the "creating" process. Audiences would not view, read or hear (as in a reading) it. As was described in Chapter Seven - Transcendence, the use of the novella is for the author alone.*

It's mid February and it's been a tough year for the board with provincial budgeting cuts, population shifts, proposed provincial standards and a weakening front-line administrator cadre. Last year's retirement of six administrators left major gaps in the ranks. There was a large group of available career Vice-Principals, but none over the year had proven themselves to be very effective in the hot spot. There had been several younger up-and-coming Vice-Principals that had been promoted, only two of them had panned out to be somewhat decent on the line. The politics of the board commissioners was at its usual; "We know what's best for our schools ... so shut up if you disagree with us."

The front-line administrator cadre seemed to be at the heart of many of the administration dilemmas of the year. Even with the shifting population, the budget problems, even the Ministry's usual nonsense, it all seemed palpable in comparison. Vandalism, teacher discontent, student unrest and the increase in parent complaints, which seemed to be pouring into the head office (the school commission or Board office) at a very high rate, insidiously gnawed at the morale of the entire Board command.

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The DG, Douglas Glasgow was sitting in his office staring out the window. This was his usual way of first thinking out a problem's solution. Today's major problem was covering up his DDG's latest mess - the screwing up of the legal mess of the Revett High School. The DG was in his second year of a five-year mandate. His first year had been satisfactory. All of that year's policies had been put in place by the previous administration. However, it became very clear after four months of his administration, that all was not well in Camelot. The members of the selection committee of the Board Commissioners, who hired him, had been either voted out or had retired since his appointment. He knew beforehand that the Board politics were not the healthiest. He was brought in based largely on his success in operating one of the province's largest boards with great efficiency. After ten years in that position, he announced his leaving and was looking for something new. His old Board was in great shape for he had trained his successor and that transition would be virtually trouble-free. He was ready for a challenge. When the position of Director General became available for Independent school Board of the West Island (IBWI), he was courted by several of its Board of Commissioners.

Through the grapevine, he had heard that this school commission was racked with infighting, corruption and overall infrastructure organizational problems. This was always part of the fare of any school commission. His interview sessions with the selection committee were unique. It was clear to him that there were three factions within the Board Commissioners. There was an old guard of commissioners who had been on the Board for many years and really had the students' best interests at heart. The second group was made up mostly of younger (mid-forties) second-generation immigrants and visible minorities. The third group was sitters. They voted as they felt the wind. The rifts between them sometimes appeared as great chasms. The selection committee for the new DG was made up more of the first group.

Initially as the new DG, he felt he had the support of this stronger group. But as some of these commissioners retired or were voted out in the June (in his first year) elections, he found that the political power had shifted towards the second group. The vice-chairperson of the Board of Commissioners was the new Kingpin. This commissioner preferred the number two position. In this way he could more aptly control both his hand-picked President and most of the other commissioners and virtually hold all the puppet strings to just about everything in the commission. For the DG, this was unforeseen.

The DG had inherited a senior staff, who, for the most part, were made up of good dedicated career mandarins. However, there were also a number of senior level department heads left over from the "the old guard" or "old boys club" of previous incestuous administrations. These bureaucrats held more power than was required or necessary. Initially the DG believed he could weed out some of the poorer ones out keep the more competent ones in place and virtually bring them on side so to speak. He knew this was going to take a few years.

Most unfortunate for the DG, this was especially true of the Deputy Director General, Donald DeDroty who was the most incompetent of these bureaucrats and, more dangerously, the most powerful. This DDG had been in the board a long time. He had worked his way up virtually by default and became excellently politically astute. He ingratiated himself with the more powerful board commissioners over the years. He became the ultimate "go-fer," "inside man," and at times political patsy for those commissioners, especially when one of them needed something done which was not exactly up-front and above board. Many of the board-level department heads got their positions by being "befriended" by him. He was owed a number of favors. The DDG was sometimes referred to as the "Board Mafia Honcho."

It was fascinating, in a repulsive sort of way, that most of these board level directors and Board Commissioners wanted such a DDG (the second highest ranking appointed administrator). They felt that having "one of their own" in the top administrative ranks was a good protection against anything "weird" that the DG might do. This was the third DG for this DDG to work under. On the surface, he appeared as the stable experienced administrator. In fact he was very bad. Every DG knew since he could not be fired, he had to be "protected" not so much to save the DDG, but to save front office. It was easier to cover this guy's tracks and fallout than to bring him up on charges.

Unfortunately for the DG, the selection committee that hired him wanted change and did not tell him clearly that he was hired in part to "clean house." Coming from another board, the DG had expected a level of professionalism from his staff. What he found was a deteriorating incestuous old boys club of administrators who were minimally doing their jobs and many of them were in the pockets of several very powerful board commissioners. Politics played rough.

The DG learned quickly that the new board president was the "front man" for the small and powerful group of commissioners who dictated board policy. They had a clear power-basing agenda. Those remaining board commissioners, who did not play along with the "in-group," had little power to fight them. If they did, it became territorial warfare. His fights with the board president and vice president had become both commonplace and common knowledge. The current box score between them was about even. The Board Executive Committee (the president, vice-president, treasurer and two others), realizing that the DG was an honest and competitive adversary, knew that it would not be wise to be so aggressive on too many issues. So they chose their battlegrounds wisely. Fortunately for the DG, the Executive Committee did not fully realize the extent of the DG's legal expertise and connections at the Ministry level with the various unions and the press.



The DG was slowly finding the chinks in their armor, but that was not the issue of the day. The issue of the day was finding new and competent front line administrators: principals and vice-principals especially in the high schools.

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The preparation for the next school year was in full swing at head office. Budget battles would soon be upon them. The DG had met with the leaders of the three major unions to hear their views on a number of issues especially on the Principalship issue. This was one of his on-going strategic moves to make friends and decrease enemies and hopefully forge a common front with the largest line budget item in the commission.

The Director of Personnel was a good administrator and with some success, remained fairly honest even though it was difficult at times. He was invited to attend the meetings with the union representatives. He and the DG were on the same side with most issues. They both saw the DDG as the common enemy. In the meetings with the unions the DDG was not present. The unions refused to sit at the same table with him. They knew where the DDG's colors and allegiances lay and it was never with them. In previous negotiation sessions, the DDG always spoke for the Board of Commissioners not the DG. This was due to some historical precedent. It gave the DG flexibility to play both sides of the fence and be top mediator during crisis issues. However, this DG did not share the precedent. He believed that it was his responsibility to talk with any and everyone concerned with the commission. Not fully trusting any of the reports regarding principals from any constituency, and with the number of complaints regarding the current principal "crisis" burgeoning at an alarming rate, it was no small matter for the DG.

The meetings with the unions, principals associations and parent groups resulted in several consistent items. First, that fact the principal selection protocol two years previous (before the current DG was appointed) resulted, in what many felt, a very poor selection of new administrators. Second, the commissioners' in-fighting resulted in a poor re-distribution of existing principals in the secondary schools. Three of the 10 high schools had principal openings along with a host of vice-principal openings. The Board politics of the board were clear - put more visible minorities and ethnic-based administrators in place. This idea was applauded. Unfortunately, at the time, there were few qualified available candidates in terms of teaching experience. This was due to the fact that ethnics, women and visible minorities did not traditionally apply for these administrative positions.

There was a war in the selection committee. The general feeling was to appoint the most qualified candidates to vice-principal, especially the more promising of these groups. The executive would deal with the "white" backlash and all those who would not be appointed. This was especially true for those candidates who had gone through the principal training sessions and who were next in line for promotions. There was room for the "norm" (white Anglo-Saxon) as well - just a few less. In this way, it was assumed that the more inexperienced candidates would attain experience and knowledge on the job.

The DDG, speaking for the "silent majority" (now the in-group) stated categorically that they needed those "types" in power now. What ensued was a power battle where everybody lost. Yes, some of these candidates were appointed to vice-principals. However, two of the existing vice-principals (of ethnic and minority status) with minimal experience were appointed to principal positions against the concerns of the parents of those schools as well as the teachers unions. Their concern was the inexperience at these candidates. They were still appointed. The principal cadre of the time stated their concerns. This included the principals of the schools where these two appointees were presently serving as vice-principals. They endorsed them categorically

as great potential principals but not at this time. Traditionally, Vice-Principals held that position for a minimum of at least five years to learn all the in, outs, scheduling, discipline, parent and other needed experiential and knowledge bases to become good principals.

The influential Board members refused to listen and appointed them anyway along with a number of new Vice-Principals. Two years later, the two high schools with these inexperienced new principals and Vice-Principals were in mess, having the most and greatest administrative problems. The other high schools were receiving an abnormally high amount of transfer requests from parents wanting to take their children out of these specific schools. The parents' committees raised similar concerns. The Principals' Association stated to the Board that if these schools' problems were not fully resolved immediately, it would further make it difficult for fully qualified minorities, women and ethnics to be appointed. The Board Commissioners attempting to save face shifted the blame to everything but "inexperience."

The DG weighed all these concerns. In the previous year many of these concerns did not arise due to the impending teachers strike. Also, the DDG was responsible for principal evaluation along with the respective regional directors. Through his very carefully orchestrated plan of transfers of regional directors during the strike, these newly appointed principals' evaluations were conveniently lost. The issue never rose to the surface. Due to the teacher contract negotiations, there were only a handful of administrative turnovers. They were all handled internally. In other words, there were no new people appointed.

However, this was not the case this year. Seeing the writing on the wall, many experienced principals did not want to be relocated to these more troublesome schools, especially in their last years before retirement. The DG thought and pondered how battles could be avoided. There were a number of openings for administrators. Along with the problems in these two particular high schools, there were going to be other openings. Retirees accounted for two positions. The others though were strange. One vice-principal was being disciplined for hitting a child. He claimed self-defense; the kid denied it, so did his parents' lawyers. The principal at Revett High School were up on sexual harassment charges from 2 staff members; and in his school, there were at least two senior teachers who were also up on similar charges. Now the quirk in this was that this particular high school was in the jurisdiction of the most powerful school commissioner.

At Revett High School, the teachers' unions were divided on how or not to support the principal and the accused teachers, so morale was very low. The Regional Director of Revett's ward was walking on a razor blade. One side he had a very divided school where students, teachers and parents were disillusioned, discontent, angry, and divided. The very powerful ward commissioner, on the other side, unequivocally supported his Principal regardless of the charges. The DG felt that this Regional Director #1 was spending too many hours and hours in the school keeping the peace.

At Vaughan High School, the long-time principal was recovering from a heart attack; the inexperienced Vice-Principals were doing their best. But, vandalism was increasing in the school and school morale was rapidly declining. Regional Director #2 was doing an outstanding job with this situation. She was right in there virtually running the school, supporting the vice-principals and teachers along with her other RD responsibilities. The feedback about her was nothing less than outstanding. This RD2 should be much higher up, thought the DG. She would probably make a very good Deputy Director General.

The DG was well aware that there were other needs of the Commission that had to be addressed before the next Board of Commissioners meeting. Most of them were in hand. The MEQ was once again playing Russian Roulette with the funding issues - no surprise - and the provincial government was preparing for an election. Hopefully, the Commission's finance department had several financial scenarios and models on the table. He believed it was one of his better decisions to bring in a new accounting team. It was a battle at the Board level to get some particular individuals. Being a very experienced DG (at his former employer) and one time Director of Educational Services, he could read financial statements better than most. Within the first six months at this Commission, he was on the backs of the finance department to such a degree that the dead weight and unaware chieftains who ran the machinery stepped aside or retired.

There were some ruffles (through the DDG to the Commissioners of power) at the Board. When the DG was questioned on his re-shuffling, he produced his own assessment of the waste, poor management and general inefficiency of the department. When pushed by the Board's VP if he could do it any better, the DG literally threw on the table his new (not the one he inherited) budget, which showed an extra \$5 million in various untouched funds or what became known as "lost-funds." Embarrassed by being caught unaware, the board accepted the DG's demand to make changes in the otherwise untouchable finance department. It was a great victory for the DG; it also made him some enemies. That meeting also resulted in the exposure of the true fault lines in the Commission both politically and bureaucratically.

The DG believed himself the educational leader of the Commission as well as its bureaucratic point man. He also believed that he was the prime person responsible to serve the educational needs of the community. In his eyes, this meant that it was his responsibility to lead, not to be lead by the Board of Commissioners.

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The Board Personnel Director, Peter Donat, was going to retire in two years. He had a spent over 20 years as a head-office bureaucrat. A very dedicated company man and very quietly supportive of the DG, he was very much aware of what was going on in all the schools. He had voiced his concerns about the Board's intervention in the appointing of such inexperienced administrators. He was his responsibility to prepare the selection committee's short lists. Being a career bureaucrat, he knew precisely where all the power and power struggles lay, the ones to avoid, and the ones to take sides on. He knew that the DG was the best the Board had seen for a long while.

He also knew the levels of the DDG's ineptitude, his "slimy friends," the political intrigues and the connections with certain board commissioners. The PD had successfully avoided getting involved with the intrigues of the DDG especially where it involved doing favors for certain commissioners - like getting his friends hired. The PD had eluded these requests by virtually ignoring the pressures put forth by such powers. There were three commissioners who consistently asked for such personal like favors. Two administrations back before these commissioners had gained so much power, the PD was approached a former Board commissioner to hire a cousin into the physical plant staff. As a newly appointed Assistant Personnel Director responsible for non-professional staff, he politely told that commissioner, that he would interview the candidate but would treat him no different by than any other candidate. Slightly upset, the Commissioner telephoned the Personnel Director at the time. The then PD told the commissioner the same thing. This commissioner, still determined, then went to the Director of Educational Services (now the present DDG). By some weird loophole in the communications procedures,

this cousin was hired bypassing all the safeguards. When this came to the attention of both the then and now Personnel Directors, it got to the attention of the then Director General who politely chastised the now DDG privately.

After all these years, in order to keep the integrity of both his office and himself, the PD made it known to the earth at large not for anyone to ask for such personal favors. And if done, he would make it public knowledge. This did not stop the requests. The DDG, in his memory over the past administration and his crony friends, re-defined the responsibilities of the personnel department in such a way that the office was decentralized. So now, a bureaucracy was in place where there were specific department heads in the Personnel Department responsible for specific positions. The PD was more like a manager. This battleground between the PD and DDG over this matter became public knowledge. In a move which made no sense to any at the Board administration level, the Board of Commissioners approved the decentralization plan without discussing it with the PD. In order to avoid a nasty public confrontation, a compromise was reached. Since that time, however, the PD only spoke politely and when necessary, to the DDG.

After the DG took office and when it became clear that the DG would not tolerate any such inappropriate dealings of any board level official, the PD (who was on the selection committee) was called in for a meeting with the DG to discuss what seemed some housekeeping matters. Very diplomatically, and over a drink or two, the DG asked why the level of impropriety was so high in the upper ranks of the commission. He also asked why the PD was never associated with these reports. Hopefully not putting his job on the line, he confided to the DG his concerns regarding the DDG. The DG expressed a confirming fear. From that point on a quiet bond was made between them. If it was at all possible to legally darken the credibility of the DDG (for the good of the Commission), they would endeavor to pursue it.

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Across the hall, the DDG in his office began to see the writing on the wall. It was only recently that he began to feel his vulnerability and that his power within the board was weakening. When the DG was being interviewed, he seemingly expected that as a candidate, the DG would be as weak as his predecessors had been. All the previous DG's had been in-house candidates. The DDG's assumption that he could manipulate this DG was a poor and incorrect judgment call. It was clear that with the unions refusing to sit in the same room with him during the previous year's negotiations, the office of the DDG was suffering a frowning credibility gap. The DDG had given up, for the most part, his attempts to discredit the new DG. The DG's political savvy and financial expertise, which had blown away any doubts of his competence (as shown by the last year's planning meetings) were more and more cracking the "invisible protective shield" around the DDG's office. Regional Directors were supposed to answer to him, they now bypassed him whenever possible. With the restructuring of the finance office, the DDG lost a major weapon in his "control" arsenal. Even the most powerful group of board commissioners knew it was becoming more and more difficult to do end runs around the DG. To attempt to discredit the DG would be highly difficult. To not pay back the favors owed to the commissioners had become more difficult.

The DDG was truly in a bind. He had only a few years left until retirement. This DG was not going to make his life easy. The DDG felt that the DG was out to get him. He had been chastised too many times since the DG's appointment. The DG was clearly unhappy with the DDG's associations with "the old guard" and his friendships with board commissioners. He thought that maybe it was time for a major career move.

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Kazankis, the Vice President of the board, sat in his office across town. Too many things were coming at him too fast. He looked at his agenda. He had a meeting with the city permits office to discuss his new office building at 11 a.m. Then, at two p.m., a chastising with one of his delinquent subcontractors followed by a quick meeting with the President of the school commission board at 3:30; and, after a quick dash home, an executive school commission meeting at 7. A tough day was on tap with an even tougher evening to follow. He was perplexed. This had not been one of his better weeks especially at the school commission. He thought, with the idiot president making a fool of himself at the last public board meeting and losing face to the DG, it would now be especially difficult to go through with the plan to close the shrinking high school in the Hempstead area. The DG, unofficially, had stated that with "his" study of the high school and the population shifts, Hempstead High had a strong and growing enough population to remain open. This would mean that there would not be a principal shift from that school. He was also losing much faith in his mole DeDroty. He would have to go. It was clear he had served his purpose. Not only had he lost his little army, the DG, with "his" people now in accounting, was going to become more difficult to bypass in order to get things.

Kazankis tried to get back to the concerns of his construction company. It was difficult. He got on the phone with DeDroty.

"So, what have you heard about tonight's meeting?"

"The agenda has been set. It's being faxed to you as we speak. Peterson will bring up the Hempstead issue, along with the physical plant repairs needs. He'll ask Glasgow to report on the teachers' contracts. Glasgow has been in conference with Donat all morning preparing that report. Inevitably the current crisis in principal and vice-principal placements will arise...."

"Anything of any real importance?"

"The principal issue is very important. There are several schools falling apart right now. There are voices screaming from everywhere, not to mention two or three regional directors screaming for combat pay and early retirement. This is no joke. The commission has not done too well on this one."

"Anything we can blame on Glasgow?"

"Unfortunately, not a thing."

The conversation ended there, Kazankis had other things to worry about. Back to business.

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## AT THE EXECUTIVE MEETING, THAT EVENING

The President brought the meeting to order. Around the table, the executive committee of the Board of Commissioners quietly took their places. Present was the President Peterson, Vice President Kazankis, Treasurer, Commissioner Thompson (responsible for transportation), Commissioner Phearson (responsible for physical plant), DG Glasgow, and DDG DeDroty.

"The meeting is called to order," began the President. "The agenda this evening is restricted to three items: Hempstead High's physical plant upgrade, the principal problem in both Vaughn and Revett High Schools, and the appointments needs for secondary school administrators generally. I remind you that, even though this is an informal discussion, let's attempt to stay on topic. Fine, let's begin with the Hempstead High Plant problems, Mr. Phearson.

"Thank you. Our own people along with the architectural firm of Read and Tyler completed the survey of the plant. The report indicates that there are four areas in the plant that require major renovation and upgrade work for the building to fulfill both the academic needs of the Board as well as to comply with building code requirements. The price tag is projected at \$1.7 million dollars. Our finance department has been negotiating with the MEQ and it seems that the Ministry under certain conditions will pick up most of this cost. That building also houses some community social services for employment training and counseling. We could consolidate some similar programs in other secondary schools to be now executed in Hempstead. The catch to this is that it would necessitate transfers of students and staff to Hempstead as well as increase our school busing requirements. Unfortunately, the MEQ will not pick up that cost."

"Thank you Mr. Phearson. Mr. Thompson what are your estimates on the transportation increases?" asked the President.

"Roughly, about \$125,000 a year to start with, an additional few thousand for transport of handicapped, special events and the like."

"Mr. Glasgow, comments?" asked the President.

"We have three choices facing us. First, we do nothing and plead for a new facility. Second, put it off again and raise the anger towards the Board. Third, agree with this plan. If we do not go through with the renovations, we will, more than likely, lose students. We've been through this before, so I don't want to harp on it. Ward 7, where Hempstead high is located, is in the one of the most established areas of town. The school itself is one of the oldest in the system. Parents of that ward have been complaining for the last ten years about the inadequate facilities. Hence, we've been losing students at an increasing rate to both other boards, and worse, to the private sector."

Kazankis sarcastically interjected, "You mean the bluebloods are upset. Be careful, you'll make me cry. What's so difficult, is it that their chauffeurs are threatening to go on strike because they may have to drive the little darlings to another high school and that may make their snotty parents late for their morning bridge club game?"

This caused a round of snickers from some and signs of disgust from others. The DG continued. "That is not the issue. The nearest high school to Hempstead that offers the required university prep courses is 45 minutes away by driving, we won't mention the cost of school busing or public transportation. Hempstead also borders the Daijon area. This is a solid immigrant neighborhood. The population of Hempstead High has increased over 20% in the last three years alone. With this increase, the students are already bursting the building. The ESL cost alone has boosted class size in some courses 15%. Vandalism and misbehavior is up as well. We need this expansion. If we cannot retain our diverse population in this school, we will in fact create a "ghetto" school and spend more resources on security and policing than five high schools combined. The parents' committee has had it. The Board has been rejecting this proposal for three years now. There is a core of parents who are seriously thinking of bringing legal action against the Board."

"We've been threatened before," returned Kazankis. "It'll never stand up in court and you know it."

"That's not the point. The reality is the MEQ is rather annoyed at us for not finalizing this plan. It is considerably less costly to renovate and expand this building and absorb the extra costs than build another facility which the province has categorically said it won't support. It's the right thing to do. I recommend this be tabled for the next general meeting for a final vote and we should accept the arrangement with the Province."

The President spoke. "Well, I don't think we have much choice. I've received many calls from Wilson (Ward 7's commissioner), the Hempstead Parent committee is going to attend the next full board meeting. We don't want another confrontation with them. Knowing them, they'll have the press there. It should be on the agenda. The consensus that I've picked up, unofficially, is that the Board members are more in favor of this than not. We'll vote on it at that meeting. Agreed?"

All nod.

"Now to the next item, Vaughn and Revett High Schools - update, Mr. DeDroty."

"Well, Vaughn is getting by. The staff is very depressed, as are the students. The Vice-Principals, they are both new, are holding their own. Donna Deglee, the regional director, has pretty much taken over the school - and (looking at DG) we must say is doing an outstanding job. Mr. Glasgow and I are thinking that we may transfer in, on a temporary basis, Glen Leister, the senior Vice-Principal from Uniondale High School, to serve as Acting Principal until George McCauley recovers. We spoke to Tom Merrick, Ward 3's commissioner, after which we consulted with Uniondale's Principal Joan Rosalind. She thought it was an excellent idea. She'll appoint a senior teacher to serve as an acting V.P. until everything gets settled.

"Now Revett's another story. We are in very bad shape there. The teacher's union will not budge on its harassment charges against its Principal and two senior teachers. Morale is at such a low. I feel we should do something."

"Like what," demanded Ted Dowe. "This is my ward. I don't want you guys making unilateral decisions. Principal Kroosh has been an outstanding Principal for over 20 years and has kept Revett together for a long time. The parents and students support him. These two teachers are a bunch of female activist twits, they should be disciplined."

The DG replied, "Mr. Dowe, our legal department has been on this case from its inception. The investigation is not complete. The syndicate has clearly documented their case against all three. Unfortunately, the Principal does not fare too well. From what Peter Donat and I have discovered, it is clear that Kroosh, regardless of his administrative prowess, has been, for many years, rather nasty against his female teachers. We have to be careful on this one. The Principals' Association has not yet said a word of support. Traditionally, this means that they inherently believe the charges. The two teachers up on harassment charges I think will be, not necessarily vindicated, but more than likely reprimanded. Unfortunately for us, the press has had a field day on this one. For the benefit of the school we may have to temporarily remove Kroosh. The school is not functioning. The faculty has banded together against him. It's very much a work-to-rule response."

"What have you done to stop this ... insurrection, Mr. Glasgow?" attacked Kazankis.

"You should recall that section of the Collective Agreement. Classes have not stopped. Extra-curricular activities have ceased. This has had a very negative effect on the student body."

"Answer the question, what have you done to fix this? Have you threatened the teachers with punitive actions?" screamed Dowe. "I have parents telephoning my office every day demanding that SOMETHING BE DONE!"

"No, I have not. They are within their legal rights. Both Christian McFarley, Revett's Regional Director, and I have spoken to the faculty and the administrators to come to a working agreement. We have made some progress. Christian may take over the school on a temporary basis until he feels that one of the vice-principals could run the ship. They are both relatively new and inexperienced. We must be careful that we do not look as if we are taking a position for either group. We must put the students first. This is a critical time. The CEGEP marks must be in by March 1. Final term exams are coming up. We must insure that teachers will not jeopardize extra study and review sessions. There is a basketball season midway through, the regional science fairs as well, and so on. I do not want a repeat of what happened last year during the teacher contract talks - you recall. If it means moving a principal around for a month or two to get these kids through, than that's what I WILL DO as the Commission's executive officer after consultation with all concerned parties."

Silence.

The President spoke. "I think it's been covered. What about the rest of the principals - what does it look like for next year?"

DeDroty took out his notes. "Well, along with our current dilemma, next year sees very little movement in the elementary sector, but in the secondary, two of our new principals are not faring well. Two are retiring, one is going to the private sector, one has a heart condition and another under investigation. Three Vice-Principals are retiring. There will definitely be movement. Very few experienced principals want to move into the more troublesome high schools. Frankly, The Principal's Association is very concerned. Their greatest worry seems to have come home to roost."

"And what is that?" asked Kazankis.

"That the system is collapsing," replied the DDG.

"That's ridiculous," responded Dowe.

"No, it's not," quietly spoke Phearson. "If I may say a few words."

"Go ahead," responded the President.

"Thank you Mr. President, if you all recall - except for Mr. Glasgow who was not here three years ago - against the judgment of the Principal's Association and a minority of commissioners, including myself, the Board of Commissioners cancelled a principals' training course which was designed to prepare candidates to enter the administration ranks. Mr. Donat, Director of Personnel, created the training course with the blessings of many. Unfortunately, two years ago, to what can be best described as political power trip by some commissioners the



program was stopped. So here we are now some three years down the line with a great need for administrators with none in the ranks.

"Oh come on, Phearson, aren't you exaggerating this a bit?" asked Kazankis.

"Not in the least, since you were the one who led to its dismantlement."

"It was an expensive program, and the money was needed else where"

"That's not true and you know it. Let's not argue the point. That's moot. Right now, we need almost a dozen administrators and we need some of them now."

The meeting ended shortly thereafter. But the animosity was clear. Phearson had never gotten along with Kazankis and his followers. Phearson was one of the last remaining commissioners who believed that the Board's reason for existence was to serve the children, not the commissioners. This was Phearson's last mandate on the Board. His children were now out of the system: he had remained on the Board for the transition to Glasgow's first few years. He had spent 12 years on the Board and had seen it through a number of crises. But, he no longer had the strength or the time to fight Kazankis, Donat and their patsy Peterson, the President. An honorable person, he believed until his mandate was finished, he'd fight for what he felt was right.

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The next week, Glasgow, Donat and McFarley completed their investigation of the Revett incident. They concluded that Kroosh used inappropriate behavior not only for this incident, but also for a number of incidents that had come to light over a many-year period. After deliberation and consultation with a legal counsel, the recommendation was that Kroosh be removed from the position for the remainder of the school year. It was also suggested that Kroosh participate in some behavior modification in order to be eligible to serve as an administrator in some capacity for the following year. He would come and be given some type of special project at the Board Head Office without loss of pay.

To the teacher's syndicate, Principals' Association and the parent body of Revett, this was acceptable. The meeting with Kroosh was not easy, but as a true professional, he reluctantly accepted the decision and agreed to all the terms. On his own, he clearly stated he would formally and publicly apologize to the involved teachers as well as the Revett School community at the appropriate opportunities. During the hearings, he received virtually no support from any teacher, administrator or parent group. It was only Dowe that showed support. Kroosh was taken aback by the process and the lack of support. The investigation was incredibly thorough. With Donat put in charge of the investigation instead of DeDroty, it insured a degree of integrity. DeDroty had been visibly annoyed when Glasgow informed him. Such investigations historically came under the jurisdiction of the DDG. Glasgow politely informed DeDroty that the union threatened a "work to rule" order for the entire secondary system if DeDroty were to be put in charge. Everyone knew that DeDroty was in some commissioners' back pockets.

The ruling triumphate, Kazankis, Dowe and Petersen, had a collective fit. They called an emergency Board meeting to discuss the matter. They wanted Kroosh to stay and believed that the ruling was making a scapegoat out of a long time and dedicated principal. They mustered some support from their following. Glasgow held his own. After being attacked mercilessly, he quietly took the floor.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he began quietly, "thank you for your views. I have only a few words to make on behalf of our ruling regardless of your 'legal threats' towards both my staff and me. First, the running of all matters concerning the management of personnel come under the jurisdiction of my office as stated by Board policy and my contract. Therefore, you cannot, without a nasty legal challenge in this matter, touch this incident. All due process protocols were followed upon agreement of all involved parties, all unions and associations. The ruling was discussed and prepared by our legal department. You were all made aware of the proceedings. There was nothing hidden as was done in previous investigations. All parties agreed to the final decision. The matter is closed."

"Second, we have averted not one, but two major legal 'work to rule' incidents that, if they had occurred, would have been a public relations nightmare. If you decide to take this any further, you are tempting fate. And rest assured, at the next school board elections, the teachers' unions will make sure the third of you who will be running for re-election in June who do not support this position, will be targeted. It will be very, very messy. Please, for the sake of the Commission, accept this decision."

No one spoke for a few minutes. Kazankis realized they had lost. The resolution to reverse the ruling was dropped.

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Even with the Kroosh affair on its way to resolution, the need for good principals was still the issue of the hour. Even with creating two "acting" principals as a temporary measure for the crises at Revett and Vaughn High Schools, the reality remained of finding three new principals to replace the retirees, supporting two weak principals and a possible temporary principal to sit-in for Kroosh, and a number of new Vice-Principals. And there was always DeDroty lurking behind everything. DeDroty - there must be a way to get rid of him, pondered Glasgow. The DDG's office, with the personnel office, generated the administrator candidate lists. Due to these last few events, it was clear that DeDroty and Donat were not going to work together on anything. It was time to find a way to ease him out, but how? DeDroty was now clearly a major liability to the Commission. He had to go. He had a tenured senior position. He had covered his tracks extremely well. An alternative solution was required - a buy-out.

He picked up the telephone and made two phone calls. The first was to his newly appointed Director of finance. "Hi Bill, its Doug ... yeah, I know it was a sweet victory, but I'm sure it will be short lived. Listen, on the QT... get me everything you have on DeDroty - true or by innuendo... no, it's not an investigation, per se, However, I want to see if we can strike a deal with him for an early retirement or a permanent leave of absence with some type of buy-out ... that's right ... yes, some dirt could be useful as a negotiation tool."

The second telephone call went to his personal legal counsel. He asked him to search for legal ways to strongly suggest DeDroty to leave. Glasgow also called Donat, informed him of the "project" and asked him to assist the legal counsel in any way possible. Donat happily agreed.

With that under way, the DG began to assess the entire issue of principal and vice-principal selection. He decided to make it an agenda item for the next senior staff meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Vaughn High School's Principal's office, Regional Director Donna Deglee was meeting with the school's two young Vice-Principals, Tom Schein and Sheila Cunningham, and the Acting Principal Glen Leister.

"So, this you're the team," began Donna. "I am sure the three of you will work extremely well together. Even though I've worked with all of you in different capacities, it is extremely critical that regardless of differences you may have between you on issues, to the students, teachers and parents you must be a united team. George's heart attack was a terrible event. I speak to George often. He's on medical leave for the remainder of the year. It was a serious attack. He'll need bypass surgery and he'll be out for a while. Our task here is several-fold. Foremost, is for you (to Tom and Sheila) to give, show and promote support for Glen."

"Be rest assured, Donna, we are very happy that Glen is here. There are just too many things that we don't know how to handle. There is no ego lost here, just relief," said Tom.

"I understand," continued Sheila. "Glen, We want you to know, that both Tom and I are 100% behind you. We are not silly enough to believe that either of us alone can run this school. Yes, we are young and ambitious, but we are not stupid. It is to everyone's benefit that we make Vaughn a successful school."

"Thank you very much," courteously replied Glen. "I am very excited about being here and am very grateful that Donna has confidence in me and that the Vaughn faculty did not question this assignment. It is critical that we all unite in the common cause. I am counting on your support. We are a team. You folks are going to give a crash course on this place and very quickly."

"Great," said Donna. "Now to work. Here's how I see it. Glen has to establish himself as the leader of the school, especially with the students immediately. Some type of 'meeting the Principal' activities need to be immediately scheduled. We know some students will test the system immediately, so be prepared."

"How does this sound," said Glen. "First, I want to speak to each grade level by itself first before we have a large assembly. I want to meet with all the student leaders as soon as possible. I want to have an open-door policy. However I'm realistic on the reality of that. I would like the graduating class to take the initiative to make the remainder of this year great for the entire school. Second, from what you've told me, there is this feeling that everyone is exhausted dealing with the decline in student attitude and grades. The staff has just accepted it as the status quo. My question, is, is it all because of George's heart condition?"

Tom replied, "It's part of it but not all of it. We've had a few major behavioral challenges. Just before George had his heart attack, we had a minor racial rumble in the locker room. It was more than the usual fight. It was an intra-racial black situation - Jamaican black against Haitian black. And then the Greeks stepped in. It was a bit messy. Thankfully there was no weapons."

"However," interrupted Sheila, "in the scuffle, several lockers were damaged. After the police arrived, the cleanup revealed a number of knives, two handguns, and enough illegal drugs to pay off the provincial debt. We were in a bind. George wanted to have a witch-hunt. The parents' committee was split. The faculty, after hearing about the guns, freaked. The kids were scared. No one walked alone in the school. Then, George had the heart attack."

Tom continued. "After Donna called us about the heart attack, panic almost took over. Sheila and I tried to keep the kids under control while Donna came in to keep the school together administratively. The second semester timetable, my first timetable, was having problems, the CEGEP marks had to go in soon ... need I go on? The department heads were very supportive at first, but after about two weeks, were getting sort of angry, because many decisions had to be made and frankly we didn't know what to do. Donna would come in either at the beginning or the end of the day to fix any damage that had happened during the day or to keep the wolves at bay."

"So," asked Glen, "what's the current status?"

Sheila began "The race war truce has been contained to a point. We've had the guidance counselors act as peacekeepers. It has worked to some extent within the school. Unfortunately outside the school there have been as number of fights. Parents are very concerned."

"Do we know who the ring leaders are?" asked Glen.

"Absolutely," replied Sheila.

"OK then, Tom, I want you to schedule a meeting between the leaders of all the factions in my office as soon as possible. Include in the meeting the student council president and any other student leader of worth. But no more than eight students total. Let's see if we can get this nipped before it gets out of hand and dangerous. What's with the faculty?"

"In terms of what?" asked Sheila.

"Anything and everything."

"Well," began Sheila, "most of them think that we're a bunch of toothless twits. Whether it's because we're young, inexperienced or whatever, we are perceived as ineffectual. There are some of the more senior department heads who feel that we should suspend everyone who coughs the wrong way. From the academic side, there are some who feel we created a lopsided timetable favoring certain subject areas over others."

"Did you?"

"Yes and no. The CEGEPS and the Ministry made new demands on us this year. Our school population base is very mixed with ESL, CEGEP, and technical vo-tech entry requirement needs for students. In order to get all the courses in we had to limit enrollment in some while attempting to balance the language needs. Many of the students do not have the language skills to get through the science courses. We found this out first term. The science marks were abysmal. Donna tried to get us some additional ESL teachers. The Board wouldn't budge. Glasgow was successful in transferring some teachers midway through the first term in and out of the school with Midway High School for this second term. We were working on the timetable to permit the weakest ESL students who were taking the science courses to have extra English. Unfortunately, these students had to give something up in exchange. It could not be math, because they needed the math for the science courses, It ended up in being a toss-up between the arts and French in grade 9, history in grade 10 and phys ed in grade 11. During November, we introduced these changes at the department head level first. Well, the science department loved it and the English department loved it because it got the weaker ESL kids out of the normal stream and the more advanced-lit stream. The French department had a fit. We were expecting that. Music and art

have been so decimated in the past few years they just accepted it - it is too bad. But the programs are deemed useless anyway by the commission except in one or two schools."

"So where is the problem with the faculty?"

"The problem was that on paper, it sort of worked theoretically. When we ran the class lists, we could not achieve a class size balance. We kept thinking we could fix the problems. Unfortunately, none of us could. Even George couldn't fix it. But we were too late to develop another timetable. George was virtually on the phone to Donna asking for help when he had his heart attack. With everything else collapsing around us, we had to go with the timetable with all its problems."

Donna interjected. "With all due respect, it is not half as bad as they are saying, Glen. When George showed me the timetable, we discussed some modifications which I put into effect when I began coming in. It helped a little, but not enough to quiet the teachers."

"So, we have a few challenges in front of us, I see. Well, after lunch explain to me the timetable, Tom, so I can at least keep the wolves at bay." The bell rang. Both Tom and Shelagh excused themselves to go and take care of homeroom and attendance. They returned in 20 minutes to continue the meeting.

Donna and Glen continued to discuss the change in administration. Donna began. "Glen, I know I asked you to take over this school in a crisis. Do you have second thoughts?"

"No, the challenge is tough and I appreciate your trust in me. My only concern is that the senior staff is probably going to say that since I'm not a seasoned Principal, it's simply adding fuel to a forest fire."

"Glen, you're up for a principalship anyway. You have many, many years in the trenches. If it weren't for the way the hiring went three years back to hire more visible minorities you'd already be a principal. You're better as a vice-principal than many existing principals in their posts. Don't worry, you'll be fine. I'll be checking with you every day. You have both my, and Glasgow's support 100%. Don't forget, he made the announcement to the staff here on your behalf last week and made it crystal clear to all that you were 'in charge' and no one was to get in your way. He's on your side. And as far as Tom and Sheila go, they're young and they are smart. Support them and nourish them. Some teachers have treated them very unfairly here. It's been hard for them. I met personally with most of the shit kickers here on the faculty and demanded that they stop harassing them. How far it will go? I don't know. But, we can still demand transfers for next year if we have to for those who don't play along."

"I hope that will be only a last-effort need."

"So do I. So do I."

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DeDroty sat nervously in Glasgow's office not knowing what to expect. It had been a very long time since he had been invited in for a meeting alone. He was no friend or ally. In fact, DeDroty had very few friends left in the commission or on the board. He was obsolete, just putting in time until retirement or something else.

Glasgow entered and said, "Donald, let's not mince words. I can't stand you and you can't stand me. Be that as it may, the Commission needs four new principals and at least three, if not five, new Vice-Principals, very soon. We have to work together on this one."

"What do you want?"

"I want you to do your job."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Since I took this job, you've done virtually everything to undermine this office. Either consciously or not, and I really don't care which, you've been manipulating the powers of your office for a number of years more for your personal gain than that for the commission. You may have many friends in, shall we say, high places. You have also made many enemies. Many, who would like to see you fry."

"Your point?"

"Regardless of this, it is your responsibility to oversee the candidate list for prospective principals and vice-principals. I want a list within a month. I want you to work with Peter following all commission selection protocols and create a list. Have interviews, keep notes, etc., etc."

"Why don't you just have Donat do it alone since you don't trust me?"

"You're right about that, I don't trust you. However, Donat is extremely busy reorganizing the personnel department and preparing the schoolteacher cadres for next year. You know the wards and their commissioners better than anyone does. I want you to make the best short list possible."

"I don't understand you. It seems as if you're challenging me."

"I am in a sense, but not how you think. All I am asking you to do is do your job, work with the Regional Directors and Donat and generate a list of candidates."

"Without sounding too crass, why should I be so 'trustworthy'?"

"One, I don't have the time, and two, you're too close to retirement to put it in jeopardy."

"Is that a threat?"

"Not at all. We are going to go through a major front office reorganization - to save money and be more efficient. If you do not want your office and position to become even more redundant than you have already made it, I suggest you do this well."

"I do take this as a threat. I'll be informing my lawyers. If you do threaten me, I'll see you in court."

"I'd be very careful what and how you speak to me, Donald. No one and no position is sacrosanct in this commission. I know the law, the collective agreements much better than you

do. I suggest that you not become too ... aggressive. If it comes to that type of confrontation, you will lose everything and more. Kazankis will not help you. He is too selfish and ruthless."

"How bad do you want me out?"

"I'll be quite frank, tomorrow would not be soon enough."

"What I meant was, how far is your office willing to go to get rid of me?"

"Are you suggesting something?"

"...I'll consider some options and get back to you."

"That's your call. In the meantime, I request that you perform your duties as well as possible and fulfill all your professional obligations as your mandate outlines. That will be all."

DeDroty left the office. Glasgow, in one sense, felt relieved. By confronting DeDroty, the cards and terms were laid out. The next move was DeDroty's.

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After a careful reading of DeDroty's contract, the labor code, precedents and similar situations in other Boards, Glasgow's counsel determined that with two years eligibility before full retirement for DeDroty, he was within range of a buy-out. The MEQ was encouraging early retirements; this was definitely a good carrot. If DeDroty was smart enough, and no doubt he was, he could retire from the Board and get another position somewhere else in the country where he was not known and earn an additional income. He would not want to destroy that opportunity by huffing and puffing too loudly. He might be a scum ball but he was not stupid.

\* \* \* \* \*

At 1:30, the meeting began in the conference room. All were present. It had been a while since all six Regional Directors and the complete executive sat in the same room. Most were somewhat disconcerted. There was a strange feeling the room. Glasgow began the meeting. "Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for clearing your desks for this meeting. I have spoken to you all individually regarding our current dilemma concerning our diminishing Principal cadre. At this point in time we must consider this as a crisis. Glen Leister has taken over Vaughn School. He will probably stay on. The prognosis for George McCauley is not good. He has been scheduled for by-pass surgery. He will be out for the remainder of the school year. Glen will certainly be a principal next year somewhere. So that's one. Christian, what's the current status at Revett with Kroosh out?"

Christian began. "Things have calmed down to some extent. I have been working with the two Vice-Principals, Manon Larin and Robert Cathay. I think they can handle things for the moment. Manon's been a long time teacher, department head and worked in head office for a while. Robert is a good workhorse. I would suggest that we appoint Manon as Acting Principal and have them choose a senior teacher to serve as Acting Vice-Principal for the remainder of the year."

"Christian," said Harley Parks, Region 1 Director, "Manon was a VP with me for two years, she's quite good. I suggest we keep her in mind for a Principalship for next year. She deserves it. This Revett experience will have been very good for her."

"Thanks Harley, OK that's two. now we definitely need at least two more. Has anyone received any requests for transfers?" A pause. "Well then, that leaves everything open, doesn't it?"

"Doug," said Lesley Smiths, Region 3 Director. "I have some serious concerns about one of my Principals, Julio Ortega of Ballston High. He is really having a very difficult time. He gets nothing in on time and vandalism is up 26% over last year - which is up from the previous year. The VP's in that schools are not strong either. I've received countless phone calls from parents and Ward Commissioner Thompson. My own contacts in the school corroborate these concerns. I have been working quite hard with all three of them, but I truly feel they just don't have it for that school. The end of term, grades 10 and 11 marks dropped 15% overall from first mid-term. It usually goes the other way. I'm really spending too much time in that school. Ortega's a very nice and dedicated person. Unfortunately, he's in over his head."

Lesley Smiths continued, "I have much the same problem with Louis Coswell at Railway Station High. He's just as inexperienced, but what's worse, he believes he's being targeted from both major racial groups of the school."

"What do you mean?" asked Donna.

"As you know, Coswell is black. The school is about 30% Asian, 40% Jamaican Black and 30% everything else. It's a working-class first and second-generation immigrant student body. Everyone is defensive about everything. There are lots of violent acts and broken homes which is unfortunately typical of this part of town. When Coswell sides with the non-blacks, he's referred to as 'anti-brother' by the black students. When he sides with the blacks, he's attacked for 'favoritism.' He's caught. He doesn't have it. He has a heart of gold. He cannot take strong stands. I understand his position. When I was first a VP, I had similar challenges being a black administrator in a multicultural school. But I can only hold his hand so long. I have another concern, and I'm sure it's just simple paranoia on my part, but if really blows this position. It may set back a lot of things race-wise in the school and in the ranks, I mean."

Glasgow responded, "That's two weak principals and they are both the picks of the Board if you recall. To remove them at this point could cause a bit of consternation with the Commissioners. It would also mean finding an additional two Principals ... suggestions?"

After a few moments, DeDroty said, "you know, there may be a way around this. If we took, let's say, Greenfield out of Islip Middle School and made him a high school principal somewhere, and put Kroosh in his place - that would leave us one spot to fill. We do have a number of middle range of VP's who could move up to Principal for the rest. There may also be some elementary principals who may be interested in moving up. If some applied, we could conceivably move them into the more stable high schools and those existing principals over to the more challenging schools."

"Not a bad thought," remarked Smiths. "The only hang-up with that is that most principals will not move without a bit of coercion, especially to replace Ortega or Coswell. And what about them? If we move those guys out, what do we do with them without embarrassing them and getting both Kazankis and Dowe on our backs?"

DeDroty continued. "This is true, Les, however, there may be some alternative positions here at the head office. For example, let's say we created a special project for multi-cultural and



multi-racial secondary school integration and put either one of them in charge of it. There is some grant and special projects funding available - at least for one year."

Harley continued. "A good idea, but most people would see this as being buried in the board, you know taking care of our own. It's politically dicey."

Donna said, "on the other hand, we do have some elementary schools with high multi-racial populations. Maybe we could help them along by putting them at the elementary level. In that way they would remain principals, but at a softer level. The only catch would be the transfer situation of the existing principals."

Glasgow continued. "Yes Donna, it's an additional option. That also means we'll need a few more new vice-principals. However, there are always many candidates for these positions. Now let's get this thing on the road. I would appreciate if you get the word out to your principals regarding the situation. Let's see if we get some names. I would also ask that you all examine your vice-principals and make some projections on who might be ready for a promotion. Also probe some of the principals a bit more - 'for the sake of the Board' might some consider transferring to another school. Peter will make the official announcements and make sure that all staff-rooms post the proper selection protocol and such. Donald and I will explore the multi-cultural project thing. That's about it for now. Thank you very much."

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It was a few days later when Peter was having lunch in the cafeteria at the Board Offices when Marilyn Berger, Board consultant for the teaching of English.

"Peter, may I sit?" she asked.

"Of course," Peter said.

"Could we talk shop a bit, unofficially?"

"Certainly. What's up?"

"Well, the word's out that Glasgow is pushing DeDroty to leave. Any truth to the rumor?"

"Couldn't tell you. We all know those two don't get along."

"Oh, c'mon Peter, it's more than that. You and Glasgow get along. He must have told you something."

"I'm sure he would not lose any sleep if DeDroty left. Anyway, why do you want to know?"

"Well, to be frank, if DeDroty leaves that will create a big opening at the top. There has not been movement in the DDG's office for a long time. The ladder would definitely see changes on the rungs."

"Let's not be coy, Marilyn. What do you want?"

"If Dedroty goes, is there anyone on the inside? A first choice to take the job?"

"Well, I don't know. There is no set person. DeDroty has been there a long time. The Board of Commissioners would have the final say on any candidate anyway. Are you interested in the job?"

"No, not at all. However, I would be interested in moving up from my present position as consultant in some way. The writing is on the wall. These consultant positions will not be around much longer with cutbacks and re-structuring and such. I'm just looking towards my future."

"Well, at the moment, all we know is that there are many positions for both principals and vice-principals. Apply for one of them if you think you can cut it. As far as I can see, that is the only place for movement at this time."

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It was about 8-p m and pressure time for the Board of Commissioners. The rift between them and Glasgow was taking on a high profile. This was not helping some of the incumbent Commissioners who were deciding whether or not to run for re-election. Kazankis and Dowe were having a drink in a tavern close to the Commission offices. In front of them were the lists of incumbent commissioners and those who had definitely decided to step down.

Kazankis began. "Ted, I think we should really make a move to shore up our majority on the Board. I think it's also time for Peterson to step down as President."

"He is a senile 'ole ass, however, he serves his function well. I don't think there is anyone we could manipulate so easily within the existing members."

"This is true. It looks like our boy DeDroty is going to go. He has lost too many battles with Glasgow. He is no use to us at this point. He telephoned me the other night wanting to know if he retired, would we give him a bonus on his retirement package."

"Can we do that? I thought that was all controlled by the Government."

"Yes and no. My accountants seem to think that if we got him to go out on a medical release or be fired - forced to resign, we could create a severance package."

"Is that legal?"

"It sort of depends on how you look at it, But I'm sure Glasgow will be happy to see him go at any rate. But for now, we need a bit more control on the Board. Peterson should go. It's just that we have to figure a way to convince him to go. He just feels that he is so needed."

"Well he does have emphysema and it's not getting better. We'd have to really scare the shit out of him for him to consider not to run again."

"We just have to find a candidate that appeals to his constituency more than Peterson does."

"I know you have someone in mind, otherwise you wouldn't suggest it. OK, who is it?"

"Geraldo Guerrero."

"Why does that name ring a bell?"

"You see his landscaping trucks everywhere in town. And he has been living in Peterson's ward for the past four years and has three kids in the system. He owes me a few favors I owe him a few. He's a perfect candidate - early forties, successful second-generation family businessman. Stubborn, religious and very involved in the Hispanic community. It would be difficult for Peterson to win an election against him. Peterson does not have the bucks to mount a campaign."

"So, if Peterson goes as will DeDroty, who takes over at the Board?"

"I become President, you become Vice-President or stay treasurer - your call. We could always go with Thompson in as Treasurer. He's safe and has usually sided with us on most issues."

"True. What about Glasgow?"

"He's pretty untouchable. As he packs in the board offices with his people, we'll have to stack the Commissioners with ours."

"Sounds fair to me."

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A week has passed. DeDroty is in Glasgow's office with his lawyer and the Board's legal counsel, Philip Reynolds.

Doug, this is Mr. Andrew Laidly, my attorney. I've asked him to accompany me to this meeting this morning with you - more to clarify my words and ideas - in case I am not clear."

"Yes. Mr. Laidley, this is Mr. Philip Reynolds, our head legal counselor. As I'm sure Donald has informed you, under any such meeting with a legal counselor which may lead to litigation, we are obliged to have our counsel present."

Laidly replied. "Perfectly understandable. Allow me to proceed. For the moment I will speak for Mr. DeDroty. First of all, since there have been no threats against my client, we are not here demanding any kind of "justice." We are here to discuss a possible compensation package so my client can leave the Board with full pension benefits and an unblemished service record."

Reynolds replied, "Let me understand you correctly. You are offering us an avenue to release Mr. DeDroty from his duties. What makes you think there would be any problem with that?"

"Let us just say, and everyone knows this, that it is just a matter of time before Glasgow will request, and probably heavy handedly, my client's resignation."

"What leads you to that conclusion?" asked Reynolds.

"Everyone in this building and at the Commissioner level is, shall we say, acquainted with your ... unpleasant feeling towards Mr. DeDroty. Your arguments with my client have reached a point where neither one of you can stand each other being in the same room. You have

virtually pushed him aside from his responsibilities - putting them either on hold or in someone else's office. You have made him feel rather useless, and his office rather marginal. After one and one half years in your position, you have stripped him. It is clear that you would rather see him somewhere permanently outside of this building. Rather than get into a nasty forced resignation that would be messy for everyone, we were hoping to work out a compromise so my client can leave the board and pursue other administration positions without compromising those possibilities and his pension. He has two full years remaining in his contract with the board. We are asking you to consider a severance package of 14 months salary, full medical benefits until his normal retirement and that you pay into his pension plan until his normal retirement 14 months hence. If you accept, my client will resign his position immediately, and virtually take a leave of absence. We feel this is within his seniority position and that he has faithfully been employed in this Board for 32 years."

Reynolds was quiet for a few moments and then said, "There are several areas of your proposal that must be looked into for legal purposes. This is a very large compensation package, especially since there has been no official indication that Mr. Glasgow would initiate some sort of firing. Secondly, when the Commission has negotiated similar such an agreement, the settlement has not been so high."

"Let us just say, if and when my client is released from his services, if it is under a cloud, there are many people at the Commission who would rather not get into a messy loud and embarrassing situation."

"Some might call this blackmail."

"And others might call this preventative medicine ... for the Board."

"You realize that the Board may not be in a position to pay such a high price, considering all the fiscal cutbacks."

"I'm sure that among the brains here, an arrangement could be found."

"Perhaps so, but this still must be approved by the Board Commissioners."

"Do what you must."

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