Review Symposium

Leaders and Leadership in Education, by Helen Gunter. London:
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Reviews by Dean Fink, Alma Harris, Michael Strain and Robert
Archer.
Response by Helen Gunter.

I began Helen Gunter's book *Leaders and Leadership in Education* with high expectations. I enjoyed and learned from her previous book *Rethinking Education: The Consequences of Jurassic Management* (1997), in which she employed chaos theory as a window on contemporary educational issues. Her use of metaphor and analogy in that book provided useful conceptual images. Her term 'management by ringbinder' to describe many contemporary management texts has become part of my own lexicon (attributed of course). Her present book is a breathtaking survey of contemporary management and leadership literature, particularly British. For scholars and students it provides an ideal resource to discover 'what's out there'. The bibliography alone is worth the price of the book. In general I am sympathetic to her line of argument that suggests that 'What we need is less emphasis on restructuring hierarchical leadership and more courage to enable teachers and students with managers to work and develop learning processes and the contextual settings in which they are located' (p. 138). Similarly I am 'on the same wave length' when it comes to her concerns about the imposition of the 'new orthodoxy' (Hargreaves et al., 2001) of standards, targets, standardization, testing, inspections and their attendant 'naming, shaming, blaming of teachers and educators' (Fink, 2000). At the same time as I found myself nodding approvingly, I became increasingly uneasy with her tone and critique of ideas and by implication people that I value and admire. The strength of the book is her willingness to ask tough questions, a key leadership skill that seems to be disappearing; at the same time she seems to be in a rush to pass judgement on past leadership research and practices, a leadership quality all-too-prevalent in our hurried society.

   Just as Dr Gunter reveals the 'meanings and significations' that shape her orientation to this area of study and practice (p. 3), I should 'come clean' as to the sources of my unease before I address the strengths of the book. I am a 'chronologically challenged' male who spent 30 of his 34 years in leadership positions in state-supported education. I include this demographic information because I get the distinct feeling that, to Dr Gunter, people of my age and gender have been and continue to be the barriers to her image of 'democratic' leadership. Over the years, I have served in various leadership

roles, ranging from department head in a secondary school through secondary school headship to inspector and finally to a senior leadership position in a Canadian LEA. I came to academic life only 10 years ago as a participant in an effective-schools project in Ontario, Canada.

School effectiveness originated in the USA with the work of Ron Edmonds, a black man and at one time the vice chancellor of the New York school system. He argued that schools could raise the achievement levels of all students, especially black, inner-city students. He suggested that if we knew what made some schools effective for all students then educators could create more democratic schools. Unfortunately, in spite of researchers' best efforts, this equity argument got lost in the USA and elsewhere. Dr Gunter's concern seems to be that 'school effectiveness' has been subverted by the 'excellence' movement and misused by various governments, and therefore offers little to our understanding of the role of leadership in schools. While the 'subversion' is real, if we threw out everything that policy-makers misused, I suspect a lot of important policies and practices would be eliminated. Standardized testing, for example, is a good idea of an 'important practice' but most countries are presently experiencing a 'pathology of intensity' (Homer-Dixon, 2000) that has turned this useful tool into a vehicle that impedes student learning and subverts good teaching.

I first encountered school effectiveness though the work of Professor Peter Mortimore of the Institute of Education. When he spoke to us in Canada he stated that 'an effective school is one in which pupils progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake' (1991: 9)—once again the 'equity' argument. Using Dr Gunter's tendency to place people in bounded camps, I would proudly say I was and still am in the school effectiveness camp. It was after all people from the school effectiveness 'camp', particularly Professor Mortimore, who courageously stood up against the former chief inspector's rather 'fast and loose' notion of research at a time when few people would take that risk. School effectiveness is not a closed society, eschewing qualitative methods for purely 'technicist' approaches as is implied by Dr Gunter. Perhaps I am naïve, but the field is wide open to new ideas and approaches and very much rooted in its egalitarian origins. I would invite the reader to peruse the March 2001 edition of *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, the journal of the International Congress of School Effectiveness and School Improvement. In addition to a detailed rebuttal of Thrupp (2000), who Dr Gunter quotes as part of her critique of school effectiveness, this journal issue reveals a reflexive discipline struggling with its past and open to new directions and insights. Rather than a 'bounded' field, it has embraced people and insights from other disciplines and fields who ask very tough questions.

Like most fields of scholarly endeavours, school effectiveness has its limitations (Fink and Stoll, 1998). While school effectiveness has provided rich insights into 'what' makes schools effective for all students, it is of little help in determining 'how' to do so. It was this need to make connections between the 'what' and the 'how' that led to my involvement in the school improvement 'camp'. School faculties that seek to improve must think in terms of the whole school as learning communities that focus on all the students in their care, not reduce and focus on the school's various parts, like departments or the history or maths parts of students.

Unfortunately, Dr Gunter seems to narrow school improvement to structures such as site-based management and school development plans, rather than viewing it as a field of research and development that strives to understand change in complex organizations like

schools. Site-based management, for example, is one vehicle for school improvement, but certainly not the only one. It is, however, a useful idea if it is accompanied by sufficient resources, and significant control over the learning programme to make a real difference for pupils' learning. As Dr Gunter points out, 'site-based management' in the hands of neo-liberal governments has left schools vulnerable to top–down mandated changes that may or may not be useful in an individual school's context. Similarly, school development planning can be a useful structure for school improvement if the plan is a living, breathing, shared document (Stoll and Fink, 1996). If, as has happened, it becomes a ritualized activity with externally developed targets then it is just one more piece of 'paper' and relatively useless. Once again my concern with Dr Gunter's review of a 'field' is that it glosses over its real and potential contributions to educational leadership and dwells on some of its good ideas that have been implemented badly.

She adopts the same strategy to discount transformational leadership as a legitimate model of educational leadership. I like to think that for most of my career I was a transformational leader. I tried to bring people together and build collaborative teams and problem-solve together. Somehow, what I would have considered positives have to critics such as Dr Gunter become Machiavellian strategies to seduce unwilling teachers into adopting unpalatable practices. This assumes that the requirements of democratically elected governments are somehow illegitimate, and teachers are gullible victims and will submit to such duplicitous behaviour—this certainly does not reflect the teachers that I know. I suspect that there are lots of examples of people in leadership positions who have used transformational methods to force changes upon unwilling teachers but this is not transformational leadership, as I understand it, and certainly not what its proponents would support (Leithwood et al., 1999). In my view, such researchers have made and continue to make a significant contribution to our understanding of educational leadership, however, and this is where Dr Gunter and I begin to agree: transformational leadership tends to underestimate the complexity and non-rationality of contemporary educational leadership. School effectiveness, school improvement at least in its early incarnations, and transformational leadership all assume that leadership is a rational, neck-up, activity—that through developing better structures and 'best practice' strategies educators could guarantee superior educational outcomes. What is missing for the most part in these past efforts is a very clear sense of moral purpose—the 'why' of change. As Dr Gunter states: 'We need to exercise the professional courage to tell parents and the community what we do, how we do it and why we do it well, otherwise education will be mutated into a transmission and measuring process' (p. 140). She calls on educators to adopt what she calls 'radical professionality', that she defines as people who are 'experts in pedagogy and their particular subject discipline' (p. 147). I would add to her definition 'expertise in pupils' learning'— surely this is the raison d'etre of schools, the 'why' of change.

Mark Twain, the American humorist, is alleged to have said, 'When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years' (attributed by *Reader's Digest*, Sept. 1937, www.twainquotes.com). In my early years as an educator, I was convinced I had most of the answers; after 30 plus years I am more aware of the inadequacy of my 'answers' and more conscious of the importance of asking better questions. This is what Helen Gunter does with clarity and passion. She challenges the prevailing linear, 'transactional' model of leadership that governments have borrowed from business. Interestingly, successful businesses, especially those that

employ highly skilled and highly transient employees, long ago jettisoned such managerial leadership models in favour of more distributive models. Her chapters on the leadership roles of heads of departments and teachers fill a gap in the distributive leadership literature.

Her image of professional teachers operating in a democratic environment with a few formal leaders who distribute leadership activities throughout the staff is intriguing and hopeful but leaves me with some nagging questions. Who protects the pupils from the incompetent teacher? Our historical conspiracy of silence as educators and unions' support for marginal teachers has provided considerable ammunition for those who advocate turning the entire profession into semi-skilled trades-people who must be 'managed'. Are unions prepared to accept professional models for teachers? Are unions prepared to advocate for redefined roles for teachers? Are unions prepared to advocate for improved learning conditions for pupils? Since the author emphasizes a political lens to view educational leadership in schools, I would assume that her lack of comment on unions reflects the British scene. In Ontario, the role of unions in educational change and on educational leadership can be mentioned almost in the same breath as the role of government. The relationship of unions to educational leadership and educational change is a neglected area of study, but to my mind crucial to our understanding of the politics of education and schools.

Dr Gunter's discussion of micropolitics is a welcome inclusion in the development of educational leadership. Increasingly, as she points out, school heads and others in leadership positions must attend to the politics of education. Ball's (1987) germinal work on the topic has obviously influenced her views on the micropolitics of schools. There is no question that political issues have the potential to inhibit school improvement efforts and contribute to dysfunctional relationships. The reality is however, that micropolitics are normal in any human endeavour. People's interests and degrees of power will conflict. The challenge for leaders is to acquire the political acumen to promote 'positive politics' (Blase, 1998) through negotiation, coalitions and consensus-building.

What excites me about Dr Gunter's intellectual journey is that we share a vague idea of what the destination looks like in part because we know where we have been. For my own part, school effectiveness has helped to focus leadership studies on issues of equity, outcomes and how leaders affect what goes on in classrooms. These studies have also stressed the importance of having in place 'the basics'—order and discipline, seamless administrative procedures, a decent physical environment. School improvement studies have helped us to understand that successful leaders mobilize whole schools through some form of goal setting to pursue better learning experiences for pupils. These studies have shown how traditional structures like departments in secondary schools fragment the curriculum and how different kinds of cultures help or hinder improvement efforts (Hargreaves, 1994). Advocates of transformational leadership and its focus on inclusiveness in decision-making and problem-solving have helped us to recognize the need for leaders to be more democratic. These, like other schools of educational thought, continue to evolve and mutate. One need only read Michael Fullan's description of his personal intellectual journey (1999) towards greater understanding of educational change to see the shifts in the thinking of one of the acknowledged leaders of the school improvement field.

As I read *Leaders and Leadership in Education* I found myself asking the question, if these other models are so inadequate what does 'democratic' leadership look like? The answer to this question will, I hope, be the subject of Helen Gunter's next book. For what

it is worth, since I have tended to personalize these comments, let me offer some sugges-
tions. I think 'democratic' leadership will have to say a lot about moral purposes for
education and for schools. It will have to talk about learning, not only pupils' learning
but also teachers' and leaders' and community learning. It will have to build on what the
author has already said about including all stakeholders in decisions that affect them,
including pupils. I agree with her that we need to listen to voices other than teachers,
governors and influential parents, but in practical terms how is this done? Democratic
leadership will have to help leaders to recognize that much of schooling is non-rational,
that how people feel, remember, imagine and intuit play as large a role in the function-
ing of a school as do reason and rationality. Finally, the target audience should be both
policy-makers and policy implementers. Ignore Bourdieu's advice not to abandon the
'rigour of the technical vocabulary' in favour of 'easy and readable style' (p. 151). His
advice may work if the audience is fellow academics who understand exclusionary
language, but not terribly useful if the purpose is to advance the cause of more demo-
cratic leadership in real schools. This book should be written in a way that people in
Whitehall, County Hall and the village school can understand, share and learn (Fink,
2001). I will look forward to reading this next book because, like *Leaders and Leader-
ship in Education* and Dr Gunter's previous efforts, it will make me think, question,
reassess and understand educational leadership more deeply. Her incredible grasp of the
field and undeniable passion for the topic will I am sure make it a 'must-read' for
educational leaders.

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     for a New Research Agenda', *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 12(1): 7–40.

Leadership is back in fashion in education. Across many countries there has been a renewed
emphasis upon improving leadership capacity and capability in the drive towards higher
standards. Even though there are few certainties about the ability of educational policy to
secure higher performance from the educational system, the arguments for investment in
education remain powerful and compelling. While the education challenges are consider-
able and the route to reform is complex, the potential of leadership to influence pupil and
school performance remains indisputable. It has been consistently demonstrated that the
quality of leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers, the quality of
teaching and school effectiveness (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Sammons, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2001;
Silns and Mulford, 2002). Consequently, from a policy-maker's perspective, school leaders
are viewed as holding the key to resolving a number of the problems currently facing schools
and are seen as central in the pursuit of raised standards of educational performance.

    There is the real danger however that the leadership espoused and endorsed as part of
the contemporary political agenda is what Hartley (1998) describes as a 'modernistic
makeover'. This is where an attractive relabelling process occurs but the underlying values
and principles remain the same. This is why Gunter's book is particularly timely and
compelling. In standing on her 'metaphorical pavement', Gunter (p. 15) argues that there
is 'a preferred model of leadership in education that permeates texts and is the product of
laboratory science'. She argues 'this model is more about leadership in educational
settings than it is about educational leadership'. I agree with this analysis and her
contention that the prevailing models of leadership fail to reflect or represent the complex-
ity and non-rationality of leading schools in changing times (Harris et al., 2001).

    It would seem that there is a prevailing orthodoxy that underpins and constrains current
conceptions of leadership research and practice (Harris and Day, 2000). However, this
orthodoxy reflects leadership practice that I would not describe as inherently rational,
rather than as Gunter suggests 'transformational'. The increasing trend within education
is towards a controlling, rational and technical framework that ignores the complexity of
social interactions, focusing instead upon structures, content and delivery. As Sergiovanni
(2001: 9) notes, 'leadership is identified with solving problems and the purpose of leader-
ship is finding solutions'. In stark contrast, transformational leadership, if I understand it
correctly, is chiefly concerned with empowering and developing others. It is a form of
leadership that tries to help people to understand the problems they face (Leithwood et
al., 1999). Hence, I would suggest that the prevailing orthodoxy of leadership is predomi-
nantly managerialist in orientation, clustered around post or position and chiefly
concerned with outcomes rather than processes. Here leadership equates with certain
prescribed tasks and behaviours that can be developed and enhanced through instru-
mental training programmes. In this model leadership is simply a transferable commodity,
independent from social, political and professional influences.

Gunter argues for a radically different interpretation and conceptualization of leadership. Using Bourdieu's theory of practice and using the dynamics of power, she advocates that by engaging in dialogue and intellectual struggle it will be possible to work through some of the ideas, beliefs and values that define the leadership field. Her argument is for 'conceptually informed practice that embraces a radical professionality in which educational professionals are users and producers of leadership knowledge' (p. 15). This is a powerful treatise and one that is reflected in the work of Lambert et al. (1995: 11) who interpret leadership as the 'facilitation of constructivist reciprocal processes among participants in an educational community'.

Despite the 'Atlantic divide', the parallels between the work of these two leading writers are quite striking. Interestingly, Lambert et al.'s (1995) and Lambert's (1998) works are not cited in the book, which is surprising as both argue pretty forcefully that leadership knowledge production should be collaborative, shared and engage those who work in schools and other settings. Their work reflects and shares Freire's (1973) view that 'knowledge is built up in the relations between human beings' and that diversity is a fundamental complexity in relationships and perceptions. Bruner (1994: 3) reminds us that diversity grows with increased consciousness because its roots are in 'multiple frames, perspectives, interpretations and perceptions'. In *Leaders and Leadership in Education* the question of 'how can we best describe and explain the emerging field of educational leadership?' is located in a deeper question concerning the production and organization of knowledge premised upon diversity rather than uniformity, complexity rather than linearity.

In her book Gunter clearly delineates leadership as a social and political relationship from leadership as defined through particular tasks and behaviours. This distinction accords with the philosopher and sociologist Jurgen Habermas (1987) who suggests that all of society's enterprises possess both a *lifeworld* and a *systemworld*. In terms of leadership this distinction is best understood by taking the management designs, processes and protocols to be the *systemworld* and the unique relationships, understandings and meanings constructed in a particular social setting to be the *lifeworld*. In the view of Habermas, where there is a colonization of the lifeworld by the systemworld the results are detrimental to those working with and within the organization. When the systemworld dominates, goals, purposes, values and ideals are imposed on schoolteachers and students.

Surely this is Gunter's point? As the *systemworld* dominates, what counts is determined more narrowly by those outside the school than those within it. As Sergiovanni (2001: 7) argues, like 'the proverbial frog sitting in the soon-to be-boiling pot of water, colonisation happens gradually and goes largely unnoticed'. At its most rudimentary, therefore, *Leaders and Leadership* is a rather important wake-up call to those working in the field to reorientate leadership knowledge towards the *lifeworld* of the school. It is also an invitation to those working in the field to engage in a rather urgent debate about the way in which leadership is conceptualized, researched and theorized.

Contributing to this debate inevitably means exposing and exploring 'the knowledge positions and positioning' around the leadership field. It means engaging with the 'academic tribes, territories' and groupings that encroach upon contemporary interpretations and understandings of leadership. Hence, the leadership knowledge workers identified by Gunter as being influential upon the leadership field are predictably school effectiveness and improvement, education management and critical studies. The overview and critique of the various fields is succinct but detailed. While I agree with much of Gunter's analysis, there is a point where we, possibly inevitably, part company. In a rather

uncharacteristic sweeping statement she concludes that the school effectiveness and school improvement fields have been 'officially consecrated by current government policy in which the scientific epistemology of school effects and the processes of improvement have become integrated into the political goals of New Labour'.

While I concur that policy-makers have seized upon certain narrow and instrumental aspects of school effectiveness research for their own ends, this should not automatically damn or devalue the field. The academic frenzy of criticism that has recently focused upon school effectiveness, often without secure knowledge of the field, has been dismissive and pejorative. Most importantly, it has subtly undervalued the contribution of the research field to our understanding of how differences between schools affect student performance and achievement. This would seem foolishly myopic.

In terms of school improvement, I am less convinced that it has been subject to the same ideological hijacking and political fate as school effectiveness. First, school improvement operates in much less well-defined theoretical territory than school improvement. It lacks the tightly prescribed theoretical and methodological model that dominates the school effectiveness tradition (Harris and Bennett, 2001). Second, the field offers 'no quick fixes', which politicians clearly crave (Myers, 1996). Instead the literature is replete with models, approaches and processes that signal that sustainable school improvement is about deep-rooted cultural change (Harris, 2002a; Hopkins, 2001). Not only does this take time, energy and resources but it is premised upon a model of organizational change that is dynamic rather than rational, that is concerned with people rather than systems. Finally, there is no single school improvement model or approach that can match the developmental needs of all schools. The field is clear that differential strategies are required for schools in different circumstances and contexts (Hopkins and Harris, 2000). Consequently, the 'one size fits all' approach to school improvement is an option that any government embraces at some risk, so I would be interested to know which particular elements of school improvement now pave the way on the consecrated ground of government policy?

It will be clear by now that, like Helen Gunter, I too 'inhabit border territory'; I simultaneously do and do not belong to the leadership field. My intellectual allegiances and alliances also reside, in part, in the school improvement and school effectiveness traditions. In my view, both these research fields have contributed to a better understanding of why and how schools make a difference to student learning and achievement. Despite different theoretical, methodological and value positions, the fields have attempted to move towards a more synergistic relationship where their respective intellectual and research energies can be used for mutual advantage (Harris and Bennett, 2001). Furthermore, they have contributed to the leadership field by revealing the powerful impact of leadership on processes related to school effectiveness and improvement (Hopkins, 2001; Van Velzen et al., 1985; West et al., 2000). These would not seem to be insignificant findings for those concerned with leadership theory, development and practice.

In continuing her exploration of 'positioning within and between fields over theories of and about leadership' Gunter offers a very useful entrée into the value and values of educational research. A central focus of her investigation is the divergence between positivist epistemologies based on quantitative surveys and qualitative work based on situational portraits. Her view is that scientific approaches to research dominate the leadership field and that research that takes a more critical stance is steadily being marginalized. The laboratory epistemology that underpins leadership research, in

Gunter's view, 'remains strong'. A brief glance at the leadership literature would tend to confirm this position. There is a concentration upon the features, characteristics and behaviours of effective leaders, instead of in-depth contexualized accounts of practice from multiple perspectives. With certain exceptions (e.g. Day et al., 2000; Macbeath, 1998; Southworth, 1995) there is a limited number of contemporary studies that explore leadership from different stakeholder perspectives and take account of contextual influences.

The case to 'shift the emphasis away from the characteristics of leadership to the character of leaders' is convincingly made by Gunter. It is an irony of quite amazing proportions that those who research and write about leadership know so relatively little about the work and lives of those who occupy leadership positions. The dominance of research studies that reflect a rational and context-free interpretation of leadership is both perturbing and perplexing. I wholeheartedly share Gunter's view that we need greater headteacher and teacher participation in biographically and critically theorized work that speaks to educationalists. The real challenge is also to convince those that fund leadership research of this necessity and to redefine the boundaries of leadership to include the community, students and teachers.

The potency of Gunter's message in this book lies in its call for a radically different conceptualization of leadership that equates leadership with agency and relocates power with the many rather than the few. In her book, she cites Gronn (1996: 12) who emphasizes what he calls the 'barren models of followership'. It is his contention that far too much weight is given to the agency of leader and that 'leadership is seen as something performed by superior, better individuals (invariably aging white males) rather than groups, located in top positions, and as something done to or for other inferior, lesser people'. This powerful and, some might say, over-stereotyped statement points unequivocally towards a reconceptualizaton of leadership activity where leadership is distributed throughout the organization rather than concentrated upon certain individuals.

Gronn (2000: 333) suggests that 'distributed leadership is an idea whose time has come'. First, it implies a different power relationship within the school, where the distinctions between followers and leaders tend to blur. Second, it has implications for the division of labour within a school, particularly when the tasks facing the organization are shared more widely. Third, it opens up the possibility of all teachers becoming leaders at various times. It is this last dimension that links directly with Gunter's notion of conceptually informed practice and her view of leadership as a pedagogic relationship and activity. It links directly to recent research on teacher leadership as a form of distributed leadership practice (Harris, 2002b).

Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice is also particularly helpful in understanding how teacher leadership can be generated within schools. It suggests that individuals derive their understanding of their work from the community of practice within which they carry it out. The members of the community have a shared understanding of the work and individuals are drawn into it by a process of learning where the boundaries are that define the collection of tasks which make up the practice. Wenger (1998) suggests that individuals derive their identity from their membership of, and participation in, communities of practice. He suggests that 'communities of practice become resources for organising our learning as well as contexts in which to manifest our learning through an identity of participation' (Wenger, 1998: 273). Hence, a learning community involves multiple forms of membership and participation.

In the conclusion to her book Gunter discusses the concept of 'radical professionality' where teachers' voices are heard and represented, where they have their perspectives and work recognized. She views teachers and students as critical intellectuals in the generation of knowledge about leadership and, in her opinion, 'radical professionalism' requires radical collegiality, a form of learning community. As Wheatley (1992) suggests, 'we need a different pattern one in which we fully engage, evoking multiple meanings'. This simple but profound observation is at the heart of Gunter's book and points towards the urgent need to redefine leadership research and radically reconceptualize leadership practice. For this alone, Helen Gunter's book should be recognized and celebrated.

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Helen Gunter's latest book ranges, in 153 compact and highly readable pages, across a large and expansive territory. It is also a *contested* territory, in which *position*-holders seek to establish and protect claims about knowledge and knowledge production, within 'structures of privilege and power relations' that constitute their enabling and formative conditions. The book asks, 'Why leadership?' and 'Why now?' Abstract formulations such as efficiency and effectiveness, by which power-holders claim to express measures of effective performance by learners, teachers and schools, are shown to reflect the interests of those who 'govern' more convincingly than they can represent significant events in the lives of those who *engage* together to make knowing happen. Neo-liberal reform of governing bodies which has given them budgetary and staffing responsibilities, as part of making schools more responsive to parents, local employers and learners' real-life needs, is shown to be part, not of 'a democratising process, but of a niche marketing exercise, enabling business communities to select which schools to support' (p. 25). The contest engaging 'leaders' is for power and privilege, before it is a search for knowledge and enhancement of human lives. Gunter accordingly extends her questioning to ask: 'Is it *educational* leadership?'

These are very different questions from any to be found, for example, on the research and development web-page of the National College for School Leadership. Discussion there is of 'what works', 'capacity', 'impacts and their effectiveness', 'tools' and 'best practice' (http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageID=info). NCSL's language is that of instrumentality, force and purposes, an assembly of abstractions in a fashionable currency, denoting rationalizations of means to achieve unproblematized ends. Gunter by contrast invites readers from a variety of 'fields' (researching, theorizing, preparing, teaching and leading) to engage with her in a space of exploration, identification, and (re)valuation of leadership practices that 'take place' in educational settings. The spatial language and framework of discussion is for Gunter not metaphorical, still less is it just a stylistic device. It is a most apt and revealing mode for examining *relationships* as they are configured and sometimes altered through, and almost always formative of, engagements in the processes of learning and leading. These are generally ignored in the mainstream literature, 'labelled' school effectiveness and school improvement, which Gunter

herself reviews so pungently and perceptively in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. But the spatial perspective conveys a purpose to the analysis here, which recent work in social theory by Bauman (1998) reveals more starkly still. We may be experiencing, in the suppression of the spatial dimensions of leadership, what Bauman has called the *technological annulment* of the spatial in social life. He discerns an emerging society divided between 'tourists' and 'vagabonds', in which the sites of neighbourliness and sociality are being removed from localities. By creating such a society, stripped of the dialogic shared spaces in which Gunter's theorizers, professionals and others 'have and may position themselves, and be positioned by others', it becomes even more important to contest suppression,

> . . . seeking the spaces and places where intellectual work [an activity, as she makes clear, not confined to any particular group] can continue to thrive, at a time when the dominant model of effective and improving leadership seeks to totalise who we are and what we can do. (p. 48)

In Bauman's globalized world, 'tourists' have access to global information and communications systems—and thereby opportunity to *practise* curiosity and evaluation through discussion with 'neighbourly' others—but 'vagabonds', on the whole, do not; their access being more restricted to sites of pleasure, gratification, pure sensation and, frequently, manipulation, in the form of multimedia-based games and entertainments.

One of the pleasures of this important book is the directness with which the author, approaching a field of central concern to policy-makers, professional groups and parents, warns the readership of her subversive intentions.

> This chapter is about knowledge positions and positioning around leadership through a study of school effectiveness and school improvement, education management and critical studies. . . I present the trends and tendencies rather than objectify fixed and certain accounts. I am well aware of the dangers involved because the current anti-intellectual climate in education means that the dialogue I describe could be characterised as bickering. (p. 32)

'Bickering'—not a word commonly found in professional or political vocabularies! Yet we know that learning is mediated through systemic (linguistic, material and cultural) and personal relationships. In a fascinating study of US undergraduates taking business studies and science degrees, these spatial and systemic *relations* are shown to be influential in shaping learning outcomes (Nespor, 1994). And at the same time, 'a scientific epistemology of school effects and the processes of school improvement' has been 'officially consecrated' and 'integrated into the political goals of New Labour' (p. 36). Why, seemingly, do governments pursue models of learning and leading which are so deeply at variance with those developed conceptually, and supported empirically (if not conclusively—see Chapter 3), by research and professional communities? This question is a more explicit version of Gunter's earlier one, and one that latently shapes and drives her discussion throughout the book, concerning the specifically *educational* nature and implications of current leadership developments and authorized practices.

Here an obscurity of sorts presents itself. Market-led principles for devolving and

distributing powers of control and direction, hierarchical (Chapter 7) management structures, instrumental methods of design, assessment and evaluation of learning, may be shown to promote inequality, exclusiveness, privilege and injustice (Ball, 2000), and to conflict with widely shared democratizing aspirations (Ranson, 2000); but are they intrinsically and necessarily inimical to learning? Critique, in relation to such questions, abounds more richly than review of evidence, with reasons ranging from the epistemological and moral to the technical and historical. Gunter's own position is one that sometimes hides a little cryptically behind the 'map' of 'positions' that she has so deftly drawn.

> It seems that powerful deprofessionalising and reprofessionalising forces are working alongside each other, and in such ways that it may not be possible to distinguish them in abstract form though the impact can be seen through research that seeks to capture and theorise professional lived experiences. (p. 145)

Are these forces in fact different manifestations of the same, discernible trend towards the technicization of knowledge, manipulation of learners and subjects, and subordination of teachers to external, corporate control? The present government has shown that technicization and subordination to central control can be moved forward by other devices than the imposition of market conditions. Quality-led inspections and audits fitted to centrally defined 'standards', 'benchmarks' and targets, effectively drive 'players' into participation in the same 'games'. Is the notion of 'reprofessionalization' robust or sufficiently meaningful to become a principle around which to articulate forms of leadership which could be more 'educative' than those fashioned by the economistic and interest-led models they are intended to replace? The dialectic of opposing forces, decontextualized from the wider social setting within which new structures originate, seems to leave the reader a little lost; with a map in the hand but no compass by which to orient fresh insights.

In the next sentence, we are told:

> The implications for educational leadership are clear as the modernisation of teachers is about stripping away epistemological and subject discipline connections and replacing them with generic skills as the means by which the technology of transformation can take place. However, as we have seen, the evidence of an educative leadership habitus within teaching and learning is strong, and it does not sit easily with the reprofessionalising agenda of follower status for teachers and students.

A *sort* of map is visible, but not quite explicitly so. Which way are we being asked to look at it? Inculcation of generic skills is implicit in the NCSL strategy, and presumably an aspect of its lukewarmness to the perpetuation of earlier models of Headship initiation such as HEADLAMP (p. 87). It is less clear how 'epistemological and subject discipline connections' were not just as 'technologically' ordered as their replacements, or that they reflected power structures more benign than those now being attacked. Is transformation unacceptable because it is driven by a technicizing and technologically oriented apparatus of generic skills and e-learning?

I am uncertain also about the use sometimes made of Bourdieu's work in this context. 'Habitus' surely cannot itself be either educative or otherwise, at least in Bourdieu's sense. Its use here appears to be distinctly value-laden, elaborating a claim that a leadership culture is emerging which is opposed to any assumption of 'followership' by teachers.

Habitus here seems to mean 'culture'. For Bourdieu, 'habitus' is an abstraction, revealing its *form* through the actualizing preferences of individual agents. It arises in a field of relationships and differences among groups that reflect power differentials. Gunter draws upon Bourdieu's formulation of 'habitus' in a more recent paper (Gunter, 2002: 10) to explain very clearly how 'habitus disposes agents to do certain things'. Objective social conditions are internalized through socialization processes (structured structures) and, as dispositions discernible in the actions of agents in particular contexts, are revealed as 'structuring structures'. Habitus signifies these 'structured' and 'structuring structures'. But I remain doubtful whether Gunter's discursive and critical argument provides 'evidence of an educative leadership habitus within teaching and learning'.

This is probably the point at which to emphasize once again the book's critical and participative aims; and these are richly fulfilled. All those who work in the field are invited to join and respond to the intellectual work presented here, in ways that, when practice is critically engaged with intellect, the work of learning and organizing learning may be morally and practically enriched. This book is not about educational leadership as such, but about threats to the moral foundations, which have underpinned traditional beliefs concerning the nature and obligations of professionality. Gunter challenges the so-called 'core' concepts and practices of educational leadership, inviting the 'tribes' and 'territorial' stakeholders among knowledge workers to redefine, and radicalize, their understanding and practice of professionalism. She advocates 'an inclusive approach' which is opposed to 'managerialism' and the domination of narrowly performative values ('if it works') in the way the work of learning and learners is organized. Bourdieu's work in support of this mission has, for Gunter, been inspirational, and her goals are identifiably similar to those articulated so movingly, and explored so rigorously, in that author's *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (1999). There, three years of work by Bourdieu and a team of sociologists yields accounts of ordinary people talking about their lives and about the difficulties they face. Housing estates on the outskirts of large cities, urban slums and inner-city ghettos, the school, the workplace, the family, the world of the unemployed and the dispossessed, the world of those who are excluded from the rewards and privileges which are bestowed on others: these places, these 'third world' spaces in the 'first world', are revealed giving rise to their own forms of social suffering, to feelings of anger, hopelessness and failure, described by the individuals who experience them. This redemptive task, and the intellectual methods used there, lie at the heart of Gunter's challenge. Like Bourdieu, she is concerned to encourage and facilitate participants to be heard in their own voices, a new form of politics as well as an alternative mode for 'professionals' as they attempt to redefine roles amid the whirlwind of a rapidly technicizing and individualizing society. It is from this position that she calls for those involved in leadership studies 'to shift the emphasis away from the current policy imperative for *what works* to *what is it like to work* in education' (p. 151). I hope I have adequately shown that this book should be widely and thoughtfully read.

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Ranson, S. (2000) 'Recognizing the Pedagogy of Voice in a Learning Community', *Educational Management & Administration* 28(3): 145–59.

Helen Gunter's latest book is an important and timely contribution. Its clarity, breadth and rigour make it imperative core reading for all master's- and doctoral-level students not only in educational management but also in educational studies. For Gunter also delineates and critiques the different contributions made by education management, school effectiveness and school improvement and, crucially, underscores the need to theorize about the interplay between structure and agency. It is timely because we are now witnessing an unrelenting intensification of managerialism in education, and important because of its balanced and insightful critique of site-based performance management and associated conceptions of leadership. As Gunter notes, it is asserted that what we need (according to New Labour and others) is more leadership of educational institutions, with superheads being drafted in to turn 'failing' schools around. *Leaders and Leadership in Education* explores why leadership and why now? Moreover—and herein lies one of the real strengths of Gunter's critique—is it educational leadership?

Gunter's critique of decontexualized and asocial, or what Fiona Wilson (1999) refers to as 'sanitised', management models and 'theories' is neatly captured by her argument that

> . . . leadership is not an 'it' from which we can abstract behaviours and tasks, but is a relationship . . . Consequently, leadership is highly political and is a struggle within practice, theory and research. Furthermore, leadership is not located in job descriptions but in the professionality of working for teaching and learning. (p. vii)

It was a refreshing delight to read this at the very outset. As a lecturer in a School of Management, I have found only a minority of mainstream organizational behaviour texts that immediately debunk asocial, technicist and decontextualized models (not just of leadership), and thus, for me, Gunter's book has import not solely for students in departments of education. However, Chapter 1 'Challenging Leadership' argues quite properly that we need to theorize about structure agency in order investigate leaders and leadership. For Gunter, the conceptual tools needed effectively to trace through the interplay of structure and agency are provided by Bourdieu's theory of practice, drawing upon the mediating concepts of 'field' and 'habitus'. I concur that we must never eschew the (difficult) task of linking structure and agency. However, since I do not wish to detract from the overall strengths of Gunter's book, I address the 'problem of structure and agency' in the penultimate section of this review. Chapter 2 'Leadership and the Performing School'

presents and analyses the policy process that is sustaining a particular version of the school and the purposes of schooling. This involves a mandated model of leadership in educational institutions rather than encouraging the development of educational leadership. It is argued here that there are competing definitions of leadership and the one that dominates education policy promotes leadership as a universal prescription rather than a context-specific professional relationship. As Gunter neatly puts it, 'Leadership is a conduit through which individualising markets are installed in education, rather than a dialogic process located in civic democratic values connected with social justice and equity' (p. 17). Indeed, the ascendant model of leadership is firmly located in neo-liberal versions of the 'performing school', whereby headteachers are being positioned as leaders or managers, in which distinctions between these two processes are being made in order to facilitate the separation of a leadership elite from those whose work is being routinized. As Gunter notes, leadership is being defined around notions of controlling uncertainty through charismatic behaviours and strategic tasks, while management is about system maintenance. Gunter distils three interrelated strands in the preferred leadership model for educational institutions, namely, leadership of systems, which concern strategic development and operational action planning; leadership of consumers, which involves target-setting and outcomes-monitoring; and leadership of performance, which enjoins the control of embodied identities and approaches to work.

Chapter 3 'Leadership in Educational Studies' is about knowledge positions and positioning around leadership through a critical exploration of school effectiveness and school improvement. The key point to be noted here is that education management, along with school effectiveness and school improvement fields, accepts unreflexively charismatic transformational leadership and the school as a unitary organization. This model lacks the necessary radicalism needed to pursue issues of equity. Moreover, for leadership to be educational, it must encompass pedagogy in which teachers and students engage in a leadership relationship where, as Gunter argues, the emphasis is on 'problem-posing' rather than 'problem-solving'. Chapter 4 'Research and Researching' presents ways in which leaders and leadership in education are being researched. Here, Gunter usefully and critically dissects current emphases on 'what works' and 'evidence-based/-informed policy'. Gunter underscores the need for a politically and ethically sensitive account of 'what works'. As she puts it, 'In the end, corporal punishment was ended not because we had statistics to prove that it did not work, but because we had beliefs about how human beings, particularly in adult–child relationships, should behave towards each other' (p. 52). The amorality of pragmatic utility, while evident to most, continues to fall on deaf ears in some influential school effectiveness quarters (Archer, 2002b).

A full-frontal attack on positivism would have strengthened Gunter's critique of RCTs (randomised controlled trials) and evidence-informed policy. Interestingly, Hargreaves, for example, has displayed an increasing sensitivity to accusations of positivism, which has led to a concern with evidence-informed rather than evidence-based educational practice, since the former does not displace professional judgement. Of course, as Gunter points out, the problem lies with what we mean by evidence-informed practice, and how it could be seen to be positioning children and teachers as being in a deficit position. Elliott (2001) has convincingly shown that Hargreaves's articulation of evidence-informed practice does not succeed in discarding its core positivist underpinning. He notes that current education policy prioritizes target-setting and forms of evaluation and quality assurance that measure the performativity (or efficiency) of practices against indicators of success in

achieving the targets. 'In other words, it is a context in which practices are treated as manipulative devices (technologies) for engineering desired levels of output' (Elliott, 2001: 560). Hargreaves's vision of educational research is congruent with this policy context and he does not see this as problematic. This brings us back to the ostensible educational value of current education policy, which Gunter addresses throughout. Indeed, as Elliott argues, the primary role of educational research—when understood as research directed towards the improvement of educational practice—is not

> . . . to discover contingent connections between a set of classroom activities and pre-standardised learning outputs, but to investigate the conditions for realising a coherent educational process in particular practical contexts . . . educational research [should] take the form of case studies rather than randomised controlled trials. The latter, via a process of statistical aggregation, abstract practices and their outcomes from the contexts in which they are situated. Case studies entail close collaboration between external researchers and teachers on 'the inside' of an educational practice. (Elliott, 2001: 564)

Gunter also points to the predominance of 'laboratory epistemology' that underpins leadership research, where the researcher is presented as a neutral data-gatherer and interpreter. Whether and how leadership might impact on learning outcomes can be measured in isolation from the local setting is rightly queried.

Chapter 5 'Theory and Theorising' presents and analyses how leadership has been and continues to be theorized. It is argued that (a) a leader may have contractual authority for being a leader, but may not necessarily exercise leadership; (b) leadership is a relationship that all are capable of exercising; and (c) leadership within education should be directly connected to attempts to realize democratic forms and practices. Following Smyth, Gunter argues for the restoration of 'Educative Leadership'. Chapter 6 'Preparing and Preparation' focuses on how people come to be and are prepared for leading and leadership. The explicit concern is with linking structure and agency, namely the choices that are made within conditioning sociocultural settings. Equally, she notes the trend in the UK towards more competence and prescriptively determined learning. Indeed, such competences are disconnected from pedagogic relationships. This hardly augurs well for nurturing creativity that is crucial to any advanced economy! However, vis-a-vis the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), for example, the most important aspects are missing, such as the culture and values of the school.

Chapter 7 'Headteachers and Principals' uses qualitative data gathered from and about headteachers regarding their experiences. Rather depressingly, we are informed about how New Labour's modernization programme is moving headteachers away from educational values and collegial processes towards what Gunter calls 'marketised performance'. As she puts it:

> Certainly the mandated model of headship as presented within current government documents does not see the headteacher as a head teacher, but as a leader and manager in an educational setting . . . Headship is being reworked around strategic business like models rather than leadership growing out of pedagogic expertise. (p. 96)

Essentially, Gunter notes that there is resistance to new managerialization of education,

but for how long and to what extent is difficult to assess. My own research confirms the general trend towards organizational isomorphism and the bleak implications for learning, creativity and welfare (Archer, 2002a). Indeed, Gunter ends the chapter thus: 'Teachers have to turn their backs on conceptually informed practice integrated with learning, to a regime of numbers and graphs designed to tell them what does and does not work' (p. 105). Chapter 8 'Teachers in the Middle' focuses on who are senior and middle managers, what they do, and how they are being positioned and are seeking to position themselves. In the main, Gunter finds that much of what is written is highly normative and is about determining roles and work congruent with current restructuring. Again, the question that we should be asking is whether such roles are to support teaching, learning and student welfare or to provide data for external accountability?

Chapter 9 'Teachers and Students' focuses on a fundamentally different type of leadership to the one currently on offer, which, at the same time, enjoins a different student–teacher relationship from the one required to realize performance-related pay. I particularly liked Gunter's reference to Smyth's argument that teachers and students are currently being positioned by the 'aerosol' words of empowerment, collegiality, collaboration and participation, and 'spraying' them around has devalued the potential meaning we could draw from them. Indeed, worryingly, we now find students expressing doubts about the genuineness of their school's interest in their progress and well-being as persons. Of course, this is hardly surprising, given managerialism's Taylorist effacement of such values as caring (despite the fact that, transcendentally speaking, managerialism cannot avoid them both in theory and in practice). However, Gunter hammers home the need for educational leadership that is distributed:

> What we need is less emphasis on restructuring hierarchical leadership and more courage to enable teachers and students with managers to work on developing learning processes . . . Such an approach would politicise schools around pedagogy rather than around glossy manifestos . . . (p. 138)

Finally, Chapter 10 'Teachers as Professionals' underscores the fact that leadership is a highly political issue and any claims to neutrality are unfounded (I would add ideological) since, for Gunter, our theories and methods are connected to positions about the interplay between agency and structure. Crucially, she argues that 'education is being ontologically and epistemologically purged, as particular forms of knowledge are privileged in ways that characterise dialogic intellectual work as being disruptive and irrelevant' (p. 141). A leitmotif of the book is how to link structure and agency, which, according to Gunter, is best done via Bourdieu's theory of practice. It was a real pleasure to read such a commitment throughout to theorizing about the interplay of structure and agency, especially how structure and culture are mediated to agency at the nexus. Indeed, Gunter writes that her future work will address the latter vis-a-vis leadership and pedagogical practice. I want to end this review by way of asking her not to change track but to change parts of the car in which she is driving, so to speak. Put simply, I would ask Gunter to consider utilizing the development of social realism, which coincidentally is now addressing precisely how sui generis structural and cultural properties are mediated by agency (Archer, 1995, 2000, forthcoming). Necessarily, this would involve recognition of the limitations of Bourdieu's work. I say change parts of the car, since I am not suggesting that Gunter abandon Bourdieu completely. Indeed, Vandenberghe has recently 'enjoined'

Bourdieu to give heed to what he calls the 'realist turn' in the philosophy of social science, since a realist ontology is detectable (in personal communication with Vandenberghe, Bourdieu admitted that he had only recently come across Bhaskar and that he had been a realist all along). I do not wish to 'enjoin' Gunter. Rather, I think she should consider critiques that show how Bourdieu does not adequately link structure and agency (e.g. Archer, 2000; Parker, 2000; Vandenberghe, 1999). The fact that she should not change car derives from Bourdieu's realist (relational) social ontology. However, like Giddens, Bourdieu argues for an identity of structure and agency, which means that we cannot link them over time, with structure temporally prior to agency and ontologically distinct (see Archer, 2002a). While, as Parker (2000) argues, Giddens is the more consistent theorist and Bourdieu the better sociologist, Bourdieu nevertheless cannot answer 'when-questions'.

Overall, this is an important and original contribution to the field of leadership in management generically and educational studies. It addresses head-on the need for adequate theorizing about structure and agency and elegantly critiques the current managerialization of education and the ideological role of academics in that process. We can only hope that those happily extolling the virtues of New Labour's modernization strategy will take heed!

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Response

The untimely death of Pierre Bourdieu on 23 January is a huge loss to those in education who have been inspired by his theory of practice and his commitment to the role of the public intellectual. Through the legacy of constant reflexivity he has enabled an ongoing re-engagement with his texts, though the danger of 'ritual embalming' is ever present (Bourdieu, 2000: 48). In examining obituaries as spaces where intellectual position and positioning can be revealed, Bourdieu (1988: 218) argues that:

. . . the 'absent friends' find themselves classified as they were always classified during their lifetimes, that is, as a function of subtly hierarchized academic qualities which, at this final point of their career, still maintain an immediately visible relation with social origins.

Similarly, a book review remains a potential place of canonization, where 'an eternization that dehistoricizes and derealizes' can prevent us from making visible the objective relations that created the author and the text. The excitement of a symposium is that as a live author I have the opportunity to rejoin the dialogue in the struggle to enable field development, and to ask questions about my own professional practice and position. By being read by other field members the problematics of 'scholastic illusion' (Bourdieu, 2000: 30) could be abated, and this is vital if the barriers to our understandings are to be challenged. As Alan Bennett (1997: 539–40) tells us: 'A writer does not always know what he or she knows, and writing is a way of finding out'.

I have learned a great deal from the four reviews, and I am grateful to colleagues for taking time to think with me. In embarking on the book I contented myself that surveying the research and theory within the field is an impossible task but that this was no excuse not to have a go. Also, with the odd exception of a sentence here or a paragraph there, I am also delighted that the book has been reviewed on the basis of what I did rather than the many books I might have written. It is heartening to see how colleagues' research and scholarship support and develop the arguments. In producing the final version of the text I was and still am aware that much more still needs to be worked through and the challenges of the review provide steerage and open up possibilities for this. Consequently I do not intend to look at each review in turn, but to take inspiration for how the field might move forward. As I cannot address all the points raised within this brief encounter, my main focus will be the purpose of constructivist sociology within field activity. I say this because it is central to all the reviews but different emphasis and illustration are used in debating issues of agency and structure. The challenge for a radical constructivism is in how it positions itself in relation to theorizing agency and the ability of the individual to make a real and significant difference for the public good.

In asking about the role of intellectual work in leadership knowledge production I have found it helpful to see how the thinking about leadership practice and the study of that practice can draw on a range of resources. Fink locates his analysis within his own professional practice and the communities around effectiveness and improvement, while Strain and Archer draw on research and theorizing from the social sciences, and Harris does a combination of both. All of the reviewers endorse the struggle for agency as a problematic enduring reality at a time of highly structured policy prescriptions. All have something to say about teachers and their positioning within reform structures, and how knowledge is used and produced within and for practice. As public sector workers, teachers have been treated as implementers of ways of working decided by those at a distance from the classroom (Smyth, 2001). A central goal in the account was to acknowledge and begin to evidence how this is working on the ground, and how resistance and refusal, complicity and compliance are complex processes worked through in everyday practice.

As an enthusiastic user of change knowledge, and as a practising manager who, like Fink, attempts to work productively with people in order to secure effective outcomes, I am also very aware that access could be denied to the research resources that both Fink and Harris

value. In working for democratic schools, an aim that others have pushed far more lucidly and for longer than myself, I am engaging with the politics of change and continuity that enables us to recognize that policy is not a given but, as Ozga (2000) argues, is a contested terrain. By putting on record that teachers are policy-makers and not takers, are pedagogic leaders and not just organizational followers, my position is that they are certainly far from what Fink describes as 'gullible'. Rather than ask 'who protects the pupils from the incompetent teacher?', I would prefer to ask: 'why do teachers have their work labelled as incompetent, who does it and why?' Identities are not just about being a teacher, but are about what you do as a teacher, and this is central to whether teachers can, do, and want to display agency within the classroom, schools and communities. An interesting line of enquiry has been sparked in my mind by Strain's analysis about whether the tensions within marketization and democracy are 'intrinsically and necessarily inimical to learning'. I cite evidence in the book that shows that learning can and does take place through the tensions and dilemmas created within practice in the current context, but I also note that the spaces in which we can continue to do this are being reshaped and constrained. While I would endorse the problematic nature of power structures such as subject disciplines, the point at issue is that they exist and that there are strong epistemological formations rooted within them. We cannot manage this away through the introduction of new power structures located in mechanistic information systems, but need to engage with the real people and practices that inhabit teaching and learning. What I have valued from the work of Fullan and Hargreaves is our greater understanding of the emotional aspects of teachers' working lives, and that consent and participation within change is central to sustainability.

By raising questions of legitimacy Fink is highlighting the contextual nature of the field because England is a unitary constitutional monarchy where the government is appointed through the exercise of the royal prerogative (even though the worst excesses have been ameliorated through the emergence of conventions), and so traditional/charismatic legitimacy has so far won the day. If we want to work for a theory and practice of the public good then we need to endorse the inclusivity that elections and democratic life bring, and teachers and pupils have an entitlement to a voice within this (Bottery, 1992). Strain's analysis of this is excellent, and we need to ask whether teachers are the 'tourists' and so are included within the social, or whether they are being positioned as the 'vagabonds' who should entertain based on others' scripts and software. Having said this, Fink is right that such ideas need to be further worked through, and it is difficult to pursue at a time when the version of transformational leadership that is officially preferred (but not necessarily practised) is one that is so intellectually impoverished. Perhaps the obscurity that Strain identifies in the lack of a clear map can be shifted away from the tangible towards a focus on who the mappers are and the processes they use to work their way through tough times. Harris makes an important contribution here by reminding us of the work of Wenger, and it would be interesting to see communities of practice as mappers, and so explore the leadership possibilities within this. In this way the maps come from the interplay between agency and structure, or practice and prescription, and not from web pages. This is problematic because there could be a tendency to essentialize mappers into types as drivers and barriers to change, and Fink illustrates this through his claims about the impact of his own age and gender, and wrongly attributes assumptions about this to the book.

In approaching the task of engaging with the reviews I am mindful of my own habitus, 'that presence of the past in the present which makes possible the presence in the present of the forth-coming' (Bourdieu, 2000: 210), in which I regard the structuring of the

academy and practice as a creative space for knowledge production. My commitment to teachers and teaching remains: this is not just a moral association with work and people that I identify with, but is also based on a wider engagement with the purposes of schools and schooling. The struggle is against being misread as taking a conservative stance through creating the illusion of a golden age and a wronged profession, and is for putting the interests of the people who are central to learners and learning at the top of reform and research agendas. Through the research process I have increasingly given more recognition to and become more comfortable with our public intellectual role. As a field we cannot just hide behind the claims to neutrality of the trainer or the enabling role of the consultant, but have to acknowledge the political dimensions to our work.

By putting our work in the classroom and the library we are necessarily sociological, and this simultaneous closeness and distance to and within practice requires us to reflect and comment on the use and abuse of knowledge production. I know that Chapter 3 was a huge challenge to write and get right, and it is inevitable that it will receive the most attention. On the one hand, Strain and Archer are concerned to continue the critique of the field through raising questions about how the argument might be further developed, while Fink and Harris are concerned to put on record additional evidence. The accounts by Fink and Harris of school effectiveness and school improvement are important because they demonstrate the value of dialogue within a review, and this challenges objectification. However, in doing this I would argue that knowledge workers from one territory not only need to give an account of that space but also need to connect with other positions. Strain and Archer show that critical approaches are alive and well, but there are huge silences in the reviews about whether critical approaches really are politically marginalized. If so, why is this, and what might we do about it? If, as Harris points out, the statement that 'school effectiveness and school improvement has been officially consecrated by current government policy in which the scientific epistemology of school effects and the processes of improvement have become integrated into the political goals of New Labour' (p. 36) is a 'rather uncharacteristic sweeping statement', I am puzzled as to why we see Archer argue in his review that I have not gone far enough. What are the differences in position, how are they different, and why? Ultimately, what I am trying to do here is develop an understanding of what we do when we read a book. Bourdieu is helpful because he argues that we cannot escape the conditions that produce our knowledge and hence we have a responsibility to take on the public intellectual role to challenge methodology and method. Fink is very explicit about knowledge that he has found useful, but research is limited about how leaders come to know and continue to develop knowing. We do not know how material is accessed, or the processes by which choices are made, particular epistemologies are accepted/discounted, and knowledge workers embraced/marginalized. Harris documents the vibrancy and pluralism of school improvement and I would agree with her that we do not have a multi-site analysis of leadership theorizing. I am sure that, like me, Harris would like to know whether, how and why the lifeworld of teachers has been colonized so that when a teacher talks about effectiveness and improvement we might ask: 'which version do they mean, and how have they come to use this?'

Overall, I would have liked to see more discussion within the reviews about the conditions which produced the book, and what it means to be a knowledge worker within a field located in a university. While I continue to argue that a strength of the field is the ongoing revelation of both an academic and practitioner habitus, I am aware

that for some we are not academic enough, while others claim we are too distant from practice (Gunter, 2002). Nevertheless, this is the place where productive dialogue about how we position our work in relation to policy networks globally, nationally and locally can take place and, following Archer, we need to ask what it means if there is an epistemological convergence or divergence between researchers and policy-makers, and how this is related to the power structures that sustain what is known and is worth knowing.

This reflection on agency leads to Harris and Archer who, by drawing on different intellectual resources, both argue that how we best theorize agency is a central question for the field. Through engaging with Bourdieu's theory of practice I am very conscious of what his work can and cannot do for us in regard to agency (Gunter, 2000, 2002). I would disagree with Strain that habitus is an 'abstraction' and instead argue that Bourdieu is very explicit both in his empirical work and in descriptions of that work, that habitus is embodied and generative when revealed through field activity (Bourdieu, 2000). I report in the book examples of research that has captured both a political and an educational habitus that values leadership as a relationship, and that teachers do exercise agency in taking courageous decisions about policy and practice. Habitus is structured by field and field is structured by habitus, and hence the two create each other, and so I am reluctant to fully accept Archer's analysis that Bourdieu cannot answer 'when-questions'. While it is acceptable to say that Bourdieu does not abstract the precise conditions in which agency is exercised, and hence a researcher cannot 'test' it out, it must be recognized that habitus is revealed through practice and so is always located in time and space. Bourdieu's work will always be limited for some knowledge workers because it is necessarily incomplete due to the emergence of conceptual understanding through empirical work and reflexivity.

With both feet on the radical constructivist territory I am well aware that there is much to debate regarding the interface with realism, and the ongoing research dialogue with Archer is welcomed, and will be both challenging and illuminating. Delanty is helpful here as he shows that both critical constructivists and realists accept an 'objectively existing social reality', but critical realists are concerned with 'discovering generative mechanisms' within this (1997: 112), while constructivists put stress 'on how social actors construct their reality and the implications that this has for social science' (p. 129). In this way I would put less emphasis on the conditions in which agency is exercised, and more on what can be known about the exercise of agency at different times and in different contexts through field activity. I am comfortable with the possibility that much about leadership may be remain implicit or even be beyond our grasp, and the more I work in organizations and research practice, the clearer this becomes. Nevertheless, the dialogue around human agency is central to our concerns and Delanty (1997) argues that the challenge is to reconcile radical constructivism and realism through their commitment to emancipation. This again points towards our responsibilities as social scientists and the contribution we wish to make to theoretical development. Strain encounters this when he describes how the contradictory situation for teachers has been well charted but how we develop alternatives and move forward is less clear. Harris gives us glimpses of the potential of Habermas in theorizing this, though I would like to see more work on how his theory of communicative action could further stimulate field interests in social change. The challenge this raises cannot be fully resolved here, but the traditional ideological emancipatory position of seeking to liberate by standing outside just will not do, and we need to work through the complexity of the public intellectual role with living in an

emergent world of 'indeterminacy' (Delanty, 1997: 141). We would want our work to matter and to be used, and I would agree that we should not necessarily throw out ideas because they have been distorted, but if our work is being misused then we have to speak out about it. Our job as social scientists in all phases of education, as Delanty argues, is to problem pose because 'social science cannot itself provide answers to social problems' (1997: 141), and so it seems our role is one of mediation, and essential to this is reflexivity in public discourse.

Perhaps we have to ask why does society need a field of educational leadership studies? And, in struggling with this we should ask: how does our knowledge of practice and the study of practice construct public dialogue about schools and schooling? How does that public dialogue as a democratic process impact on how and why our knowledge is generated and used? Thinking with these questions is a product of my engagement with the reviews, and they have made more explicit for me how we have a responsibility in education to make a contribution to how and why social science can 'recover its critical consciousness' (Delanty, 1997: 4). As Bourdieu (1990) argues, by making more explicit the conditions in which the researcher produces knowledge about knowledge production, then we are freed from the illusion of adopting technical method as a guarantor of freedom. The impact of the changing political economy of where 'relevant' knowledge can and should be produced means that Bourdieu's theorizing about the impact of neo-liberalism on structures and practices in knowledge production can enable the contradictions within our work to be open, described and explained.

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