The lights dim, the energy level subsides as old friends and new acquaintances come to order. Another futuring conference begins. Three hours and numerous scenarios later one wonders. The visions of these futures differ radically. What is true and real? What future is likely? Can we ever know?

In another city, an executive leadership program nears completion. An artist's work awaits unveiling. For five days, the executives have been engaged in guided imagery, body movement exercises, dance, and role-playing. Some even dared to walk on hot coals. Now the artist reveals his airbrush painting of the group's organizational vision, the result of a day and a half of dreaming, reflecting, and hoping.

These stories describe what is occurring with increased frequency across the United States. Visioning and intuitions have captured the imagination and dollars of the corporate community as executives seek clues about the future and ways to anticipate it.
I illustrated in Chapter Three, vision is an aspect of leadership that many theorists find essential to leadership.

It is my belief that effective vision is shared vision, because, as Senge (1990) says: “a shared vision is the answer to the question, ‘What do we want to create?’ Just as personal visions are pictures or images people carry in their heads and hearts, so too are shared visions pictures that people throughout an organization carry. They create a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities. . . . Shared visions derive their power from a common caring. In fact, we have to come to believe that one of the reasons people seek to build shared visions is their desire to be connected in an important undertaking” (p. 206).

Vision and Metaphor

But what directs vision and what allows it to be shared? I suggest that the directing agency is metaphor. In some leadership literature, metaphors are emphasized as technical tools that enrich language, rather than as frames to better understand reality. This technical view trivializes the function of metaphor and ignores the centrality of metaphor in our perceptions of reality.

The most important aspect of metaphor for leadership development is the way metaphor functions to orient our views. Orienting metaphors, or, as they are sometimes called, root metaphors, are the fundamental frameworks that direct our attention to a wide array of human experience by uniting that array under one notion.

Not only do orienting metaphors allow us to understand a large number of seemingly disparate items by discovering their profound similarities but they also direct our attention toward the future by providing models and maps that both describe and prescribe societal actions. In other words, metaphors describe a way in which the world works and, when the world does not act as the metaphoric model suggests, the same metaphors imply the broad sets of action that should be taken to realign the world with the original vision. Thus, metaphors are linked to the generic feature of mission in the Action Wheel. Yet metaphors also cradle specific meanings. Therefore, leadership must ask the validity of metaphors. From what perspectives should metaphors be judged adequate and thus advo-
cated as appropriate for visionary leadership? And which orienting metaphors should receive close attention?

My answer resides in the relationship between action, ethics, metaphors, and authenticity. Action contains generic features. Ethics frames the deep meaning and justification of the features of action. Metaphors contextualize ethics, carrying ethical principles into the world of action. And authenticity cuts across the whole discussion, calling for worldly engagement that challenges vision directed by metaphor to be true to itself, while at the same time inviting a leadership inquiry clockwise on the Action Wheel for a more complete understanding of what is really going on.

Let me illustrate why action, ethics, and authenticity are essential to a discussion of metaphor. As I mentioned before, Clancy (1989) argues that the popular purposes of business have lost their ethical legitimacy. He proposes that businesses adopt a voyage metaphor to define their purposes and give them new legitimacy (p. 287). Likewise, Kouzes and Posner (1987) use a journey metaphor to communicate “the active pioneering nature of leadership” (p. 119). Journey is also an explicit organizing principle in the thinking of Reich (1987), Bolman and Deal (1991), Peters and Waterman (1982), Senge (1990), and Adams (1984, 1986). However, none of these authors explicitly articulates the deep meaning or ethical principles that guided the choice of the journey metaphor. Nor do these authors state why the metaphor is adequate for leadership theory development. Nor do they explore a number of other metaphors that might offer complementary insights. In addition, it is one thing to urge metaphorical thinking in general, quite another to articulate what is entailed in a particular metaphorical view of the world. Thus, I particularly appreciate Clancy’s work (1989) and his willingness to be publicly accountable for his world view. All too often, leadership theorists act as if their perspective is value neutral. In my judgment, leadership perspectives are not and cannot be value neutral. Our orienting metaphors and our perspective on leadership itself causes us to frame policy issues differently. To be authentic in leadership theory, it seems to me, is to make explicit the policy implications of our own perspective and take ownership of these implications.

The remainder of this chapter will explore leadership and
metaphors in more detail, identify six metaphors that are commonly used as frames for understanding life, and relate the metaphors to action theory and ethics. I will also share my methods for teaching metaphorical vision.

Metaphors Defined

Metaphors open windows onto reality. They identify the unknown from the known, the novel from the familiar. They link the well established with the less well understood. Paul Ricoeur, phenomenologist and linguist, suggests that metaphor is a "calculated error that brings together that which heretofore did not go together" (Bolan, 1985, p. 353). Richard Bolan states that a metaphor simultaneously asserts that "A is B" and "A is not B." This entails a deep contradiction. In Ricoeur's words: "Such a process creates a tension between the two words employed. Resemblance plays a role but nonetheless the tension, the contradiction, between the words demands a dual interpretation of the words, one literal and the other figurative... A metaphor, in short, tells us something new about reality" (Bolan, pp. 353-354). "A tractor is a machine" is a literal statement about a direct perception. "Life is a machine" is a metaphor. The metaphor anchors a direct experience to something that goes well beyond it.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) illustrate the ways metaphors shape perception by contrasting the metaphors argument is war and argument is dance. The idea that argument is war is common even though we may never have articulated it. Its currency is shown by the frequency with which it colors our everyday speech. We say:

- Your claims are indefensible.
- He attacked every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were right on target.
- I demolished his argument.
- I've never won an argument with him.
- You disagree; okay, shoot!
- If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.
- He shot down all of my arguments [p. 4].
Many of the things we do when we argue are also structured by the concept of argument as war. “We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. . . . We attack his positions and we defend our own. We gain and lose ground. We plan and use strategies. If we find a position indefensible, we can abandon it and take a new line of attack” (p. 4).

Lakoff and Johnson suggest that their readers imagine a culture that views argument as dance. Using this frame, “participants are seen as performers and the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way.” Using this perspective, “people would view arguments differently, experience them differently, carry them out differently, and talk about them differently” (p. 5).

Thus, metaphors not only are filters on reality, they also unite what is happening with implied suggestions about what ought to happen. They unite the true and the real in one vision of reality. In other words, metaphors mediate what is perceived to be authentic. Different metaphors yield different realities, resulting in different perceptions of what is really going on. Is a business’s orienting metaphor journey or is it something else, say, a belief that a business is an organic system? Very different ideas and actions will arise from the different metaphors.

Deep disputes are conflicts over fundamental orienting metaphors. Everyone has facts to support his or her perception. Yet what is at stake in the debate is the unacknowledged partner, the orienting metaphor. It is the metaphor that determines how the facts are ordered and evaluated. It is for this reason that “fact flooding” frequently fails to dislodge someone else’s view. For what is a serious fact according to one metaphor can be an insignificant fact to another. The sometimes violent confrontations that emerge from conflicting visions present leadership with a vexing set of problems. What should leaders do when faced with different visions? What vision or visions should hold sway? Understanding the metaphors behind the visions helps us see the actions that are being prescribed by the vision and, eventually, may help us to join visions together to expand our options for authentic action.

As Reich (1987) reminds us, metaphors and morality tales form the maps out of which leaders frame problems and advance proposals for policy. As an issue is framed, however, so it is solved.
Misframing a problem confounds the solution and compounds the problem rather than leading to authentic action. Or, as Schön (1983) puts it, “When practitioners are unaware of their frames for roles or problems, they do not experience the need to choose among them. They do not attend to the ways in which they construct the reality in which they function; for them, it is simply the given reality” (p. 310). Unreflective use of metaphors locks us into existence; reflective use of metaphors opens the possibility of choice and assessment. Frames then become resources for action.

Of late, leadership theorists have been giving a good deal of attention to particular metaphors. However, they often do not identify enough of our major social metaphors, and they offer very little theory to assess each metaphor’s adequacy and truth. Fritz Capra (1982) cites only two metaphors: mechanical and organic. Gibson Winter (1981) introduces a third: art. Lee Bolman and Terence Deal (1984) propose four: structural, resource, political, and symbolic, which parallel the mission, power, structure, and resource features of the Action Wheel. Steven Pepper (1970) also offers four: formalism, mechanism, contextualism, and organicism. And Garreth Morgan (1986) identifies nine—machine, organism, brain, culture, political, psychic, prison, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination. In addition, the authors do not tell us which metaphor to use when. To a large extent, multiple metaphorical analysis undergirds Ralph Stacey’s provocative book, Managing the Unknowable: Strategic Boundaries Between Order and Chaos in Organizations (Stacey, 1992). “As soon as we recognize that the dynamic of a successful company is chaotic,” he writes, “and the long-term future is unknowable, it becomes clear that long-term plans, mission statements, and visions are also bypass games (p. 116). Thus, expecting tight agreement on many values in a time of radical diversity exposes a false assumption about reality. “The absence of strongly shared cultural norms encourages the multiple perspectives required for innovative activity” (p. 144). What then is the fundamental challenge for leadership? Engage in metaphorical analyses from many points of view. Test boundaries. Become a complex learner in a complex learning organization in a complex learning society.
Six Metaphors for Leadership

Our creativity is proportional to our metaphorical diversity. The more metaphors we use, the more we enrich our view of life and the more unexamined aspects of life reveal themselves to us. Thus, I initially hesitated to advocate the use of a limited number of orienting metaphors in leadership studies. However, as I read the literature in the field and spoke, and reflected on the story of strangers and the Action Wheel, a pattern emerged. All metaphors are not equally salutary. Some are better than others.

The six metaphors I have selected are the ones that I believe are shaping current leadership and public policy debates and that I believe ought to shape those debates. Ethical principles and metaphors live in a reciprocal relationship. Principles legitimate actions; metaphors direct and interpret actions. When our ethical principles are known, we can make preliminary judgments about appropriate metaphors. However, metaphors themselves enrich the ethical principles, bring them to life, and trace out their significance for action. The metaphors I have selected also relate to and inform the generic features of action. The six metaphors are these:

- Life is a gift (existence).
- Life is a market (resources).
- Life is an organic body (structure).
- Life is ups versus downs (power).
- Life is a journey (mission).
- Life is art (meaning).

Since this is not a volume on policy and metaphors, a full treatment of each metaphor must await another time. Here I want simply to sketch the thrust of each metaphor and show how it directs leadership. I also show how each metaphor prescribes actions, using public policies, and especially educational policies, as examples. And I show how metaphors can function inauthentically, using racism as my example.
**Life Is a Gift**

Isabel Briggs Myers, as I mentioned earlier, called her book on personality types *Gifts Differing*. A number of us, however, build our world view on the idea that not only are our traits gifts but that life itself is a gift. Just what is a gift? Louis Hyde (1983) describes it as "a thing we do not get by our efforts. We cannot buy it; we cannot acquire it through an act of will. It is bestowed upon us. Thus, we rightly speak of 'talent' as a 'gift,' for although a talent can be perfected through an effort of the will, no effort in the world can cause its initial appearance. Mozart, composing on the harpsichord at the age of four, had a gift" (pp. xi-xii).

The gift metaphor is pervasive in religious traditions. Black Elk, a holy man of the Oglala Sioux, reflects on his gift of healing, "of course it was not I who cured. It was the power from the outer world, and the visions and ceremonies had only made me like a hole through which the power could come to the two-legged. If I thought that I was doing it myself, the hole would close up and no power would come through. Then everything would be foolish" (Neihardt, 1961, p. 209). Contemporary theologian Matthew Fox (1983) seeks to recover the gift metaphor as a shaper of religious vision. The Christian faith, in particular, he believes, has distorted the joy of the gift of creativity by its preoccupation with the fall-redemption metaphor.

When we use the gift metaphor, we link life to existence and make existence a gift, also. Existence is that from which human action moves. Existence is stubborn; it is pre-resource. By viewing existence as a gift, the "thatness" of existence is transformed. What is taken in, received, appropriated, enjoyed, and relished becomes internal rather than external to our lives. That which has been alien is now friendly; that which is strange, now familiar. Thus, the gift metaphor causes us to look at the givenness of life from a mode of cherished affirmation.

**Policy Choices.** Any metaphor that shapes our view and understanding of life also directs our policy choices. The policy implications of the gift metaphor are many. Life as a gift affirms diversity by directing us to rejoice in the richness of life's great givens. As a
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Gift, diversity should not be homogenized, assimilated, or rejected. And yet the gift metaphor faces the brutal challenge of evil. If life is a gift, what about the Holocaust, Russian gulags, the nightmare visited on Kampuchea by Pol Pot, and other examples of human destructiveness? Is death a gift? Or sickness, or disease, or poverty? These are also givens of life. What of natural disasters—floods, earthquakes, hurricanes? History, at best, is bittersweet. Yet, says the gift metaphor, evil must be acknowledged and embraced.

If life is a gift, policy predilections follow: abortion is problematic, as are the selling of blood for transfusions and paid surrogate parenting. The purpose of education is viewed as the complete development of all the diverse talents belonging to each individual. Education is expected both to identify and to enhance those talents.

Life Is a Gift and Racism. Racism is a scourge on the earth. What we think it is and think that we should do about it depends on the metaphor used to analyze the situation. However, racism distorts each metaphor, recasting it in counterfeit ways. An examination of each metaphor from this viewpoint will suggest why racism persists, why particular advocates of one metaphor are threatened by another, and, perhaps most importantly, why proposed solutions from a single metaphor can be inauthentic, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Racism distorts the gift metaphor while appearing to affirm it. Racism says all people have gifts; however, some gifts are superior and some inferior, and this distinction is rooted in biology or theology.

We can call those who support this view supremacists. They argue that, while it is true that everyone has a right to exist, “natural” supremacy justifies control of the inferiors by the superiors. They neither hate nor eliminate inferiors, they claim, because there are no grounds to hate. It is not their fault that one group is superior to another. It is genetic or it is God’s will. There is no need to eliminate inferior persons who understand their place and stay in it. However, if supremacists believe their survival is at stake, then all means, including genocide, may be used to ensure the superior group’s continued existence.

Thus, a plurality of gifts is transformed into better and
poorer gifts even though the affirmation that all people deserve a place maintains the minimum requirement of the gift metaphor. In this way, racism distorts the metaphor but does not eliminate it.

Life Is a Market

The market metaphor thrives today. Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States advocated it. It is the metaphor directing much of both the breakup of the Soviet Union and the development of the commonwealth that is replacing it.

The roots of the market metaphor lie in the Newtonian and Copernican revolutions, which depicted the universe as a perpetual motion machine (Capra, 1982). We have only to consider the mechanistic concepts of supply and demand, marginal utility, and cost-benefit analysis to realize the impact of the Newtonian and Copernican world views on economic theory. Etzioni (1968) states that the atomistic and aggregate approach to interpreting life experience, used by many economists, "explains the state of a society, economy or policy in terms of properties, relations, or actions of micro-units, rather than in terms of their super-unit macroscopic relations" (p. 62).

In other words, the market view focuses on a particular interrelation of parts. Persons or resources relate to other resources through a variety of voluntary contracts or exchanges. Anything that challenges this free exchange is a threat to the workings of the market. The sum of the parts, working freely, equals the good of the whole. From this atomistic perspective, a term like the common good is the sum of all the exchanges of all the private actors producing private goods. Common goods is a better description of the desired result than is common good.

The libertarian strain of this market perspective is illustrated by Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman (1980) when they say, "No external force, no coercion, no violation of freedom is necessary to produce cooperation among individuals, all of whom can benefit. That is why, as Adam Smith put it, an individual who 'intends only his own gain' is 'led by an invisible hand' to promote an end which was no part of his intention." As free-market advocates, the Friedmans believe that "the combination of economic and political
power in the same hands is a sure recipe for tyranny." They worry that "the view that government's role is to serve as an umpire to prevent individuals from coercing each other was replaced by the view that government's role was to serve as a parent charged with the duty of coercing some to aid others." As a result, they say, "sooner or later . . . an even bigger government will destroy both the prosperity that we owe to the free market and the human freedom proclaimed so eloquently in the Declaration of Independence" (pp. 5-6).

On the face of it there would seem to be an inherent contradiction in the Friedmans' belief that a Newtonian deterministic model sustains individual freedom. However, Friedman and other free-market advocates see no contradiction. By preserving his or her own desires, each person is being true to his or her own nature. Supply and demand as lawful relationships among the parts in an economic exchange always hold as individuals pursue their own desires. The laws do not account for the desires, only for the character of the exchange.

Policy Choices. We see the policy implications of this metaphor daily in the United States. The belief that life is a market calls for deregulation, limited government, parental and student choice of schools, and privatization of the public sphere.

The purpose of education, in this view, is to develop individuals' skills so they can compete in the marketplace. These skills include reading, writing, computing, and so forth. The specific levels of these major skills and the specific subordinate skills that are called for depend upon the market's reading of the competitive situation.

Life Is a Market and Racism. In the market metaphor, racism is manifested as personal prejudice and institutional discrimination that restrict the entry of certain groups of people into a "free" market and deny the right of individual competition to a whole group. Racism is thus anti-free market and inauthentic.

In an authentic free market, everyone must be free to be secure and to develop his or her inherited abilities, or gifts, to the maximum. At their most authentic, free-market advocates are great
civil libertarians because anything that threatens the freedom of the market is anathema.

Free-market advocates become racists when they attempt to restrict the freedom of the market to a particular group, such as whites. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the American Indian Movement are examples of organized groups that became threatening to some free-market advocates because admitting these groups into the so-called free market appeared to restrict its efficient allocation of freedom and resources, which had de facto been reserved for whites. From the perspective of the free-market racists, these new would-be traders in the market had to be challenged, resisted, and brought under appropriate legal constraint.

Thus come the inauthenticities: all people are supposed to be free and have equal access to the marketplace, but whites end up defending their own access. Ultimately, these self-alleged defenders of liberty openly restrict the freedom of people who are different. While racial supremacists are worrying about their own survival, racist free-market advocates worry that unrestricted allocation of human and material resources will restrict their own access. But it is racism itself that introduces inefficiency into an efficient market. Again, racism distorts the metaphor’s essential vision.

**Life Is a Body**

One of the most dominant contemporary metaphors views life as an organic system. Life is a body. This metaphor undergirds a wide range of seemingly disparate activities, including the ecology movement, personal growth therapies, cooperative classrooms, and affirmative action. Capra (1982) summarizes the view of living systems that the organic metaphor conveys: “Living systems are organized in such a way that they form multi-leveled structures, each level consisting of sub-systems which are wholes in regard to their parts, and parts with respect to the larger wholes. . . . All these entities—from molecules to human beings, and on to social systems—can be regarded as wholes in the sense of being integrated structures, and also as parts of larger wholes at higher levels of complexity” (p. 43).

The organic metaphor informs “body politic,” “body of knowledge,” and similar phrases. During the Watergate hearings,
presidential counsel John Dean drew upon this metaphor when he spoke of a cancer growing in the presidency.

Organicism is the viewpoint of most public television nature programs. Vivid images of balance and survival, adaptation and flexibility indicate nature’s ordering principles. Life is portrayed as a complex web of interdependencies and all nature as a complex organism. Tampering with one part of the system has direct consequences for other parts. Inherent in this notion is the message that nature’s survival is our own survival. Images of domination and exploitation are replaced with those of cooperation.

In some ways, the body metaphor parallels the gift metaphor; however, they differ in the role assigned to action. The gift is given to be accepted and treasured as it is. The organic system is susceptible to change at the hands of humans, who can invent new structures to make it more effective. Human agency is more pivotal in the systems model than in the gift model.

Policy Choices. The policy and change implications of this metaphor are enormous. First, how do we change a system? In this view, we must work with the system, rather than against it. Peter Senge, in one of his Innovation Associates seminars, offered this example of system change. Suppose we want to turn a large ship. An obvious approach would be to have a tugboat push the ship at right angles to the bow and in the desired direction. However, that is not effective. Pushing at the bow pushes against a tremendous weight of water on the other side. The harder the pushing, the more the resistance of the water’s inertia. An easier way is to turn the captain’s wheel, which turns the rudder. An even easier way is to use a trim tab on the rudder. This device uses very small amounts of energy to change the direction of a large ship. Thus, a small energy input can yield a large system output. The basic message of the body metaphor is, Work with, not against, the system. Figure out how the system works and look for those levers that bring the greatest amount of output with the least amount of energy input.

Organicists believe interventions must be careful, selective, and able to work within the body. They often criticize public policy decisions in which major changes are forced on a system without an understanding of how the system works. Thus, governments
build low-income housing in the form of high-rise buildings, only to find that they become stifling ghettos for their residents. Educators who employ this metaphor worry about community and push for self-worth courses, cooperative classrooms, and personal growth. They worry that parental school choice will undermine a neighborhood's sense of community and increase destructive rampant individualism. The purpose of education is self-understanding, global understanding, and the building of a global community of mutual respect and dignity. This can only occur as individuals affirm the larger organically related world.

**Life Is a Body and Racism.** In the authentic organic metaphor, racism is a social disease. What do we do with a disease? We find a cure. Since the body is an integrated whole, all parts of the system have to be healthy for any part to be healthy. Justice, understood as fairness (Rawls, 1971), is one of the ways health is maintained in the system. Therefore, justice that benefits only the few produces social sickness.

Those who are authentic in using this metaphor to understand life worry about personal deviance and nonadaptive structural processes. The antiracist task, as they see it, is to make up for past wrongs. Equal opportunity is insufficient. What is required is affirmative action that brings relief from past discrimination. Their antidote to racism is consensus building, teamwork, and cooperation. In order to maintain consensus and cooperation, advocates of this metaphor press toward assimilation of everyone into the common culture through educational, religious, and family socialization processes.

Just as advocates of other metaphors can become inauthentic when threatened by others, so too can systems advocates. Who needs surgery to be a healthy part of the body? “Them.” The “victims” of racism are viewed as deprived and disadvantaged. The cure is “mainstreaming.” The health of the society into which minorities are mainstreamed is not questioned. By naming victims and their institutions as the problems, systems racists assume their own systems are the standard of success.

When acting as racists, systems advocates become indistinguishable from authentic market advocates, who seek to guarantee
minorities equal access in the market. An authentic rendering of the organic metaphor, however, directs individuals to reform the whole system for the benefit of all, not to focus on "them" and try to cure "their" problem.

Systems advocates were among the leaders in the Civil Rights movement. Yet some of them, instead of being true to themselves, unknowingly affirmed the market metaphor by focusing solely on assimilation of minorities into the larger culture. They were convinced that they were curing a disease and creating a healthy body, but instead of bringing about a new, just community for all, this assimilationist group affirmed and supported a sick society for everyone.

Pluralists represent another school of thought that uses the body metaphor. The pluralist view on racism argues that ethnic identity can be maintained while ethnic groups enjoy full participation in the United States. All minorities should follow the lead of the Jews, Irish, Italians, and other groups who came to the United States as poor and outcast minorities and achieved success by accepting a certain level of adaptation, while also enriching the culture to which they adapted.

We can see this orientation operationalized in many school cultural awareness programs, which focus primarily on blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other victims of racism. The goal is to heighten the whites' awareness about minorities' contributions to society. In this process, however, the meaning of being white or the dynamics of oppression are rarely examined. Therefore, the inauthenticity within this orientation is essentially the same as that of the assimilationists, except that the pluralists acknowledge the significance of cultural identity.

Life Is Ups Versus Downs

Our everyday speech contains many up-down metaphors, each reflecting the belief that up is better than down. Friends have sent me a number of choice examples:

The heights of ecstasy, the depths of despair.
Lower than a snake's belly.
Morale is up; morale is down.
Elevated to bishop.
I’m not up to doing that.
I’m under the weather.
I’m down at the mouth.
The computer is being upgraded.
I am downhearted.
They are beneath contempt.

Those who order their lives in terms of up and down believe that the body metaphor disguises fundamental conflicts in a society that is a battleground of irreconcilable vested interests. Only through resistance and constant organizing will the oppressed downs eventually overthrow the powerful ups.

Although body metaphor advocates do not ignore conflict—disease infects the body, which tries to reject foreign substances—they see conflict as an abnormal process that threatens the larger harmony. For up-down disciples, conflict is a given. Typically, they frame reality in terms of two hierarchical groups in perpetual opposition: master-slave, rich-poor, white-black, male-female, straight-gay, ruler-ruled, colonizer-colonized. The essential mission is “the struggle”—the battle to ensure that resources are fairly distributed and that the oppressed achieve liberation and self-determination.

For example, most social movements are informed and directed by the up-down metaphor. Early labor history abounds with up-down language, as does much early Marxist thought. In this perspective, groups are powerful agents who dominate and exploit others, as each group attempts to maintain or secure an advantage. Just as there can be no master without a servant, there can be no ups without downs. They are dialectically related.

Much liberation theology also draws on insight derived from this metaphor. Karen Lebacqz (1986) quotes liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez’s observation that “Latin American theology starts with ‘praxis,’ with passionate and committed involvement in the struggle for liberation” (p. 101). This theology is committed to the political downs: “laborers, peasants, the elderly, the young, the unemployed, women, those from oppressed ethnic and racial groups”—people who have become nonpersons, “suffering misery
and exploitation, deprived of the most elemental human rights, scarcely aware that they are human beings at all" (p. 101).

**Policy Choices.** Those who view the world through the up-down lens advocate political education. In contrast, current schooling, with its authoritarian control, often parallels imprisonment. Schools should be centers of learning about political self-determination. Education should be a commitment to the fundamental task of liberation, not an enforcement of conformity to a preordained hierarchical system.

**Life Is Ups Versus Downs and Racism.** Racism under the guise of the up-down metaphor is the unilateral use of power by ups to exploit, dominate, and tyrannize downs. In the United States, the exploitation of cheap black, Hispanic, or Chinese labor to maximize profits is a clear example of this kind of racism.

There are two schools of thought that use the up-down metaphor to analyze life: worker or class advocates and anti-neocolonialists. The former stress class only; the latter combine race and class in their diagnosis.

U.S. worker or class advocates become racist when whites control the organizing of labor or when the assumption is made that minority interests are identical to white working-class interests. That ethnocentrism leads ups to discount Hispanic concerns for bilingual, bicultural education or Native American concerns for tribal identity. Thus, white class advocates who say they fight for the freedom and shared power of all oppressed people paternalistically tie the fate of others to that of their own race. Their failure to distinguish color from class downplays the importance of culture. They can look and act like body advocates, and are sometimes criticized for acting "like liberals."

The anti-neocolonial advocates argue that the experience of oppressed people of color in the United States can best be understood if it is compared to the experience of colonization. U.S. minorities are concentrated in ghettos, in barrios, and on reservations, where they are exploited by U.S. whites just as the Europeans exploited their colonies. Race, in this view, is an interdependent variable; it is not reduced to class, but it accompanies class struggle
Anti-neocolonial advocates believe that whites cannot be trusted to lead U.S. society because they have lost the power to see the racist evil in their midst. They need constant monitoring by Third World leaders. In capable hands, the anti-neocolonial model is a powerful analytical tool for understanding the impact and functioning of white racism. However, a suspicion of all whites creates a contradiction. The liberators who seek to overthrow the oppressive system have created a language and analysis to perpetuate a new oppression. Now, the oppressed group becomes superior; its sensitivities become the justification for dominating its former oppressors. The oppressed will imitate the oppressor unless there is a cultural transformation of the oppressed mind-set and the oppressive culture (Freire, 1974).

The up-down metaphor has difficulty envisioning people standing side by side. Ups become downs and downs become ups and rarely do they figure out what it means to be in partnership.

**Life Is a Journey**

Patricia Hampel (1987) captures the essence and the paradox of the journey metaphor in the context of a comment about composer Antonin Dvořák's summer vacation in Spillville, Iowa: “There can be no pilgrimage without a destination, but the destination is also not the real point of the endeavor. Not the destination, but the willingness to wander in pursuit characterizes pilgrimage. Willingness: to hear the tales along the way, to make the casual choices of travel, to acquiesce even to boredom. That's pilgrimage—a mind full of journey” (p. 21).

Many writers explicitly use journey language as an ordering principle in their writings—for example, Robert Fritz, The Path of Least Resistance (1984); Nelle Morton, Journey Is Home (1986); and M. Scott Peck, The Road Less Traveled (1988). Often, it is the implicit backdrop, as in Ferguson's The Aquarian Conspiracy (1980) and Anthony, Ecker, and Wilber's Spiritual Choices: The Problems of Recognizing Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation (1987). They go so far as to argue that journey is the central theme throughout the romantic tradition.

Journey directs our attention inward and outward, high-
lighting the connection of self to community, nature, and God, while stressing our creative capacity to chart our own courses.

How each of us attends to and describes the experience of journey, of course, varies greatly. Keith Morton (1987), describing an Arctic journey, calls the Arctic a "place to be conquered. It is meant only to enlarge puny humans to mythic and heroic proportions" (p. 1). In contrast, Barry Lopez (1986) sees the adventures of the explorers who searched for a Northwest Passage as "the record of human longing to be free of some grim weight of life. That weight was ignorance, the poverty of spirit, indolence, and the threat of anonymity and destitution. [The] harsh landscape became the focus of a desire to separate oneself from those things and to overcome them. In these arctic narratives, then, are the threads of dreams that serve us all" (p. 310).

Many journey advocates propose a spiritual dimension. We seek to connect and touch at every level, redefining ourselves as we get to know others. The journey metaphor also embraces diversity. From this perspective, the up-down metaphor is too narrow, the market metaphor too mechanistic, the organic metaphor too structure-bound. Journeys are not recorded in analytic systems, mathematical models, or dialectical frameworks but in journals, diaries, tales, stories, and shared experiences.

In the diaries of Etty Hillesum we experience what Hillesum's editor, J. G. Gaarlandt, describes as "a journey" through Hillesum's "inner world" (Hillesum, 1985, p. xiv). Like Anne Frank, Etty was a Jew who lived in Holland during the Nazi reign of terror. Hers is the painful and glorious story of one person's struggle to address her own deepest fears and hopes as she loved in one of the most radical ways one can love. As Gaarlandt observes, "She did not want to escape the fate of the Jewish people. She believed she could do justice to life only if she did not abandon those in danger, and if she used her strength to bring light into the life of others. Survivors from the camp have confirmed that Etty was a 'luminous' personality to the last" (p. xv). She died in Auschwitz on November 30, 1943.

As Etty confronts her fears for the future, she moves through the language of up and down to another metaphor:
Life is difficult, it is true, a struggle from minute to minute (don’t overdo it now, Etty!), but the struggle itself is thrilling. In the past I would live chaotically in the future, because I refused to live in the here and now. I wanted to be handed everything on a platter, like a badly spoiled child. Sometimes I had a certain rather undefined feeling that I would “make it” one day, that I had the capacity to do something “extraordinary,” and at other times the wild fear that I would “go to the dogs” after all. I now realize why. I simply refused to do what needed to be done, what lay right under my nose. I refused to climb into the future one step at a time. And now, now that every minute is so full, so chock full of life and experience and struggle and victory and defeat, and more struggle and sometimes peace, now I no longer think of the future, that is, I no longer care whether or not I shall “make it,” because I now have the inner certainty everything will be taken care of [pp. 17–18].

Policy Choices. The purpose of education in this view is to invite students on a journey of mutual discovery. Multiple criteria are better than one, offering many roads to travel. Exploring, bumping, challenging, and learning about others as we learn about ourselves become the central guiding mission.

Life Is a Journey and Racism. Since the journey metaphor is often manifested through storytelling, perhaps my personal odyssey can best illustrate how racism exploits this metaphor. My first job was an associate directorship at the Detroit Industrial Mission (DIM), an ecumenical agency working in industry on human value issues. Our DIM staff was all white males. In 1968, we decided to hire a black male, and Reverend Douglas Fitch came in for an interview. At that time, I was smugly content with my view of the world and, wanting him to know I was a “good” white, I asked him to read an essay I had written titled “Black Power: The White Hope.” He did. What happened next transformed my life. He said, “Bob, this is a good piece on black power. The only problem is it’s moving in the wrong
direction with the wrong solution, and it won't get you anywhere. Why don't you figure out what it means to be white and let us worry about what it means to be black?” For reasons far beyond my comprehension, his question penetrated to the core of my being. The new direction it gave me still propels me today.

I called some white friends together. We began thinking and writing and slowly developed a novel idea—a new white consciousness. I wrote my thoughts down and they became my book, *For Whites Only* (1970). My book and Joe Barndt's *Liberating Our White Ghetto* (1972) were, at that time, the only books that proposed a self-conscious examination of whiteness. *For Whites Only* catapulted me into a new arena. I was considered a leader in the fight against racism, especially as I advocated this new white perspective. Then another important event occurred, one that threatened me to my core.

I was attending a racism conference at which the black participants had taken over, using Third World leadership as their rallying cry. I remember standing up when this happened and proposing that the whites should caucus to decide what we should do. All hell broke loose. I was called every name imaginable. As I entered my house that evening, my back went out. I spent two weeks in bed, and during those weeks, I spent a lot of time pondering what I was doing and why. I still remember the strength that came when I realized that I was dealing with racism because I had to. Racism violated my core being. I had to deal with it, whether I was supported or not, criticized or not. Amazingly then, I stood up for the first time in two weeks. My heart and head were aligned. I felt a deep peace and a kind of power that was not oppressive. I tasted authenticity.

What emerged for me was an analysis of whiteness. Not only did I look at myself in a new way, I asked a whole new set of questions about the world in which I was living. By confronting blackness, I was challenged to explore myself as part of white society. Many of us whites joined together to attend to our own racism. Sometimes we bashed each other, mostly we loved. As we tested the outer limits of our racism and searched for self-affirming new ways to treat our color as a gift in the liberation struggle of people of color and ourselves, we began to put together methods of
engaging other whites in the journey. White-on-white seminars emerged, producing a set of structured learning activities (see Katz and Taylor, 1988).

We also joined and shared antiracist activities with people of color, forming the organization People Acting for Change Together (PACT), which became a vehicle for our sustained growth and development and lifelong learning and friendships. As I look back on those events I continue to be amazed. By being with blacks in common struggle, I learned about whites and my color in ways not possible without the contrast. I also learned that I would never completely understand the black experience. However, with the help of black friends, I could grasp my own experience of being a white participant in a white racist society. What a journey from naiveté to understanding.

The journey taught me many lessons. The two most basic were that what it meant to be white was "not to have to think about it," and that, as a white, I could understand and embrace whiteness as a destructive cultural force without guilt and commit my energies toward the mission—the elimination of racism and affirmation of pluralism. There is no way around the pervasiveness of the white culture in this country. By accepting the reality of being a racist, I could transcend it.

So we cared, we repented, we asked for forgiveness and we mobilized antiracist actions. Yet as our journey unfolded, we often lost vision and became less than we had promised. We failed to develop a new self-concept as "new whites," and thus had no foundation to resist manipulation and control by people of color. Instead of being a harbinger of a new, shared reality, new whiteness sometimes collapsed into a vitriolic ethnocentrism that came from those who had most thought they had escaped from its prison. New color consciousness looked very similar in behavior to old color consciousness. Cultural ethnocentrism runs deep and is persistent. The journey must continue, to find fresh ways for whites to address this issue of color directly.

*Life Is Art*

"When good jazz musicians improvise together, they also manifest 'feel for' their material and they make on-the-spot adjustments to
the sounds they hear. Listening to one another and themselves, they feel the way the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly. . . . They are reflecting an action on the music they are collectively making and on their individual contribution to it. Thinking what they are doing, and in the process evolving their way of doing it" (Schön, 1983, pp. 55-56). Donald Schön’s description of improvisational jazz provides a bridge from the journey to the art metaphor. In a journey, we attend to others, learn about ourselves, build relationships of caring and empathy, and grasp deep forgiveness as the act that breaks a revenge cycle. But there are many journeys, some unusual, some inward, some outward, some spiritual, some natural, some destructive, some constructive. In other words, the journey metaphor avoids the dilemma of evaluation. Yet conflict is perennially present, to be acknowledged, embraced, engaged, or transcended. A Quaker facing a Nazi still must decide, in love, whether to resist the Nazi. There comes a point of accountability for action, for war or for peace.

The concept that life is art offers a fragile hope for resolving this dilemma. It is not a new metaphor, but it fills modern everyday language. We “imagine scenarios,” “sculpt visions,” “act out roles,” and “write the future” on the “stage of life.” Improvisation, context, setting, and history are important to this metaphor. Art focuses on journey as a historical trip but highlights the receiving and creating aspect of human dwelling, the flow of past and future into each other that clarifies sense and significance for the journey itself. Art is that process which reveals our being to us, gives shape and substance to the journey, calls us not only to attend to ourselves and others, to care for ourselves and others, but also to stand, to present ourselves, to articulate values, and to be centers of authenticity.

The most comprehensive treatment of the art metaphor I have found was developed by Winter (1981), who believes we are in a time of transition between orienting metaphors. Our condition calls for a new vision, one that can embrace the past and explicate a future that affirms creative symbolic dwelling on the earth. For Winter, the very survival of the Western technological era is at stake. Its self-destructive process and goals are undermining a sustainable global future. The desire to dominate others and nature is realizing an unintended consequence of its own success. Human dwelling
has been reduced to technological manipulation and management. When the hydrogen bomb can be considered technologically sweet, a cultural crisis of the most profound order demands attention. "Unless the question of the meaning of the human project is confronted, there can be no escape from the domination and injustice that follows upon the drive for mastery" (p. xi, emphasis added).

The art metaphor is best positioned to reveal and embody a new synthesis. Winter directs our attention to existent as the setting for meaning. Human beings dwell "symbolically on the earth," amid the "artistic event of receptivity and creativity" (p. xiii). Existence, as I have already argued, is infused with publicly shared meanings. Even though it has a givenness, a stubbornness, that refuses to disappear, it also invites inquiry and interpretation. If we are to clarify the meaning of existence, to explicate the sense and significance of its givenness, we must be open to the past and willing to reconstruct our vision of the future. The core of the human enterprise can thus be articulated by viewing symbolic dwelling as the basis for our full engagement in life.

Winter is radically historical. Like Karl Marx, he critiques journeys of philosophical idealism. Like Marx, he is dialectical, framing the artistic process in terms of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. However, for Marx, symbols and metaphors block the way to reality. Culture is a product of political and economic forces, not the cause of them. For Winter, ideology and culture, including religion as fundamental meaning, constitute and direct human history. Thus, we must understand the real mission of technological society if we are to challenge it and propose an alternative. For Winter, ideas are not "above" human dwelling, as Plato has it, or "under," as Tillich has it when he posits God as the ground of being (1954).

The art metaphor opposes any process that reduces people to things, and it opens worlds "that have not been glimpsed or experienced" (p. 23). For example, when life is art, language is no mere tool with which to manipulate the world around us. Language is what allows us to be in the world while transcending it toward new possibilities. Language is our way of experiencing being in the world as working, loving, fearing, enjoying, or hoping (Winter, 1981, p. 55).
One way we learn about life as art is through the formal artistry of others. As poet Joseph Brodsky (1988) pointed out, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, “Every new aesthetic reality makes man’s ethical reality more precise. For aesthetics is the mother of ethics” (p. 17). The artistic event challenges us to attend to what constitutes human life itself and from that perspective offers an evaluative frame for retrospective assessment and prospective anticipation. Art is the metaphor of responsibility. It decides the process of receiving and creating within the ebb and flow of human life, the core of full participation in one's dwelling on earth.

Not all art has this quality. Art can be misused as propaganda or money-making commodity just as a journey can be misused. Yet Brodsky suggests that “for a human being there is no other future save that outlined by art” (p. 20). B. F. Skinner (1976) and many Marxist writers also share the idea that art is fulfillment for the human species: Art is the telos of the journey; it is utopia.

**Policy Choices.** For Winter, the human species is fundamentally responsible for discernment of the quality of life. People and processes that sustain the capacity to review and redirect the human situation are to be encouraged. Aspects of life that destroy life are to be thwarted. Given this, who should be recognized as the carrier of a humane future? Is it the poor, as in liberation theology; the proletariat, as in Marx; people of color, as in racial liberation? It is every person's responsibility.

From this perspective, education is defined as a commitment to critical thinking. It invites us into paradox and the use of metaphorical language itself as an opening on life. Education relishes divergent as well as convergent thinking, challenging students to establish their own ethical foundations and take ownership of their own thinking.

**Life Is Art and Racism.** Viewed through the metaphor of art, racism is the denial of our personal and cultural shadow, as defined by Carl Jung. That denial is repressed and/or projected onto others. According to Hopcke (1989), Jung’s shadows are “those unpleasant and immoral aspects of ourselves which we would like to pretend do not exist or have no effect on our lives—our inferiorities, our
 unacceptable impulses, our shameful actions and wishes—this shadowy side of our personality is difficult and painful to admit. It contradicts who we would like to see ourselves as, who we would like to seem to be in the eyes of others” (pp. 81–82). Jung believed deeply that we may project our shadow onto others, attributing to them negative qualities that we deny in ourselves. Our task is to create and then confront our full selves, to bring the shadow into consciousness and thereby deprive it of control. Cultures, as well as individuals, engage in this form of denial. Racism and ethnic hatred are problems that are seriously compounded by this human failing.

Formal art often examines how well or poorly we do at creating examined lives. Athol Fugard’s play “Master Harold”—and the Boys (1982) is a penetrating expression of the price of refusing to confront our full selves. Set in South Africa, the play powerfully, poignantly, and painfully explores the consequences of white refusal to face the truth of whiteness, to admit that the roles of white “master” and black “boys” are roles chosen by whites. They are created and maintained by an inauthentic art orientation, which pretends these roles are given (gift) not created (art).

In this play, the direct confrontation between blacks and whites begins when one of the “boys” simply says that Harold can choose not to sit on a bench restricted to whites. If Harold were able to accept this idea, that single small action of choosing where to sit would have an enormous implication for him. It would force him to admit that he could review and redirect his own life, that he could start to undo a great inauthenticity through just one small authenticity, as we all can. But first we must see life as art; we must accept responsibility for ourselves and our ability to review and create our own situations, over and over again.

Metaphors, Action Theory, and Ethics

When Clancy (1989) critiques the three purposes of business (production of goods and services, creation of wealth, and economic institutional maintenance) he marries ethics to purpose. He states that “we must find a way to reorient business from the market fair, from ‘le voyage sans but’ [the journey without an aim] and get it back to its proper role—assuring a better life for everyone, spiritu-
ally and materially. We need a new paradigm, and we need new metaphors for business. . . . We need a modern version of 'cathedral building,' . . . to inspire people to the challenging, rewarding, and socially responsible calling that business should be' (pp. 298-299). Clancy chooses not to detail a new vision that would be grounded in the very authenticity out of which his critique arises. Yet that is what authenticity demands of us, that we build our visions on an ethical base.

Ethical thinking is mediated through orienting metaphors. Lodged within each metaphor is a central ethical principle, directing our attention, telling us what is workable and what we should do. However, if a single metaphor totally shaped our perception, we would sink into the morass of cultural relativism. We would have no fulcrum for intellectual critique, no place from which to make ethical judgments about the ethical principle embodied in the metaphor. Authenticity critiques from both within and without, providing a conceptual and experiential touchstone for evaluation and recommendation. Therefore, I will examine both the internal alignment and the external reach of the six metaphors as they are enriched and informed by the ethical principles outlined in Chapter Seven. (Table 8.1 outlines the relationships.)

When we define life as a gift, we transform the givenness of

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existence into deep appreciation and affirmation of all of life, including death. Current leadership’s preoccupation with fixing the world takes our attention away from the glory of creation. The gift metaphor redirects us to be with that which is, not to fix that which is. Although the gift metaphor in isolation can induce resignation, helplessness and quietism, and preservation of the status quo at all costs, it is also essential in our orientation if we are to understand the sacredness of our past and appreciate existence as a trigger for insight. Authentic action’s home, its fundamental dwelling, is rooted in life is a gift.

A view of life as a market implies a freedom that complements the givenness of existence. At its best, the market opens our options for exploring our gifts. At its worst, it turns all gifts into utility objects, to be measured, controlled, and bargained over. Without freedom, gifts lie idle; with freedom, gifts are potentialities, to be chosen and tendered into the marketplace of ideas and material production in order to become essential resources.

The concept of life as an organic body corrects excesses that arise from an untempered market. Justice is framed as a regulative concept, insuring adequacy of production and fairness of distribution and redistribution of resources. Justice expresses itself in three sub-principles: equality, equity, and adequacy. Equality requires that we treat equals equally. Equity requires that we make up for past inequities by taking corrective action. And adequacy requires that particular distribution and redistribution criteria change as conditions change. Freedom without justice results in caprice and unfair externalities that the market cannot address on its own. As a friend of mine said, “Sometimes the invisible hand gives you the finger!” A market orientation maximizes efficiency; a body orientation concentrates on effectiveness. Market highlights exchange; body worries about sustainability and integrity of the total system.

The up-down metaphor brings energy to the social body. The body orientation seeks consensus; its natural tendency is to move toward equilibrium. The up-down orientation insprints, testing whether the claims of justice are real. An open door takes us into another room only if we can choose to use that doorway, only if what is formally present in the system has been claimed by us through struggle and change. Equal opportunities are energized
only by decision and commitment. At its worst, the up-down metaphor fails to transcend itself. Downs become ups and repeat the very patterns of oppression that once held them down. The struggle envisioned by this metaphor is an endless one that does not admit the possibility of side-by-side partnerships. At its best, up-down thinking marries dynamic to form, inspiring both toward a shared journey. It undergirds full participation in life’s sustaining opportunities.

A view of life as a journey justifies and energizes side-by-side partnerships. It transforms an up-down struggle into a shared voyage on which the sojourners attend to, care about, and learn from each other, regardless of status and political power. A journey orientation redirects power. Instead of facing in on itself or trying to fix others, it attends to being with the other. Love, identified as empathy, not sympathy, stands with others on their journeys, not to change these others but to be with them in their duress and joy. Justice cures; love cares. Henri Nouwen's comments on caring (1983) are instructive:

The word “care” finds its roots in the Gothic “Kara” which means lament. The basic meaning of care is: to grieve, to experience sorrow, to cry out. I am very much struck by this background of the word care because we tend to look at caring as an attitude of the strong toward the weak, of the powerful toward the powerless, of the have's toward the have not's. And, in fact, we feel quite uncomfortable with an invitation to enter into someone's pain before doing something about it. . . . The friend who cares makes it clear that whatever happens in the external world, being present to each other is what really matters. In fact, it matters more than pain, illness, or even death. . . . Therefore, to care means first of all to be present to each other [pp. 34-36].

As I said in the story of strangers, love also forgives. Senge (1990) takes this forgiveness into the business environment as a part of management, in what I think is an inappropriate way: remarking
that "to encourage risk taking is to practice forgiveness. Real forgiveness includes 'forgive' and 'forget.' Sometimes, organizations will 'forgive' in the sense of not firing someone if he makes a mistake, but the screw-up will always be hanging over the offender's head. Real forgiveness includes 'reconciliation,' mending the relationships that may have been hurt by the mistake" (p. 300). In my view, the popular adage "forgive and forget" misses the mark of authentic engagement. Unless we have had frontal lobotomies, we do not forget, nor can we. Far from meaning forgetting, reconciliation means admitting what is really going on. As Hannah Arendt (1959) says, forgiveness breaks the revenge cycle of human interaction, opening new possibilities for continuing the journey that is life (p. 221ff). Forgiveness remembers but declares a willingness to continue the relationship without blame, shame, or humiliation. Amnesty and pardon are political acts of societal forgiveness, which, for humanitarian or political reasons, do not require repentance. Ford pardoned Nixon; Carter offered amnesty to the Vietnam War objectors. At its best, a journey orientation levels the experiential terrain, offering virtual equality amid actual disparities. At its worst, this metaphor perpetuates ethnocentrism and advocates a responsibility to judge the journeys of some cultures as better than those of others.

When we view life as art, we take responsibility for creation and for our own creativity. This orientation adds accountability to the life journey. Humans cannot escape the fact of responsibility. Just as meaning intersects with existence in the Action Wheel, so too does the art metaphor link up with the gift metaphor. As we reflect on ourselves and others in action—as we create meaning—is (gift) and ought (art), fact (gift) and value (art) unite. Life as art says we ought to be responsible. Life as a gift declares that we are responsible. The act of showing up and engaging in life implies that we are accountable to ourselves and for others. One of Dostoevsky's characters in The Brothers Karamazov reveals the unity of fact and value when he says, "believe me, everyone is really responsible to all men for all men and for everything. I don't know how to explain it to you, but I feel it is so, painfully even. And how is it we went on then living, getting angry and not knowing?" (quoted in Morris, 1961, p. 1).
Responsibility, as a word and a concept, is so deeply enmeshed in our everyday speech, we fail to realize that it may be the only really new and provocative idea that has entered the stream of ethical reflection in recent history. Its rapid acceptance is a clue to its importance, not only in our ethical tool kit, but more critically, to a comprehensive model of action and leadership. McKeon (1990) traces the concept of responsibility in English and French thinking back to 1787, roughly the same time leadership emerged as a word and concept. His review of all the layers of meaning that responsibility has accumulated over two centuries reveals why this idea is so essential for us today.

As originally applied to the operation of political institutions, responsibility had four criteria. Under these criteria, McKeon (1990) states, a government or republic is responsible "(1) if it operates within the framework of law in which official action and control are reasonably predictable and (2) if its government reflects the attitudes of its people through institutions that provide for the regular election of personnel and regular review of policy" (p. 80). These initial criteria concentrate on two conceptual precursors to a full-blown theory of responsibility: namely, accountability and immutability. Accountability entails punishability, not just the fact of it, but that it should be deserved. Immutability entails the existence of free beings, deliberating and shaping their own destiny. Immutability will not become totally operational in the West, or elsewhere, until suffrage restrictions are totally removed. However, it is the concept of responsibility itself, not just political pressure, that has made it possible for governments to extend suffrage.

Accountability and immutability are negative criteria and are external to the person within the state. Accountability is demanded by the law; immutability is a product of the government's openness to constituents' influence. However, says McKeon, these criteria are supplemented by two positive and internal criteria: freedom and rationality. Freedom means that in "matters of the common good, the people are better judges than the uncontrolled ruler-elite. This idea challenged the idea that representative government or democracy will work only if the people are ready for it" (p. 81). Responsibility reverses that idea's order: people "acquire responsibility only by exercising it" (p. 81). Rationality means that "justice and
the moral sense of community is better advanced by free choice of moral criteria rather than by imposition and pre-supposition, precisely because the decision is more likely to be rational and truth is more likely to be advanced by frequent competition among ideas than by authoritative prior decision concerning the true” (p. 81).

The idea of political responsibility led to cultural responsibility because citizens belong to many cultural communities and participate in many different commons. These commons are determined by “religion, education, taste, ethical diversity, economic situation, [and] occupation” (pp. 81–82). Political responsibilities of nations both reflect and protect citizens' treasured traditions, making each community “responsible to other countries as well as to its members” (p. 23). Overall, responsibility “reflects and depends on a common rationality and on common values revealed in discussion and sought in action. . . . Responsibility is a reflexive relation: the responsibility of the individual and the responsibility of the community of which he is a member are interdependent, and independent communities assume responsibilities with respect to each other which constitutes a kind of inclusive community” (p. 82).

McKeon’s remarks demonstrate how responsibility discovers and makes public the We amid the Us and the Them. Responsibility is a driving force in leadership because it is coupled with dwelling, freedom, justice, participation, and love, and it presses toward convergence. The person and the community are interdependent, responsible to and for each other.

Furthermore, McKeon states that, over time, the external controls of accountability and immutability tend to become internalized. Persons in communities admit their actions and their actions' consequences. They do not blame the law for setting standards that are not their standards. Their preoccupation with their own interests changes to a recognition that their context includes self and others. Empathy opens the possibility of understanding the “problems, needs, and aspirations of others.” In the process, “the understanding of interest may be transformed into an understanding of the common good and of common values” (p. 83).

At its best, the art metaphor intimately connects responsibility with creativity, innovation, invention, and meaning. Life is the stage, canvas, or commons for meaning to be discerned, explored,
and created. At its worst, the art metaphor fosters counterfeit interpretations of life, denying the complex reality of existence. Escapist art is art; however, it disguises rather than reveals life in its fullest.

**Leadership, Metaphors, and Authenticity**

Leadership calls us to be authentic: to be true to ourselves and be true to the world. In order to be true to ourselves, we must look at any misalignment that exists between our professed metaphor and the behavior that is entailed by that metaphor. Thus, if the issue to be addressed is racism, the preliminary challenge to leadership is to invite supremacists to guarantee a place for all, discriminators to open access for all, social healers to sustain health for all, liberators to empower participation for all, journeyers to care for all, creators to take responsibility for all.

This call need not be harsh. Too often an attack on others only disguises gross incongruities in the very ones mounting the attack. Gentle authenticity offers ourselves and others more journey options. Better to ensure our own authenticity is in order than to flail about at others.

Paradoxically, the more secure we are in our own view, the more open we are to that of others and the easier it is to go clockwise on the Action Wheel. Thus, as we develop our visionary leadership and become comfortable with our personal metaphor, we can more readily perceive and receive the second step, which is to be expansive and inclusive of others' perspectives, to walk in the shoes of others and be true to the world.

Barker's insight challenged leadership to go into places that it would not ordinarily go. Metaphorical analysis may take us a level up to another metaphor. However, when we deal with public policy issues, a move to another metaphor is difficult. All too often, our own metaphor is invisible to us, even though it interprets and directs our actions. Only by sustained reflection and bumping against others can we begin to contemplate an alternative as a realm for understanding our actions.

Let me illustrate with two examples. The first shows the hidden interplay of ethics and metaphors. A young man who was a member of a leadership seminar group that had talked with Mitch
Snyder, the nationally known advocate for the poor and the homeless, just a few weeks prior to his death was deeply disturbed by Snyder. The true problem, the young man said, was empowerment and participation. Snyder should teach the poor to love and to take responsibility for their lives. The problem lay with the poor and with Snyder, who was not providing adequate ethical education to the homeless.

By using the Action Wheel, I saw that this young man was taking his ethical argument clockwise—which was totally appropriate. He moved the issue from power to mission and, therefore, had moved his ethical focus from participation to love. However, when he blamed the poor for their own plight, it was clear that the market metaphor was silently directing his view. I suggested to him that love was indeed the ethical issue, but that he had focused on the wrong group. The ups needed to love and take responsibility for their part of the social scene. Then Snyder would have something to discuss with him and them! There could be no real journey of mutual respect if the ups maintained indifference and apathy.

The second example illustrates how metaphorical discussions can open insight into situations in which “something is not right” but we don’t know what it is. Vivian Nelsen, a consultant on racism, and I were asked to work with the troubled and perplexed staff of a nonprofit community organization. They had been told they were a team, yet they did not feel like or function as a team. After six hours of exploration with them, it became apparent that one problem was a collision of three metaphors. They didn’t need each other to do their jobs, except for coordination (market); they talked as if they were family (body); and their social philosophy of service to the poor and excluded directed their organizational programming (up-down). Moreover, the director was challenging them to take on a new adventure (journey). Just surfacing the metaphorical complexity alleviated their disorientation and opened the possibility of improved understanding and informed decision making.

What is at stake in understanding our metaphors? Why are they so central to leadership?

Earlier, I used racism, one of our most persistently bedeviling issues, to illustrate the enormous consequences of orienting metaphors for leadership. As that example illustrated, our solutions,
directed by our metaphors, bear on people's lives. Distorting a metaphor destroys its promise, limiting and misdirecting action. Each orienting metaphor, in a very real sense, comes from the people. It is not imposed by leadership but proposed, because each metaphor informs both leader and follower as, together, they seek a vision that answers the question, What is really going on? Out of the millions of possible metaphors, only a few are broad and deep enough to reveal highly significant connections among all the experiences of life, sustain attention over time, and inspire fruitful investigation into reality.

No one metaphor, however, exhausts reality. Metaphors reveal as well as conceal, bringing certain aspects of life and policies for action to the forefront of our attention and disguising others. Hence, multiple orienting perspectives are essential in leadership thinking. If we were concerned only with logical consistency, the advice to be true to self would be the entire truth here. However, talking, even shouting, across metaphorical camps only exacerbates any issue. Not only do we need to think with more than one metaphor, we need to marry metaphorical analysis to an independently justifiable ethical framework. A commitment to a metaphor does not justify the use of that metaphor. The justification comes from ethical argument. And it is ethical justification that spurs leadership to select particular metaphors and expand its metaphorical repertoire.

Teaching Metaphorical Thinking

When I teach metaphorical thinking, I divide the seminar participants into six equal groups and give each group one of the six metaphors. I ask each group to brainstorm all the ways life is really a gift, a market, and so forth. After ten minutes of brainstorming, I ask the groups to report their findings. Beginning with the gift metaphor and working toward art, I throw out policy issues to each group, asking the group to frame the problem from its metaphorical perspective: What is your view of abortion, surrogate parenting, rationing of scarce goods, and so on? After some practice and coaching to jumpstart the process, the groups find metaphorical analysis
exciting and are surprised at how quickly they can frame issues from their metaphorical perspective.

After hearing three of the six groups (gift, market, and body), I point out how amazing they have been—framing problems with no data! Then the process continues; however, it also gets more difficult. We are all familiar with the market and body metaphors, but the up-down, journey, and art metaphors force the participants to reach for new thoughts. The art metaphor always proves to be the most difficult perspective to articulate.

Then I invite the participants to vote with their feet. Each person is asked to join the group that represents his or her strongest personal metaphor. Usually, all six metaphors are covered, although journey continually gets the most votes. Then I ask the participants two questions—what is the strength of your metaphor? And what does your metaphor conceal about life?

Next, the groups are invited to bump up against others’ metaphors, each group listening to the strengths and weaknesses of the others, each trying to impress on the others the insight from its preferred position. The entire process takes two-and-a-half to three hours. I always ask each group to use its metaphor to define racism and propose a solution. I also ask the groups the purpose of education. I do this for two reasons. First, the answers differ so dramatically that the participants can easily see the informing power of each metaphor. And second, the issues are so much in debate today that the participants can easily recall current examples of solutions and can quickly connect those examples with the metaphorical perspectives that inform them.

As a final comment on this teaching method, I suggest that metaphorical analysis is also important in the case-study method of teaching, which is dominant in most U.S. business schools. I have little doubt that complicated real-life cases challenge participants to think creatively. However, unless students are taught to analyze cases with metaphors in mind, they will not realize what is actually guiding their conclusions. Too many business cases play against the market metaphor without anyone's attending to what that metaphor reveals and conceals about life. Using the process of moving around the Action Wheel, a full metaphorical inquiry can challenge
participants to see more in a case than their single prevailing metaphor reveals.

Summary

Vision is controversial and difficult to define yet eagerly sought in current leadership theory and practice. In this chapter, I have critiqued current interpretations of vision and supplied the missing ethical and metaphorical foundation upon which leadership vision must be built. Vision is not imposed; it is proposed. It is even discovered in our midst. Wherever visionary leadership is found, it will possess orienting metaphors, ways of understanding life that direct both thinking and acting. Metaphors come and go, gain public currency, and then lose it. Six metaphors deserve our serious attention as central interpretive schemes in a comprehensive view of leadership: life as gift, market, body, ups versus downs, journey, and art. Each metaphor embodies a critical ethical principle, and both the principles and the metaphors are linked to the features of the Action Wheel. The degree to which leadership reflects the coherence and interdependence of these ethical principles, metaphors, and features of action determines that leadership's authenticity.