Voegelin's Ladder[1]

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Abstract: Leadership has non-logical aspects. One of these is spirituality. Voegelin's Ladder provides a context for studying spirituality as a part of leadership. What it reveals is that spirituality arises at the intersection of the human with the divine. Spirituality expresses itself as purpose and aspiration, which a leader embodies.

Key words: Great Chain of Being, leadership, spirituality, Voegelin, Eric.

> "Man is a ladder placed on earth and the top of it touches heaven.
> And all his movements and doings and words leave traces in the upper world."
> - Martin Buber (quoted in Hitt, 1992, p. 3).

Introduction

It is possible to reason about non-logical things. Leadership is one example. Leadership involves non-logical things. Emotion, for example, tends to be thought of as non-logical, yet there has emerged a tremendous interest in something called emotional intelligence. John Gardner once wrote that "in the tasks of leadership, the transactions between leaders and constituents go beyond the rational level to the nonrational and unconscious levels of human functioning" (1990, p. 14).

The literature is full of claims to the effect that leadership involves non-logical things such as passion and desire, as well as mystery, propaganda, and illusion. This would be true in any context, e.g. military, politics, business, and religion. Human beings have feelings, appetites, epiphanies, and tastes, and these can be overwhelming. We should respect them and not dismiss them as residual defects that triumphant Reason will eventually root out or repair. To a large extent, some of these non-logical aspects are the very things that give life savor, meaning, and purpose. Even so, non-logical features can be studied in a logical fashion. That is part of the mission of leadership studies, i.e., to study in a logical fashion the non-logical features of leadership—leadership abstracted from context. To do this, it helps to work within a frame of reference, a schema.

This paper describes a schema developed by the philosopher Eric Voegelin (1974/1990) for depicting a hierarchy, a ladder (if you will) of a range of human aspects. It shows that humanity has its non-logical features, but it also organizes these features in developmental levels, according to a logical structure that can be useful in conceptualizing the persons engaged in leadership—their complete nature as both logical and non-logical beings. With this schema,

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students of leadership can incorporate the non-logical aspects of a person in juxtaposition to the logical, which we shall refer to as rational/analytical thought. In other words, from within one of the levels on the ladder, we will begin to see it all.

Spirituality qualifies as a non-logical feature of human life. Issues of spirituality pertain to that which is at the higher reaches of consciousness. Given the interest by leadership scholars in matters spiritual—and given the confusions that easily arise when trying to discuss them logically—the following paper begins to frame an answer to the question: "What does it mean to speak of higher things?" To get there, we must adopt a mental model distinguishing the upper from the lower. Voegelin's ladder does just that.

A word of caution is immediately necessary. Rational/analytical thought, as we are calling it, cannot completely fathom reality. Certain aspects of life are impervious to its scrutiny. "The heart," wrote Pascal, "has its reasons that Reason does not know." Freud, for example, studied hidden non-rational drives in the psyche. LeBon studied non-rational drives in the mob. Edmund Burke referred to sentiment, Kierkegaard, to faith, and Schopenhauer, to the will. Reason has its place, but it quickly finds itself subordinated or set aside in actual experience, and even though most people believe it is worthwhile to apply reason to non-logical things for purposes of study, reason can never thoroughly grasp or contain it. As Ken Wilber was to put it, relying on Kant and Nagarjuna, rational arguments attempt "to use the eye of mind to see that which can be seen only with the eye of contemplation" (1998, p. 21).

It takes an integrated vision of human nature to depict for rational/analytical thought that requires the eye of contemplation. Kenneth Boulding (1956) suggested a handy way of understanding this. There is what he called an image we use to operate in the world. Part of it is conscious, the part we pay attention to, like the part of a building that shows up at night in flashlight. Part of it is unconscious, the part we could pay attention to, if we choose to do so, like the parts of a building that are presently dark to us, but which we could see if only we move the flashlight. The third part of the image is subconscious, a part we cannot pay attention to, like the parts of a building behind the façade, where the flashlight cannot penetrate. All three parts affect behavior (p. 54). The trick is discerning what lies behind the façade. Boulding believed that the rest must be left to inference.

Are the things behind the façade all the same? Are all non-logical features of leadership alike? They are largely opaque to us, behind the façade and easy to cluster together in our imagination. Should we refer to all of it as the subconscious? Henri de Lubac (1944/1949) complained, "How often the supraconsciousness is confused with the infraconsciousness!" (p. 383). Supraconsciousness and infraconsciousness make a fine and volatile distinction. There are in a sense two types of things behind the façade: similar in being non-logical, but otherwise at opposite ends of a spectrum or ladder. Voegelin's ladder depicts something at the higher reaches of consciousness and something at the lower reaches of consciousness, at the fringe or twilight of ordinary human consciousness, and both are non-logical aspects of human behavior.

In order to portray Voegelin's ladder, we make two immediate distinctions. First, we distinguish the façade from that which lies behind the façade. Second, we distinguish what lies behind the façade between supraconsciousness and infraconsciousness.

Below and above

An integrated vision of human nature will capture non-logical aspects of those who engage in leadership. Not everything that is non-logical is the same. Voegelin's ladder attempts to

differentiate these aspects vertically, with categories below rational/analytical thought as well as above. At the lower reaches of consciousness would be things that we normally call material, biological, lower needs and drives, such as instincts, appetites, the will to power, and so forth. Writers who emphasize these non-logical things (e.g. Freud, LeBon, Burke, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer) are trying to explain the foundations of phenomena such as leadership. Why do those we refer to as leaders feel compelled to lead to begin with and why do those we refer to as followers respond?

How far back into the material stuff will the explanation go? We might talk about impulses or urges. We might examine the psychological effects of a leader's height, health, resonant voice, posture, alpha animal traits signaling a primate coping-mechanism for the community, and so forth. The hypothesis is that humans tend to lead and follow in response to sub-rational forces, such as fear or fascination. Curious students can go back of psychology to genetics, evolutionary biology, chemistry even, I suppose, and electricity. This "downward" path looks at leadership as an outward phenomenon of a deep, organic process attributable ultimately to the impulses of vitality. The search is for causal explanations at the most basic level.

A distinct variation of this path is the power of myth. Writers on leadership such as Bruce Mazlish (1990), James Hillman (1995), and C.F. Alford (1994) have treated this variation with dexterity and depth. From within this variation come works on soul, which is different from spirit. In simplistic terms: soul is lower than spirit, a repository of myth and archetype, further below even rational/analytical thought, though higher than our vegetative and inorganic natures (see e.g., Wilber, 1998, pp. 162-166; Wilber, 2000, pp. 193-197).

As students entering the investigation from the rational/analytical level, we can describe a vertical line, with paths going up and down, in both directions. The first path, the one we have already started to describe (which de Lubac labeled "infraconsciousness") probes downward, toward the material foundations of human behavior. The second path goes in the opposite direction. With de Lubac, we can call this path supraconsciousness, and it includes things we normally understand as aesthetic, moral, if not religious. It refers to a higher calling, a larger purpose, things such as destiny and vision, as though humans are beings with free will who aspire to something above or beyond themselves. Writers who emphasize these non-logical things are trying to explain the way that humans set goals and dream dreams. What are folks wanting to achieve? What do they hope to gain? Are we all part of something beyond our daily survival? Is there something more? This second path, traveling up our vertical line, looks at leadership as the means for fulfilling some cluster of aspirations. It is in a word teleological.

The characterization of one path going down while the other path goes up connotes superiority, a hierarchy, as though going up were nobler, more elevated than the other. Our language is full of similar metaphors equating "up" with "better." It would be unnecessary to accept that connotation. James Hillman has written extensively on behalf of going down—not toward the material specifically, such as organic chemistry, but toward myth and the soul (see e.g., Hillman, 1975). Down is good, too. That is why it might seem more acceptable to speak of going *deeper*. That has a different connotation.

We must be careful, because the point of Voegelin's ladder is to examine what lies beyond the vantage point of rational/analytical thought, for purposes of study, and not to regress completely to the lower levels, renouncing what lies above.

Studies of leadership that move downward are perfectly legitimate. They form part of a complete treatment of the subject. We all have much to learn from the study of infraconsciousness. There is a non-logical foundation to human behavior. It is out of that

foundation that humans emerge as they are. A thorough understanding of it can only help the cause. To highlight one example, Bernard Bass reports that several studies indicate leaders possess higher energy levels than non-leaders. Energy is an infraconscious factor that appears to be relevant to leadership (1990, pp. 89-90).[2]

It is our purpose in this paper to move in the other direction, upward, toward the spiritual—not to repudiate what lies below, but rather to seek to understand what seems to lie above. It too is comprised of the non-logical, and it too (in my opinion) can be studied rationally…up to a point. Chester Bowling, to cite one example, refers to a "nonrational epistemology" about leadership because the spirit lies in the "noncognitive realm" (2001, p. 370). How then do we show that realm?

Voegelin's ladder

The image of a vertical line to order our thinking in this way received an explanation in a little known essay by Eric Voegelin. In the *Southern Review* (1974), he published "Reason: The Classic Experience." His article included an appendix, where he set out a table to show what he called "levels in the hierarchy of being" (1974/1990, p. 290).

Table 1. Voegelin's Ladder

		Person	Society	History
	Divine Nous			
	Psyche Noetic			
	Psyche Passions			
	Animal nature			
	Vegetative nature			
	Inorganic nature			
	Apeiron -- Depth			

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In Voegelin's words:
The arrow pointing down indicates the order of formation from the top down. The arrow pointing up indicates the order of foundation from the bottom up…. The order of formation and foundation must not be inverted or otherwise distorted…. (*Id*., p. 290)

According to his principle of completeness, we must understand and appreciate each of the levels and not isolate any one of them. The ladder goes a long way toward illustrating what it would mean to have a comprehensive understanding of leadership: all of the cells on the ladder

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[2] No one can ignore the material factors of leadership, whatever the context. In reference to Napoleon III, Bass has quoted Emile Zola: "A grain of sand in a man's flesh and empires totter and fall." (1990, p. 155) Bass then considered the effects of ill-health on leaders at the onset of World War I, plus specific crises in the American presidency attributable to physiological conditions. Later, he foresaw the importance to leadership studies of breakthrough findings in genetics (1990, p. 911).

would be filled. Doing so would purportedly connect everything together. He saw no advantage in reductionist models.

Human beings operate at all levels simultaneously; these are simply different ways to approach the same reality.[3] In other words, we are at one and the same moment physical objects operating according to physical laws—inorganic, vegetative, and animal—as well as psychological creatures with passions, beliefs, and imaginations (*Id*., p. 268). Voegelin insists on humanity's participation in the complete hierarchy of being and refers to it as our "integral nature" (*Ibid*). We fully occupy a reality between the two poles of transcendence at the top and the *apeiron* at the bottom. The temptation to pick one level and insist that it must be the *only* level he calls "hypostasis." It is a reductionist fallacy—unnecessary, for one thing, and unresponsive to the evidence (*Id*., p. 290; Harvey, 2001, p. 378; see Wilber, 1998, pp. 38 & 56f). As the Spanish philosopher once wrote: "The sole false perspective is that which claims to be the only one there is" (Ortega, 1923/1961, p. 92).

Not everyone agrees with this position. There are writers who do choose one level, one way of understanding, and declare the rest to be illusory. "Language of 'higher things' rationalizes behavior," they might argue, "cloaking it in legitimating words, almost to the point of deceit." They hold that claims of spirituality in leadership are little more than a pious fraud. Borrowing from Karl Marx, John Dirks refers to this as the opiate hypothesis, which holds that "spirituality of work represents a corporate attempt to mollify workers into accepting and cooperating with essentially oppressive and exploitative work conditions" (2000, p. 2; see also p. 6).

For purposes of illustrating hypostasis further, Jacques Barzun mentions an 18th century book titled *Man as Machine*, followed in the next century by the declaration of man as an automaton. Since then, he writes, "man has been portrayed as a chemical, glandular, and electrical machine, [even] predestined and worked by the instrumentality of cells and genes." (2000, p. 367) Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer famously attacked this line of thinking in *Back to Freedom and Dignity* (1972/1982).

Voegelin's ladder makes room for many "viewpoints" so long as no one view presumes to exclude the rest. It allows for the possibility that leadership, as a phenomenon in reality, can be studied profitably at any one of the levels, from multiple perspectives.

Leadership < > Spirituality

At the pinnacle of Voegelin's ladder we would find that level where we can start to make sense of spirituality. This highest level implicates or refers to something even higher, beyond which we cannot go, transcending humanity. The highest level represents the point where humanity intersects with the divine. For that reason, it will have to remain incomplete, tinged with mystery, allusive.

Despite its inscrutability, we have to take spirituality seriously and do our best to understand it, for several reasons (see generally, Harter, 2004).

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[3] Ken Wilber uses the imagery of a ladder to illustrate a progression, which is not incompatible with Voegelin's purpose inasmuch as Voegelin speaks from a higher rung on the ladder that includes everything that came before. His is a static model, not a dynamic model. For Voegelin, the perspective embracing all of the levels simultaneously matches the highest levels in Wilber's ladder of consciousness. For a discussion of the ladder as a progression, see Wilber, 2000, chap. 9.

a) There has been a revival of interest in spirituality among academics in management, organizational behavior, and leadership studies, so we have to take some account of their work.

b) Academics have become increasingly interested largely because spirituality has been invoked by leaders and followers as meaningful, if not determinative, for their experiences of leadership (Cavanaugh & Bandsuch, 2002; Harvey, 2001; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

c) Leaders and scholars alike have examined the possibility that spirituality has instrumental value (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 86). Corinne McLaughlin assembled multiple findings, concluding that "[s]pirituality could be the ultimate competitive advantage" (2002, citing Mitroff).

d) It is not just a competitive advantage. Spirituality pertains to morality and ethics. (Marsden, 1997, p. 85; see generally MacIntyre, 1981/1984) Debates and investigations into the origins and validity of moral claims frequently refer to spirituality. Cavanaugh & Bandsuch (2002) even argue that virtue should be the benchmark for spirituality in business.

e) At the very least, claims of spirituality deserve as much respect as other diverse claims in a pluralistic society (Marsden, p. 86). It will not do to bar them at the gate.

What people are saying…

Spirituality is hard to define. Different traditions offer versions. Frequently, people who claim to experience the spirit simply refuse to give more than a vague description, saying that such things are ineffable. They are, in the words of Ken Wilber, "attempting to use the eye of mind to see that which can be seen only with the eye of contemplation" (1998, p. 21). What does he mean by that?

As a practical matter, how does a person discern various levels on the ladder? Wilber finds a corresponding "mode of knowing" for each of the three dominant levels of matter, mind, and spirit, which he refers to as the eye of flesh, the eye of mind, and the eye of contemplation (1998, p. 18). Thus, if we want to know anything, we must use the appropriate mode of knowing (*Id.*, p. 155ff). To understand the spiritual dimension of leadership, therefore, we must use what he calls the eye of contemplation, which can be difficult. Specifically with regard to leadership, however, a number of writers have made the attempt, directly or indirectly.

In other words, leadership studies already includes attempts to connect leadership with spirituality, even though these writers do not explicitly place their attempts within a schema like Voegelin's. Without knowing it, they have been searching the higher reaches of Voegelin's ladder to illuminate or explain leadership behavior.

We might justifiably imitate Aristotle, who in similar situations would look around to find what people are already saying about a topic. For the sake of brevity, I restrict myself here to a few writers. Their remarks do not actually *prove* the importance of this non-logical, supraconscious realm, but they do illustrate a widespread belief in its importance among people who have spent considerable time reflecting on leadership.

The reader might notice in these remarks a tendency of the writers to speak of leaders in isolation from their relationships, following the model of leadership in which individuals influence others toward desired goals and objectives. Leadership was about the leader—his traits, behaviors, and styles. For a long time this has been a conventional way to talk about leadership.

A number of critics have since disparaged such "great man" approaches to the study of leadership, challenging the assumption that when studying leadership we can meaningfully study only the leader (e.g., Lee, 1991/1993). Nevertheless, the following writers did work within that tradition. For this reason and for reasons cited elsewhere, so shall I (Harter, 2003).

Many of these authors refer to the leader's "higher" purpose. The leader is not to be merely utilitarian, using or deploying followers in order to achieve results. Rather, a leader answers to a higher calling, grounded in something sublime, transcendent, or holy, and it is that fealty, that dedication which positions her to lead others. What exactly are they saying when they say things like this?

In what follows, the authors do not always use the explicit language of spirituality, and that is my point. They *implicate* spirituality.

Certain Christians writers can be seen to urge the connection of leadership with spirituality. They are usually explicit. John Maxwell has made a career in the Christian publishing industry by beginning with scriptural precepts and drawing conclusions about what leadership is (or ought to be). Let it not go unsaid in this place that much of the literature is unapologetically anti-intellectual, grounded in fundamentalist dogma—which does not mean that it is necessarily wrong or useless. Among intellectuals from within the Christian tradition, Irving Babbitt and Richard Weaver made similar claims about leadership, and their voices have been too long neglected in leadership studies (Panichas, 1996/1999, chap. 5). Nevertheless, Christianity is not the sole basis for connecting spirituality and leadership.

Not all of the persons writing about spirituality have a religious perspective. Some are simply groping for words that intend much the same thing as spirituality. Their work is secular. Peter Koestenbaum sets out in his book on *Leadership: The Inner Side of Greatness* to show that by pursuing greatness we "ennoble human nature and strengthen our societies" (1991, p. xi). Toward that end, leaders engage in transcending (even mystical) visions at a higher level perspective (*Id*., chap. 5). Kouzes and Posner use comparable language. They urge leaders to be forward-looking and inspiring. "If a leader displays no passion for a cause, why should others?" (1987, p. 21). Thus, by describing a lofty vision, leaders "ennoble those who work on its behalf [and] elevate the human spirit" (*Id*., p. 117). James MacGregor Burns describes transforming leadership as raising leader and follower "to higher levels of motivation and morality" because followers are to be lifted or elevated into their better selves (Burns, 1978, pp. 20, 41-46). Peter Vaill considers spirituality to be a requisite of visionary leadership, such that "all true leadership is indeed spiritual leadership" (1989, p. 223).

Charles Handy insists that "life is about more than surviving—there could be something glorious about it, it could contribute to a better world. That leaves one with a personal challenge, to do something glorious with one's life. It is also, I believe, a challenge for every organization and every business" (1998, p. 118). In addition to these voices are books on spirituality reviewed recently in *The Leadership Quarterly* (2001). Let us take a closer look at what all of these writers are claiming.

In the next section, this paper will attempt a synthesis, rarely attributing specific claims to specific sources. This is my attempt to combine the many loose associations of leadership with spirituality to which this paper has just alluded into a more coherent treatment, so that we reach an answer to the question raised earlier, namely "what does it mean to speak of higher things?"

Leadership *implies* spirituality

Leadership, like spirituality, is a relationship grounded in a purpose, and that purpose reflects the aspirational character of its participants. Participants experience and respond to the tension of existence. Leadership originates in a desire to change the present, to improve something about one's existence and bring it into alignment with an ideal, no matter how slight. Leadership embodies those aspirations, representing a level of faith we have as humans that together we can participate in approximating those ideals. Aspiration justifies leadership.

Humans obviously aspire. They envision a future that is different, better somehow, from the one they presently occupy. They believe things can get better. And rather than sit around hoping for that to happen on its own accord, like manna from heaven, humans tend to get up and do something about it. They participate in trying to improve the world. This drive to realize better days takes shape, moving from need to idea to purpose, and then humans get down to work. To the extent they work together toward some common purpose, issues of leadership become comprehensible. The very existence of common or collective purpose makes leadership possible. According to Mary Parker Follett, common purpose is what makes leadership intelligible (1919).

This purpose—whatever it is—belongs to the spiritual realm, no matter how mundane. It might not be so overtly religious as praising one's God or winning salvation for the soul, but it belongs to the spiritual realm regardless. Within that spiritual realm of dreams, desires, designs, and decisions, we may try to make a profit, assault an enemy ridge, or pass legislation. It could be any one of a number of objectives. Spirituality does not have to be restricted to lofty or vague ideals.

The question arises whether all human aspiration derives from the realm of spirit. To the extent that spirit infuses all things down through the ladder, then the answer would be "yes"— but it is important to recognize that the aspirations at the lowest levels will seem unremarkable, if not crass. To say that feeding the body and taking a nap reflect our spiritual being stretches the ordinary meaning of "spiritual." We could as easily ascribe these aspirations to the level immediately above, such that the animal nature shapes the vegetative, and the emotional shapes the animal, and the rational/analytical shapes the emotional, and so on, with the spiritual font becoming increasingly apparent and unfiltered the higher one goes.

Another question arises about aspirations we would declare to be unethical or evil. Could it be spiritual to desire the extermination of a rival clan, for example, or the assassination of its leader? Superficially, to the perpetrator the choices might seem praiseworthy and, yes, spiritual, resulting in fame, apotheosis, and an eternal reward of bliss. Nazi prison commandants, suicide bombers, and Hutus wielding machetes all might have considered themselves fulfilling some high purpose. Most of us today would not be satisfied with that assessment, which is why I would characterize their condition as a spiritual disease—a term coined by F.W.J. Schelling and elaborated by Voegelin elsewhere.[4]

With this in mind, one long term project for a pragmatic leader, it seems to me, would be sorting through these various aspirations, reconciling most, rejecting some, and prioritizing them into some kind of coherence. That coherence ultimately fits into the coordinates of two classic questions of self-awareness: (a) who am I? And (b) why am I here? All purposeful action

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[4] On the origin of the term "pneumopathology," see Day, 2003, pp. 11-12. See also Voegelin, 1990, pp. 278ff. The topic of pneumopathology however exceeds the scope of this paper.

presumes to derive from how we are oriented with regard to identity and vocation. Consequently, so too would leadership presume to answer those questions, for both the leader and the followers.

Max Scheler, writing extensively on spirit, regarded it completely as "guidance and direction" (1928/1961, pp. 62 & 68). Spirit sublimates drives or instinct by detaching a person momentarily from the immediate press of events (dictated by the infraconsciousness and its encounters with the world) to contemplate another way, another possible condition, which it then pursues by channeling energy. Spirit inspires leaders to realize a vision and permits them to inspire followers to do the same. In this way, leaders experience spirit within themselves and evoke spirit in others.

Suppose that a leader articulates a vision about the kind of shipping department she expects to be supervising at a manufacturing facility. That is her purpose. She is painting a verbal picture of the future she wants to bring about, and she is trying to get her subordinates in the shipping department to share that vision, to buy in to it, so that together they can work to make it a reality. That is the typical kind of aspiration in leadership studies—worldly, narrow, common. No one disputes that some leaders articulate more elevated visions, such as world peace and eternal bliss, so the point I am trying to make is that they are in essence the same thing. It does not really matter how lofty the goal. The supervisor has taken a piece of the whole vision for a better world (where everyone profits and workers go home proud of their labors, while customers experience delight) and has applied that to a specific set of circumstances, for a specific set of people and a specific task. Her vision is part of a larger vision. And that's okay.

The literature on leadership and spirituality appears to be asking leaders and the scholarly community to take seriously the spiritual dimension of even the most mundane projects, to contemplate the way in which a leader's immediate vision fits a larger vision. "Are you building a cathedral or just cutting stone?"

That is what I understand the literature to intend.

A prescription

Voegelin's ladder depicts a hierarchy in which higher levels form the lower ones. Lower levels constrain what the higher levels can do. And as the levels get higher on the chart, levels that are *relatively* lower actually resist formation and (in a manner of speaking) push back. Animal appetites frequently crowd aside rational thought, as Maslow rightly understood; rational thought has for its part been clever stigmatizing spirituality as delusion or superstition. What lies below resists what lies above. Part of what this journal intends, as I understand it, is the restoration of hierarchy (or in the vocabulary of Wilber "holarchy"), as a matter of prescription, reestablishing the rank order, so that first and foremost a leader is attuned to her purpose, subordinating her powers to that purpose, with each descending level forming the levels that fall below it. To do that, she must be aware of the constraints placed upon her ambitions by these lower levels. Aspiration that is oblivious to real world constraints is un-realistic, overweening (we might say), at risk of becoming utopian, oppressive, even stupid.

Just as the stone resists shaping, requiring the violence of the chisel or the abrasion of corundum in order to embody the sculptor's image for it, so also throughout the hierarchy will lower levels resist the higher. For this reason do we have to remind ourselves that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." To the extent that the spiritual purpose of leadership influences followers, it must bring them into alignment or confluence, overcoming resistance by cascading from above, from aspiration down to rational/analytical thought, down to the passions, through

the animal nature. Leadership that neglects this work will struggle, if not fail, as followers yield here and there to their own weaknesses and generally drift away from the task at hand. In shades of Douglas MacGregor's Theory X, leadership would be the shaping or ordering of these levels (in oneself and in others) toward achieving a purpose—a discipline, if you will.

Leaders sometimes neglect this work and lose sufficient mass. In this sense, their leadership seems airy, detached, and ultimately fantastic. Reality gets away from them, and their vision reveals itself to be nothing more than a dream. By way of contrast, leaders sometimes undertake this work of trying to shape lower levels to make them conform without respecting inherent limitations, driving folks to exhaustion, abusing their trust, and creating warps, monstrosities. A Khmer Rouge, to cite one tragic example, devoted extraordinary resources to imposing widespread equality and uniformity.

Both the ineffectual utopian and the cruel slave driver share this in common: they do not take seriously the reality of their situation and work with it.

It is true that people in their personal lives usually fail to hold this hierarchy together in good order, knowingly or not, which is one reason they respond to leaders who do. Voegelin's ladder is almost a template for patterns of domination, as persons operating from a higher level are more likely to lead. I would not push the analogy too far. It does however tend to reinforce the claim that people are likely to follow leaders with integrity, where integrity means the *integration* of the entire person, up and down the ladder. And, ordering the whole thing— transcending and including the rest—is the spirit, a force and criterion of order (Voegelin, 1974/1990, p. 265).

Students of leadership would be advised for the sake of thoroughness to consider the role of spirituality in leadership. Voegelin's ladder assists in that project.

Summary

We are human beings trying to understand human behavior. At some point in our ruminations, we are obliged to make plain our anthropological framework. *What does it mean to be human?*

Scholars are inclined to value rationality, and they should. Scholars themselves tend to be very smart, and as scholars they tend to be rewarded for their intelligence, so they come to rely heavily on their intellectual powers—their rational/analytical powers. Rationality lies at the heart of their work. To complement this, in academic settings I must make controversies surrounding the limits of this kind of reason explicit.

Another reason to make these controversies explicit is the methodological assumption behind many investigations in rational choice and game theory that participants in social interactions are thoroughly rational. This is an assumption—a useful assumption, in many instances—but an assumption, nevertheless, which we would do well on occasion to doubt, in deference to the empirical evidence that leadership is just as largely non-logical, if not more so.

These controversies gave me an excuse in this paper to make plain one anthropological framework, namely Voegelin's ladder, which presents a broad and variegated image of humanity. This framework not only assists in the study of leadership, as for example in classifying previous research, it also suggests a way of structuring prescriptions for leadership. Studies and advice that take a more integrated view of humanity are more closely aligned with experience.

Promptings of the spirit form aspirations, which take shape in the mind of a leader as purpose that will depend on rational/analytical thought to design and then execute a plan in light of

existing constraints. Spirituality informs ethics, which in turn relies on our intellectual powers to prepare a response to the demands of a paramount reality. To the extent we are going to teach others how to lead, therefore, we should in my opinion ground their ambition in their life's vocation and equip them intellectually to integrate their whole life and their circumstances as a precondition for their attempts to lead. Otherwise, leadership is little more than messing in the lives of those who have their own callings and dreams.

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