

# Stories of Leadership in Art and Culture Creating Organizations

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to discuss leadership in art and culture creating organizations. We ask: Do we need the old tales of leaders as heroes? Both in symphony orchestras and film projects, where this text has its empirical base, there can be found several committed people. Why not view the whole working team, including the leader, as a hero! The question is of significance because of ethical aspects, but also when talking about how the art making processes are understood. Accordingly, we argue that the old story on leadership can be written with a relational perspective. That is, leadership is viewed as a shared phenomenon in an organization, and can not be defined with ideas about how successful a leader is, or what qualities s/he has. The conclusion is that the leader and those s/he interacts with are responsible for the relations and actions they construe jointly, which implies to notice aesthetics in leadership processes.

## **Keywords**

Aesthetic Leadership, Relational Perspective, Conductor, Film Director.

## **1. Introduction**

One of the common images of a leader in our society is the conductor of a symphony orchestra. He is the lonely genius who stands in front of and masters the chaotic crowd of one hundred individualistic and artistic musicians inspiring them to complete a common goal. The orchestra as a metaphor for society and the conductor for leadership is also found in a lot of management literature (Koivunen 2003, Köping 2003, Stenström 2000, Spitzer 1996). Further, the metaphor is not only used in business administration, also another aesthetic leader role, namely the film director has been characterised as a conductor (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997).

When we started our ethnographic research projects on organizing and leadership in the art creating field, i.e. the symphony orchestra and a film project<sup>1</sup>, we were influenced by these conceptions, with a romantic view of the leader as the hero who empowers, enthuses and is in control of events. This idea, according to Yukl (2002), corresponds to much research and theory

on leadership, which has favoured the importance of a single heroic leader. This leader is often described to possess certain leadership traits such as charisma, wisdom, courage, drive, motivation and self-confidence. Even though these ideas have been criticised in the research community, and leadership research has developed to discuss leadership behaviour, style, contingency, symbolic, aesthetic, etc. approaches (Bryman 1996; Kirkeby, 2000), still the trait approach have a strong influence on the understanding of the leader role.

Although there is a great adoration of heroes in the art-creating field, we found the metaphor insufficient in understanding our empirical fields. We have been asking how these ideas about the leader, both in the field of art and business administration, can be understood concerning the view of man in the debate surrounding modernism/postmodernism and after. We found a criticism of the idea of man as a self conscious, autonomous, integrated, free thinking subject who constitutes himself and his world (Foucault, 1972; Benhabib, 1992; Carter & Jackson, 2000; Dachler, Hosking & Gergen, 1995; von Wright, 2000). To question the hero myth, we are not alone, either. Problems and risks with the celebration of the business hero are also noticed by Kavanagh and O'Leary. They state, with reference to Mintzberg, that "we have become enamored of a heroic view of management", and what we get "is not management, but hubris". (Kavanagh and O'Leary, 2004: 116,128).

The aim of this paper is to discuss an alternative view of leadership which, according to us, better illustrate the phenomenon. Inspired by ethnographic method our empirical studies have been conducted in the art creating field, which has given us an opportunity to compare our interpretations with the traditional literature on leadership in business administration. We want to point out that there are both similarities and varieties in leadership in different kinds of aesthetic and art creating organizations.

## 2. Empirical Findings

To illustrate the reasoning, used in this paper, some empirical illustrations are given concerning the everyday working practices in filmmaking and a symphony orchestra in Sweden.

### **The Context of Filmmaking**

#### *An Episode on the Screen*

Two men in military uniforms sit close by inside a tank. It is dark and foggy. Red lights flash on the tanks control panel. The facial expressions are tense and the voices angry. The younger man who is driving the tank insists on quitting the war and deserting.

"Drive, or I'll shoot you" hisses the older man and points a gun to the young man's head. There is a close up of the back of the threatened man's neck where drops of sweat can be seen.

#### *Tales from "The Off Screen"*

The episode above describes a few scenes from a film and lasts for a few minutes on the screen. In reality it took two days to shoot. I (MSW) followed the shooting phase on location<sup>2</sup>. The tank described above is not a real tank but the stage design has been built in a studio. The scene is cramped. Beside the actors, there is also a director and the photographer with a camera and stand that compete for space, not to mention all kinds of lighting equipment and microphones.

It is very hot in the room. To create the foggy impression smoke is needed. The smoke machine has broken down so the smoke is manufactured by melting beeswax on a frying pan an assistant carries, waving it around all the electric cables, people, stands and crates. There is an odious smell because of the smoke. Someone has got a headache. There is a problem with the wiring to the little red lamps on the tank's control panel. They will not blink. Everyone has to wait until it is fixed. The electrician entertains us with little clever remarks, some of which are obscene.

People are running to and fro between the takes, everything is somewhat chaotic. The A and B photographers measure the distance between the camera and the actors' heads. The director is listening to the dialogue between the actors. The sound technician tries to find an appropriate place for the microphone and then listens to the sound. The make-up person is dabbing glycerine on the back of the neck of one actor to give the impression of sweat. It is difficult to find good camera angles.

The director and photographer decide to re-shoot the scene over and over again. The director complains that someone has brought coffee into the room thus putting the equipment in the cases in jeopardy of being destroyed and yells at the assistant who tallies with the frying pan. But, after a while: Silence! Action! Camera! the director calls out. All at once everyone concentrates, the atmosphere is intensely charged, everything is still except for the actors and the camera rolling. The actors have to perform the same movement, express the same words, display the same emotion with feeling. It is a tough scene as far as content goes, and emotionally as well. Stress. Problems with the camera angle. More smoke is needed, the beeswax is not in place, fetch, wait, and, eventually, time for the next take. Silence! Action!

.... and so on....Actually, they didn't live happily ever after. – Should they have?- However, there can be an enormous sense of solidarity, intimacy, playfulness, jocularity during a shooting.

### **Comments about Organizing in Film Projects**

In a film project there are different phases involved. Activities culminate in the shooting phase, when the script is created in a filmic form. The dynamics during the shooting phase are in focus in this text. An ordinary shooting phase in Sweden takes about one and a half to three months.

#### *“You Want a Team Which is on the Same Journey”*

The organization that is set up to create a film is a temporary one. A film team consists of about 15-25 people. The team is seldom entirely the same from project to project, but several directors and producers have told me that it is an advantage to work with a team they have met before. There is mostly hard work during the shooting, including a great deal of overtime or filming at night.

There is traditionally a clear distribution and specialisation of work in a film team. The photographer uses the camera; the sound technician records the sound. How one works in a technical sense, how one uses one's equipment, is the same from project to project. The idea that the director is supposed to realise, however, is unique and changes from one project to the next. The creative process is unique; there are different scripts, teams, locations, etc. In project research various ways of relating to the project have been noted in a team (Engwall, 1995; Sahlin, 1996; Brännmark, 1996). There are fiery spirits who are there to realise their idea, but also people who see it as a job like any other. Different interests meet, and some kind of negotiation is going on about the limits for the numerous sub-tasks (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995).

Can a director assume that the whole team is interested in the artistic vision? Director Christina Olofson explained that it should be the task of the director to create circumstances for the artistic spirit to be there. She doesn't like the division of the team into the artistic and technical units, everyone needs to feel the rhythm of the artistic process. She exemplified it by describing the task of the person who tracks the camera on the rails. The appropriate speed and rhythm have to be provided by this person, because tracking must correspond with the action desired.

Film-making is expensive. A film director described it as running in front of a high-speed train and creating at the same time. In traditional project management literature, careful planning is identified as one of the most important conditions for a successful project. Several informants have similarly talked about the importance of careful planning and rigorous preparations before the shooting in order to guarantee the optimal conditions for the creative process, but also to minimise costs. However, despite all the planning, it is impossible to predict everything. This has been noted in project management literature, especially in cases where flexibility is required, along with "the dream of rationality" (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Lundin & Söderholm, *ibid.*; Lindahl, 2003). For instance, it is hailing when the script calls for sun and swimming, or the house, which should be set afire in shooting tomorrow, happens to be on fire today. The actors in film production use words like circus or battle field to describe the turbulent nature of the shooting phase.

Often the plans need to be changed. It facilitates improvisation if a leader can rely on the cooperation of the team. Several people have pointed out that besides the team members' professional capacities, of importance is the social dimension, too. The crew must be able to work together under considerable pressure. This is an aspect which people are not always aware of, and not only in film projects (Ricciardi, 1999).

### *Leadership in a Film Project*

Many claim that there is a need for someone to drive the process forward in a film project. In Swedish film production the director has the right to "the final cut", s/he decides what the final film text will look like. Handling the turbulence during the shooting is thus viewed by the team as part of the director's role. Consequently, the director must navigate between the financial demands, practical organizing and artistic ambitions that are important not least to the director's integrity. It means hundreds of both important and trivial decisions in a single day. It was the common belief that, if the director fails in these decision-making activities, there is a risk that the process will get off track, with disastrous consequences, both economic and artistic.

Consequently, how the leader role is constructed and leadership exercised is dependent, partly, on the hierarchy. "It is an advantage for you as a director if the team doesn't question your decisions". Partly, there is a need for a sensitive artistic leader. 'A vulnerable bulldozer', was a description film director Marianne Ahrne said she got as the project leader during the shooting.

On the one hand you must be a commander, who manages the pitched battle that a shooting is like. On the other hand you should be the artistic leader, who catches the moods and creates a secure platform for the actors. In all creation, courage is needed and the actor needs a secure relation to her/his director. It is only then, you are capable of tearing away your mask and showing your naked soul. In front of the camera, in spite of all the chaos surrounding you – with people, electric cables, lighting equipment... (Ahrne in Soila-Wadman, 2003, p. 72)

## **The Context of Symphony Orchestra**

### *Rehearsals in a Symphony Orchestra*

Five minutes to ten a.m. I (ASK) stand at the entrance to the podium. For the orchestra this is the second day of rehearsals with the Polish maestro Witold Lutoslawski. They are tuning their instruments. It is a terrible noise, some people arrive late, others are talking to each other. When maestro Lutoslawski rather slowly walks to the desk the noise stops and the attention of the orchestra is turned to the maestro. He turns towards the orchestra places his score on the music-rack, wishes the orchestra musicians good morning. With no other words said they start with the conductor's own composition *Mi-Parti*. Lutoslawski stops when there is something he wants to correct. That also gives the musicians the opportunity to ask the conductor about difficulties in the piece. They call him maestro. After about one and a half-hour there is a lunch break and then it is time for rehearsing the cello-concerto. The soloist Mr Thedéen enters the podium. They play the concerto from beginning to end without stops. When the piece is completed the members of the orchestra bursts into spontaneous applauds and some are shouting 'bravo'. After a short break they continue with Lutoslawski's Third symphony for about an hour.

The next and second day is a day of hard work, repeating the difficult and important parts. The musicians seem to enjoy working with maestro Lutoslawski and are impressed by this old humble man who conducts in a very soft but firm way. There is not much noise or talk in the orchestra. There are no eye glimpses, small talk or jokes, which often can be the case. The musicians are concentrated and focused maybe because of the complexity of the music they are rendering or maybe because of respect for the conductor? Next day is the full rehearsal. There are about five people except me in the audience. Suddenly there is silence. Maestro Lutoslawski is entering the podium. He takes a quite difficult way to the desk, he turns towards the orchestra, bows deeply, some of the musicians applaud carefully, he puts up the full score, lifts his conducting pin and gives the beat to the orchestra. The orchestra starts playing. They play through the whole piece without any cut. When they have finished Lutoslawski wants to start from a special bar again.

## **The Organizing of the Orchestra Team**

The symphony orchestra is a product of the appearance of the new bourgeois class as well as technical progress and musical experimentation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century society. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the orchestra grew together with the musical compositions and the professional conductor was born in the middle of the century, i.e. a conductor who was not the composer of the musical piece rather a musician with the orchestra as his instrument (Stevens 1986).

Today the symphony orchestras consist of about one hundred disciplined professional musicians with serious training and education. Many musicians claim that musicians are individualistic and even self-centred (Köping 2003). One interpretation of such a statement is that in a huge collective where people are extremely close together physically with hardly any possibilities to assert neither planning nor working conditions, people protect their personal sphere as much as possible. Goffman (1967) calls this kind of acting avoidance ritual. i.e. behaviour that rests upon a tradition of prohibition and taboos. It has been amazing to discover how little talk there is in a working orchestra. Although musicians relay heavily on listening and sound (Koivunen 2003, 2004, Köping 2003), it is not talk that is crucial. Most of the communication in an orchestra is musical – it is a type of communication that builds on agreement on a technical level and is reciprocal to its nature. The musicians have to start

playing at the same time, they have to keep themselves within the beat, play well together, they should not stick out or show themselves and it is most appropriate that they finish at the same time. But this does not mean that they have to share the same *ideas* about their playing. On a cognitive level the musician are free from the fetters of the collective, at least within traditions and conventions. The interpretation of the musical content is personal while the playing is collective.

You can divide the work of the musicians into three different phases. First the musician is rehearsing on his/her own. Secondly the musicians join in a collective rehearsal together with the conductor and the soloists for three or four days in order to together rehearse and agree upon an interpretation of a piece. And finally there is the concert occasion, which adds the audience to the process. Each of the three phases form the individual and collective competence and skill of the orchestra and each of the phases has its own features. The musicians are extremely disciplined. They have scores, a conductor and about one hundred other musicians to follow and adapt themselves to. The musicians act and react on the sound of their colleagues instruments, on the gestures, signs and the body language of the conductor and of the other musicians (see also Koivunen 2003).

### *The Conductor as a Leader*

There are few professions that are so exposed and mythical as the conductor's. It is often a rather romantic view of a hero who brings light, enthusiasm, inspiration and order into this creative chaos of ideas and convictions. We discovered a person who was first and foremost vulnerable, humble, considerate and dependent, as well as charismatic and inspirational. In the creative process between the orchestra and the conductor the most conspicuous characteristic was mutual dependence and adaptation.

Listening is one core element in conducting. Koivunen (2003, 2004) has in depth examined the auditive aspects of the conductor's leadership. A Swedish female symphony orchestra conductor Cecilia Rydinger-Alin describes it like this:

... you have to listen – partly if they play something wrong that you have to correct. Partly you have to listen to intonation and balance between the parts. But you also have to listen to what actually these people sitting in front of me present to me according to their musicality and their ideas of the piece. I have to trust their musicality and know where my baton ends and their music rendering take over. (Cecilia Rydinger-Alin in Köping 2003, p. 158)

An aspect of the conductor's role is to allow the orchestra members to make "their own" music, to have their own ideas about the piece. Most conductors emphasise the importance of not infiltrating the orchestra members playing.<sup>3</sup> One of the great surprises during the observations of the orchestra was that conductors talk very seldom. They usually do not correct, only repeat a part that was insufficient or unclear. They very reluctantly make suggestions on how to think or interpret.

The conductor turns out to be one out of many musicians but with a very special instrument and a special role. The instrument of the conductor is not only sounding, it is thinking and acting, has its own will – it is human and needs a special kind of relating. The conductor is the only person who is supposed to speak during rehearsals, s/he tries to have eye-contact with the musicians, s/he gives them signs when to step into the music and use different dynamics and tempo, s/he smiles or nods his/her head in order to show appreciation, and s/he gives minor services by

helping orchestra members out in difficult places or bars of the piece. S/he is actively representational (Goffman 1967). The conductors often indicate that every single member of the orchestra is important and that it is the conductor's job to make them realise that. This feeling of importance develops in the interaction between the orchestra members and the conductor.

The leadership of the conductor implies a very strong dependency on the orchestra. Musically and technically speaking s/he is dependent on the quality of the orchestra, but also on the orchestra member's will to communicate and take part in the interpretation and playing of the music. The most heroic part of conducting is actually to place one self in the position in front of the orchestra, but the actual conducting is an intricate inter-play or co-operation between all the musicians in the orchestra, including the conductor. Everybody is taking a risk in playing the music, although the risk of the conductor is more obvious and personal. In this respect the conductor might seem heroic to the audience, but hardly to the orchestra members.

### **3. Discussion**

The two presented art-creating organizations – the film project and the symphony orchestra – look quite different on the surface, structures differ, time and space perspective differs. But in this chapter we argue that the creative processes and leadership in both cases have a lot in common.

#### **The Significance of the Artistic Product to Management**

In order to understand how the creative/artistic/aesthetic expression is brought about in film making and music playing, it is of interest to look at how production conditions are organized. But it is also of vital importance to understand how the artistic process works in order to understand the practical organizing and leadership process.

Lapierre (2001) writes about the characteristics of artistic work. He maintains that for an artist, designer, performer, - conductor, choreographer, lighting designer, dancer, actor, etc. – the most important thing is to be true to the idea that haunts him. In doing so, it is not a question of simply relying on one's technical skills or virtuosity, but also on one's sensibility and intelligence. Art is a means of self-fulfilment and of relating to one's time. With regard to an art-producing organization, art originates with the creators and performers, who have made art the focus of their personal and professional lives, rather than as a result of market demand.

However, these ideas of seeing art work as an individual action can be contrasted to seeing the art work as an agent. Guillet de Monthoux (1993, 2000, 2004) claims, that art is created in a circle of poets, actors and the audience in an aesthetic play. Artists are not isolated bohemians who stand above and beyond regular society. The technical part of an art creating team cannot live isolated from the aesthetic play. They are not merely instrumental technicians but craftsmen who interpret and enrich art. Nor would the creation of a work of art be described as something which is represented by a materialistic Mona Lisa idea of art, as a framed canvas painted by someone famous reminding us of something. Seeing art as an intimate dialog between a brilliant artist and his admirer is too narrow a view. This position extends the individualistic view on an artist, which has parallels to the romantic notion of an artist since the 1900<sup>th</sup> century (Becker, 1982). Instead, art can be viewed having an organizing ability and being dynamic human action. That implies organizing in the aesthetic field, where the artist triggers playful interpretations in a creative process. Referring to Genette, Guillet de Monthoux argues that a work of art, as exemplified in the script for a theatre play or the score to an opera, is more than



the written text; it also includes execution on stage and comes into being between its manifestations.

The stories from the shooting and rehearsal above serve to illustrate this thesis of art as an agent – how artistic expression is in becoming and comes into being, in the everyday practise of film making and music playing. It is brought out, bursts out, organizes itself in an ongoing negotiation process between the actors involved. In a film team, the members of the team test various camera angles, lighting, actor interpretations, positions, sounds. There is continuous chit chat going on in the team about how to find solutions. They are thinking, watching, feeling, acting. Still, despite the fact that careful plans and preparations have been made, one must always be prepared for changes and improvisation, both in front of the camera and behind the camera. In the orchestra the members are continually corresponding to their instruments, the music written on the scores, to each other's playing, to the gestures and signs from the conductor, and the communication with the audience. Sometimes in great harmony but often in some kind of frustration, unease and suspiciousness about the complex situation of total dependency, lack of control and sometimes uncertain outcomes of the sounds. Even if playing is done by individuals, the process of musical interpretation is fundamentally relational to its character – as well as the making of film.

## **A Relational Perspective**

We view the individual and society as processes of relations. Individuals and groups as well as organisations are not autonomous and fixed entities rather they are constantly coming into being, constantly interacting. This kind of perspective can be compared to a mechanical/individualistic ontology that got a foothold in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The society was viewed as the sum of sovereign and autonomous individuals who were undivided, consistent, only representing themselves and constantly trying to maximise their 'happiness'<sup>4</sup>. One of the most famous theorists of this view was perhaps Hobbes:

Hobbes argues that society is an unnatural state for selfish creatures such as human beings and that it exists only as an expedient order coerced by sovereign authority. Where it exists, society is the fruit of self-interest and power... In these accounts society is a network of economic actors, a logical product of self-interest in the marketplace. (Sandelands 1998, p. 7)

This is also one of the most common paradigms in mainstream management literature (Hosking & Dachler 1995, Jackson & Carter 2000). The employees are viewed as containers of certain traits and conditions, which the talented leader will use in a fruitful way, i.e. the leader is seen as a subject and the co-workers as objects. Hosking et al (1995) call this view 'entitative' or 'possessive individualism' and argues that there is another way of viewing individuals and organisations, namely a relational way. Consequently, also leadership should be viewed from a relational perspective (Burr 2004, Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Koivunen, 2003, Köping, 2003; Soila-Wadman, 2003). This means asking questions about the processes in which a specific leadership model has been construed and is continuously being construed. Leadership is then seen as dispersed in an organization (Bryman 1996, Yukl 2002). The leader shares the responsibility with others in the construction of this understanding and, in the long run, its execution. The leader is one of many voices. In the individualistic model relations are viewed as instrumental and are used to get co-workers to think about things from the leader's perspective. From the relational perspective, leadership cannot be defined by arguments like how successful or unsuccessful a leader is, or what special qualities he has. The main issue is rather that the leader and those he interacts with are responsible for the type of relations and actions that they



construe jointly. The differences that exist in one's understanding of oneself, the other and the state of things should be noted and negotiated. The leader should thus shift his/her focus to "multiloguing, negotiating, networking" and other social means of narrative that deal with the meanings of individual and collective activities. Doing this in practise means that there is continuous small talk going on, in both the formal and informal organizational arenas. These conversations can be trivial, but it is here that emotions and ambitions are expressed and ideals, norms and rules are created, interpreted and re-interpreted (Gustafsson, 1994; Ekman, 2001). In organizations where this kind of communication does not flourish there seems to exist anxiety and suspiciousness (Köping 2003).

The relational perspective of organizations is by no means new. An early researcher in this field was Mary Parker Follett (1918, 1924, Graham 1995) who in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century studied individuals in organisations and society with a relational perspective, although she did not herself use the concept. Follett claims (in Kolb et al 1996) e.g. that there are three different ways to handle (possible) conflicts, i.e. domination, compromise and integration. Probably the most usual idea of the role of the conductor and director is that he/she dominates the group and forces or entices the members to come along. However this turns out to be a simplification. On the other hand we would not describe the creative process of film making and music playing as a compromise either. That would mean that every member/part has given up some of their ideas for the benefit of the other. Rather we would describe the really creative process as a situation where all the ideas are integrated into a new interpretation a "third way". In this process you could view the director/conductor as a consultant or negotiator.

Success in integrative negotiation is achieved when parties can identify their respective interest and revalue them in light of the other's response, so that both can see where their interests fit into each other and that all may find some place in the final solution. (Kolb et al. p. 154)

Kolb et al calls these final solutions – creative resolutions. Neither the director/ conductor nor the team members try to put themselves into the other's situation, rather they both change in the creative process. If we follow Follett:

Rather than having a vision of autonomous individuals who come together for the purpose of meeting their individual needs, she sees interaction as the site for connection where the self is affected and changed. 'Through the circular response, we are creating each other all the time... I never react to you but to you –plus-me... That is, in the very process of meeting we both become something different.' (Kolb & al 1996, p. 156)

In other words we do not view the work of the film team and the sounding music as the sum of individual playing, rather as a relational process. And we do not view the leader as a person who possesses certain kinds of traits, knowledge and power to influence others, rather leadership is seen as a process of negotiation, communication (with or without words) and coming into being.

#### **4. Relational and Aesthetic Leadership – Concluding Remarks**

Finally we want to share some thoughts about what we call aesthetic and relational leadership, which we hope will inspire leadership research.

One view of the role of the leader in leadership research is that s/he is responsible for “making the decisions”, an old (and individualistic) approach. We subscribe to the view that much of the action takes place before the “decision” is made, it is perhaps made afterwards, if ever. Improvisational processes, where the action is going on while the film team is searching for the expression, exemplify this. However, several of the informants who work in film projects have emphasised the ability of the director to make clear decisions. That is, the director must have an ability to put clear instructions into words about what is to be done, give a direction and to drive the process forward. The same could be said about the not so improvisational but still interpretational symphony orchestra where not much is said, but still communicated by playing and reacting on each other’s sound and body language. One could actually view both conductors’ and orchestra member’s instrumental/visual argumentation as a kind of reflection in action.

Shotter (1995) provides useful metaphors for a good leader, which correspond with our ideas about how the role of the film director and conductor is constructed in a film project or orchestra. The good leader is a maker of history, as well as a repairman with the ability to restore the flow of action. In this role, one is more than just a reader of the situation. The leader must also create the landscape to make the next action possible. One task then is to formulate into language what is to be done. Taylor finds that the work of most managers is verbal and interactive, like storytelling. He compares it with artistic work and emphasises that the aesthetic transaction includes both the performer and audience. But in organizing activities, the roles of performer and audience “may switch back and forth rapidly as managers intersect with each other and their staffs...” (Taylor, 20002: 824). Interviewing film directors, we have been fascinated by what excellent storytellers they really are. In conducting and music playing the “storytelling” is done mostly with the language of music which e.g. Langer (1957) argues is a language of emotions that does “not store up propositions” rather it “makes things conceivable” (ibid. p 244). This storytelling is done simultaneously in interplay between the orchestra members and the conductor.

To sum up, we want to stress that there is a relational negotiation process going on among the whole film team and in the orchestra before and while judgements are being made, before decisions are taken, while the process is going on, a process that needs improvisation in order to tackle the turbulence. Several informants have emphasised the importance of the atmosphere of trust in the processes of film shooting and music playing. Consideration should be given to the ideas of Nussbaum (1990) in talking about improvisation and creating authenticity. When a person improvises, he must keep to the commitment of his role relative to the other characters. He must be responsible to the story of the undertaking, to his own story, but also to the demands of the moment. This we think goes for all kinds of artistic interpretation and work.

Further, emphasis must be given to the importance of aesthetics and the human body in leadership and organizing processes in general, as well as in art-creating processes. All the senses of the body are involved when judgements are made. The ability of the leader/manager to act and make decisions, and to provide “a linguistic formulation for what is to be done”, is built on aesthetic, emotional and cognitive knowledge which is situated in the body. As examples from these studies show, artistic expression is negotiated in an aesthetic play in the art-creating field; that is, it takes form through communication on an aesthetic level among the members. This takes place as they continuously listen, become attuned, think, feel and chit chat, but also through bodily movements<sup>5</sup> when the director/conductor and actors/musicians are searching for expressions –as artistic expressions emerge. Sometimes in these processes, it happens that collective virtuosity is created and a feeling of flow is experienced (Marotto et al

2002). In these processes, it is vital for the director/conductor to be able to refrain from intervening at times, to be open to emerging opportunities, to timing (Soila-Wadman, *ibid.*). In other words, the director/conductor must be open to the aesthetics of capitulation and relating.

Finally we want to pay attention to Kirkeby (2000) who emphasises the ability of the leader to find expressions to describe what is in the atmosphere. He talks about the magic, the power, which is unexplainable, but still is there in the capacity of one's speech and voice to conjure up something. He exemplifies this with the Greek drama: "Just as it is in a drama, the leader, as a choir director, answers only to that what the choir says, because the choir lends him its voice." It is like stepping beyond the limits of an individual. Kirkeby talks about poetics. He believes that not everything can be said in the speech act; there are still secrets left. Just as the poem is more than the poet, the thoughts and the actions of the leader are more than the leader himself. These observations further support the argument for a relational and aesthetic perspective on leadership.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Doctoral thesis of Ann-Sofie Köping (2003) *Den bundna friheten. Om kreativitet och relationer i ett konserthus*. Stockholm: Arvinus. (Fettered Freedom – On Creativity and Relations in a Concert Hall)  
Doctoral thesis of Marja Soila-Wadman(2003) *Kapitulationens estetik. Organisering och ledarskap i filmprojekt*. Stockholm. Arvinus (The Aesthetics of Capitulation. Organizing and Leadership in a Film Project.)

<sup>2</sup> In addition to this field study film directors interviewed were Marianne Ahrne, Roy Andersson and Christina Olofson.

<sup>3</sup> Other conductors interviewed in the study was Witold Lutoslawski, Gennadij Rozhdestvensky, Leif Segerstam and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Benhabib 1992, Gergen 1994 and Jackson & Carter 2000, for an alternative view of the self and the individual.

<sup>5</sup> See also Strati, 1999.

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